50TH ANNIVERSARY 1976-2026

Hill & Lake Press

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ONE SMALL CHECK FOR YOU, ONE GIANT LEAP FOR LOCAL NEWS

By Craig Wilson



A local icon reports for duty: the neighborhood's giant pencil suits up as an astronaut for Halloween, ready to boldly write where no pencil has written before. (Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)

Your neighborhood newspaper is growing, and it runs on reader support. Here's how to fuel the mission.

The neighborhood's favorite giant pencil suited up for Halloween, and frankly, it has never looked more ready for liftoff.

We took it as a sign. A pencil this committed to the mission deserves a newspaper to match.

For 50 years, the Hill & Lake Press has gone "where the biggies leave off," covering the stories right here in our neighborhoods. Now we're boldly venturing where we haven't been before. We've expanded our coverage, added pages and reached more readers, and we're still growing.

But even a local icon can't reach orbit without fuel, and neither can we. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we rely on generous contributions from readers like you. Your support is critical to keeping us running, and without it, we can't deliver the news.

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Craig Wilson is the editor of the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill

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CITY SAYS NO MORE THAN 10 AT THE MOORE HOUSE

By Craig Wilson



The house at 2104 Kenwood Parkway, commonly referred to as the Mary Tyler Moore house. (Image: The Moore House)

The "Mary Tyler Moore" house at 2104 Kenwood Parkway is marketed for weddings and galas of up to 130. The city says it isn't zoned as an event venue and can hold no more than 10 people at a time.

This story began with a KSTP news video someone forwarded to me. I found it bewildering that an event venue could be permitted in the heart of Kenwood. It is not, according to the city.

You know the house. Trolleys of sightseers still roll past it, and strangers pull over just to take its picture. It's where Mary Richards lived, at least in the opening credits of "The Mary Tyler Moore Show."

Now it's for rent. Overnight stays, yes. But it's also being marketed for weddings, galas and receptions of up to 130 people. Under its short-term rental license, the city says, the house can hold no more than 10 people, and its zoning does not permit an event venue.

In recent weeks, I put questions to the city, spoke with Bernie Reisberg, whose wife, Michelle Reisberg, owns the house, and heard from the firm that manages it.

A Private Residence

The Queen Anne house was designed by architect Edward Somerby Stebbins and built in 1892 for S.E. Davis. Its exterior stood in for Mary Richards' fictional address, 119 North Weatherly, on "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," which aired from 1970 to 1977. Moore never lived there.

In September 2017, the Arrowhead Revocable Land Trust bought the house for $1.45 million, the Star Tribune reported. Bernie Reisberg, described then as a Twin Cities businessman affiliated with the buyers, told the paper the home would be a private residence for "a family living there from time to time."

Kate Wall, the buyers' real estate agent, said then that they "have no interest in opening the house to the public or bringing any more attention to the residence."

Hennepin County property records now list Michelle M. Reisberg as the owner. Bernie Reisberg told me the couple took the house out of the trust because "there was no accounting reason to have it in the trust."

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50TH ANNIVERSARY 1976 - 2026

Hill & Lake Press

Founded in 1976, the Hill & Lake Press is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit reporting community news and events, educating and informing neighborhood residents about issues of the day. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Hill & Lake Press.

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letters TO THE editor

Our goal is to offer readers diverse perspectives on newsworthy events or issues of broad public concern to the Hill & Lake community. Our copy limit is 300 words (750 words for a commentary or as space permits), and we reserve the right to edit for clarity and length. We do not publish submissions from anonymous sources; all contributor identities must be verified.

Thank You for "October"

I'm writing to express how much I enjoyed Megan Bacigalupo's letter to the editor in the October issue! I saw the picture of the beautiful woman and was curious what would follow.

It was such a lovely description of the beauty of our changing seasons, always knowing October will return next fall.

Thank you, Megan!

Carolyn Hartwigsen
Edina

In Defense of Bats

I had to reread your story "How Not to Deal With a Bat." The "Not" quickly gave way to eight steps for annihilating an animal intruding on a home that seriously needs maintenance. And it was juxtaposed with an article saving inch-long turtles.
Here are my tried-and-true solutions for bats:

Step 1: Open the window and close the door where the bat is located. This works the majority of the time. It works better at night. Be patient.

Step 2: If the bat is reluctant, gently use a soft broom to nudge it toward the window. If it is lethargic and falls to the ground, it is likely starving, young or sick. Place a box over the animal and a shovel underneath it. Place the box outside. Call the Wildlife Rehab Center in Roseville for guidelines. As with all wild animals, don't handle it unless you are a professional. And yes, fire Andy from Animal Control for even suggesting a "stomping" fee.

Step 3: Educate yourself on bats, and not just for Halloween. We have seven species of bats, and four of them hibernate in Minnesota. Ten years ago, a devastating fungal disease was inadvertently brought to Minnesota. The fungus thrives in the dark, cool caves that house dormant wintering bats. It has caused catastrophic population declines of up to 90%. Bats need our help, not Static Guard and tennis rackets.

Bats are the only flying mammals and are not related to rodents. Their sophisticated echolocation skills are extremely beneficial. They can locate and catch 500 mosquitoes an hour. Being inside a home is their last choice.

Bats are a maligned species that have suffered from myths and ole husband tales. Not unlike another animal: the wolf. I have spent the last 35 years studying wolves and humans.

Your monthly column on torturing bats brought to mind the dismembering, poisoning and slaughtering of wolves. Two years ago, a man shot a wolf, but the injury wasn't fatal, so he muzzled it and took it to his local bar. Once his feigned bravery was sated, he took it out back and shot it.

I know it's a hard sell to stay calm while a bat dips and dives over your head. Hysteria will not serve you or the bat.

So please seal up your home and try, really try, to appreciate the remnant population of bats. Maybe a little less mosquito scratching will convince you too.

Nancy Gibson
Co-founder, International Wolf Center
St. Louis Park

Bring Back the Median

Regarding last month's article "Uptown's Worst Block Gets a Do-Over," the same brain trust at Minneapolis Public Works also decided to remove the median at the corner of West 31st Street and East Bde Maka Ska Parkway, and now traffic volume has measurably increased and left turns and U-turns are happening all the time. Residents along the parkway are enduring increased pollution and noise.

The Park Board has done zilch about this problem.

Replacing the median would be a great start to ameliorating this problem, along with speed bumps and traffic restrictions.

Richard H. Charlson
East Bde Maka Ska







Before and after: Tall shoreline growth hides Lake of the Isles along much of the lakeshore path, while cut-back stretches open the view to the water. Good for wildlife, but what about the people who come to see the lake? (Images: Mike Erlandson)

ROOTED IN GRATITUDE:
BENCH AND CATALPA TREE HONOR DONALD C. WILLEKE

By Brett D. Schumacher



From left: former Ward 7 Council Member Lisa Goodman, Donald C. Willeke and Ward 7 Council Member Elizabeth Shaffer. (Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)



Donald C. Willeke plants the catalpa tree dedicated in his honor on Dean Parkway. (Image: Mark Mahon)

More than 60 neighbors gathered on Dean Parkway to thank the man who has spent five decades looking after the city's trees. His new bench sits where he can see it from his dining room.

Cedar-Isles-Dean resident Donald C. Willeke was honored by friends, family and neighbors with a bench and tree dedication on Dean Parkway on Sunday, Oct. 4, celebrating more than five decades of commitment to Minneapolis' urban tree canopy.

Willeke co-founded Tree Trust, helped establish The American Chestnut Foundation and served as the first chair of Minnesota's Urban Forest Council. He has also served as the mayor's appointee to the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission, bringing his knowledge and persistence to the stewardship of our city's trees.

" He plants trees for the benefit of future generations."

More than 60 people gathered for the dedication, with remarks by Council Member Elizabeth Shaffer and former Council Member Lisa Goodman. Both reflected on Willeke's influence on their personal and professional lives.

His contributions are especially visible along Dean Parkway, where trees he helped establish enrich the neighborhood. Several have remarkable pedigrees tracing back to Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Bacon and Thomas Jefferson.

Addressing the gathering, Willeke reminded everyone that trees need care to grow and thrive, adding that "our democracy is like this." His words invited those present to reflect on what they, too, will nurture and leave for future generations, a thought expressed in the Latin inscription he chose for his bench: "Serit arbores, quae alteri saeculo prosint," or "He plants trees for the benefit of future generations."

" The bench sits on Dean Green, north of 28th Street, facing Willeke's home."

The bench sits on Dean Green, north of 28th Street, facing Willeke's home. Fittingly, he can see it from his dining and living rooms, a tribute to a lifetime of care for the trees and community around him.

Brett D. Schumacher lives in Cedar-Isles-Dean.

FRANKLIN'S MYSTERY STRIPES, EXPLAINED

By Craig Wilson



Which side is yours? On Franklin Avenue west of Hennepin, the answer is the middle. (Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)

For several blocks west of Hennepin, Franklin Avenue drops its center line and leaves drivers to sort it out. That is more or less on purpose.

If you have driven Franklin Avenue west of Hennepin Avenue and suddenly wondered which side of the road is yours, you are in good company.

For several blocks, the yellow center line vanishes. Two dashed white lines run along the edges, and drivers going both directions are left sharing what looks like one wide lane, eyeing each other like strangers reaching for the same armrest.

Then, just as suddenly, the dashes end and Franklin goes back to ordinary bike lanes, as if nothing happened.

Congratulations. You have met an advisory bike lane.

What the Dashes Mean

The city's Street Design Guide describes advisory bike lanes as "preferred but not exclusive operating space for people to bike along two-way roadways." Translation: the dashed lanes along each edge belong to people on bikes, mostly. Cars going both directions share the middle.

" Drivers often find it confusing. That is more or less the point."

When two cars meet, one or both can ease into the bike lane to pass. The guide says advisory lanes "allow cars to merge into the bike lane area when approaching an oncoming vehicle," and that drivers should do so carefully and only when no one is biking there.

A solid white line says stay out. A dashed one says you may cross, but mind your manners.

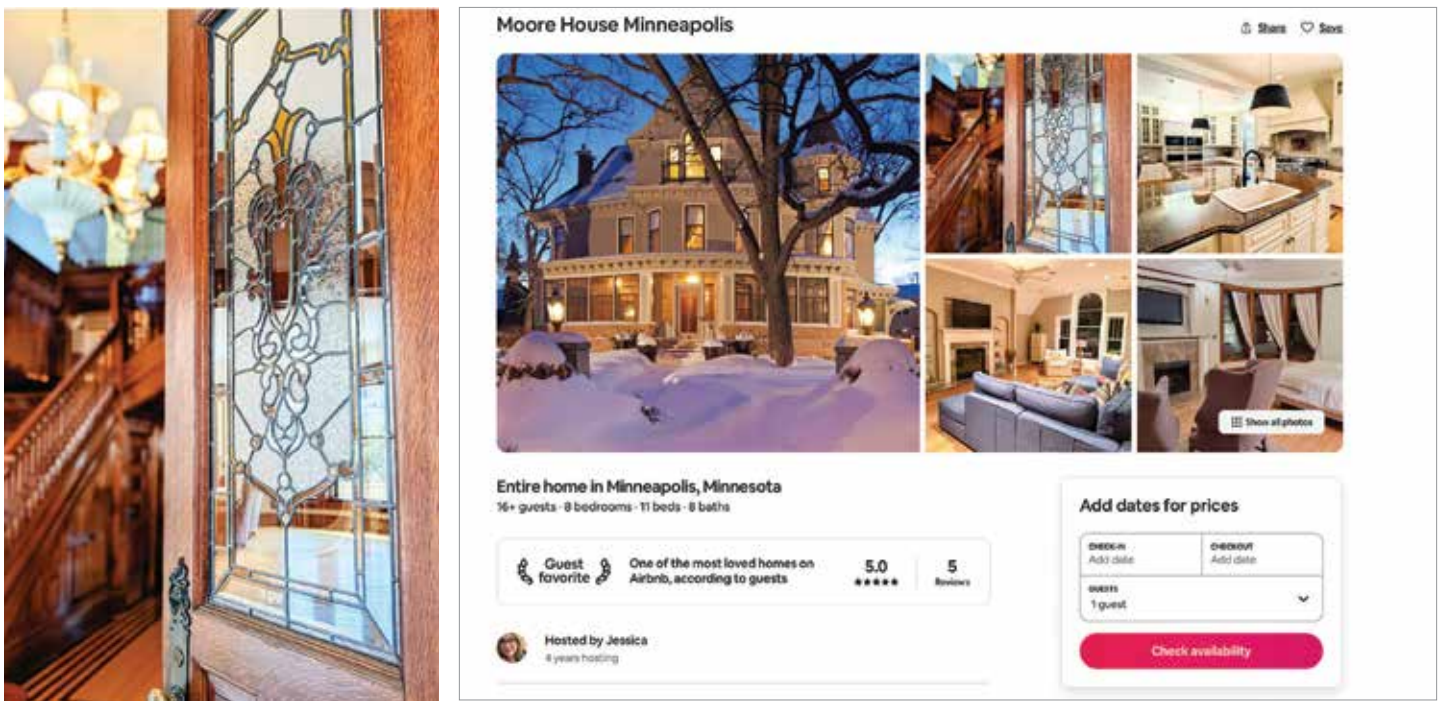
In practice: stay in the center, slow down when you meet an oncoming car, check the bike lane, move over only if it is empty, then glide back to the middle.

Why Franklin Got Them

These blocks of Franklin did not always allow parking. That changed during the Burch Steakhouse years, when the Burch, the Lowry, Lowry Hill Meats and other businesses had the area thriving and parking was

Continued on page 5

CITY SAYS NO MORE THAN 10 AT THE MOORE HOUSE continued from front page



Online marketing for 2104 Kenwood Parkway, promoted as The Moore House, includes its website ("Iconic Exterior. Exceptional Inside."), an Airbnb listing for "16+ guests" and wedding photography on its stairs. Bigger Picture Solutions manages the house. (Images: The Moore House Minneapolis, Airbnb, Catherine Brinker Photography)

Open for Stays and Events

The Reisbergs moved to the western suburbs about a year ago, Bernie Reisberg said, "just to be closer to some friends and folks." He said the family turned to short-term rentals to keep the house from being turned into a fourplex or multi-unit building. "We'd be delighted to sell it, but we don't want to see it carved up," he said. Reisberg confirmed the family did not try to sell the house before turning it into a short-term rental.

> **" For this property, the maximum is 10 people."**
>
> **— City of Minneapolis Spokesperson**

Yet he also said, "Obviously, everything is for sale." And if the house were someday divided like other properties along Kenwood Parkway, he said: "Ultimately, if that's what's best for the city, that's fine."

There's an irony here. On TV, the house was already carved up. Mary Richards lived in an upstairs apartment.

According to a July 28 Mpls.St.Paul Magazine story, the house opened as an event space and vacation rental in late 2025. Reisberg said the family has been renting it out since early spring 2026.

Bigger Picture Solutions, a venue consulting and management firm run by Jessica Barrett and Kastina Morrison, manages the house and markets it as The Moore House. The home's own website and its Airbnb listing say, "We specialize in event and vacation rentals, and can combine the two for something truly one of a kind."

Meet Minneapolis, the city's tourism agency, and other sources list the house among the city's landmarks. That "doesn't make it as conducive to being a family home, but does create an opportunity to share a special space with people visiting Minnesota," Barrett wrote in an email. "The City of Minneapolis and Meet Minneapolis were extremely supportive of using this property as a vacation rental."

A Meet Minneapolis spokesperson disagreed. "To say that Meet Minneapolis is supportive of that wouldn't really be accurate," the spokesperson said.

Two Calls to Police

Police records show two calls to the house this summer.

On the morning of July 26, Morrison called police for help evicting guests who, according to the incident report, had held an unauthorized party and were refusing to leave after their reservation was canceled. Officers made sure "the unwanted party was out of the residence," the report says.

Reisberg and Barrett each described one problem rental this summer that ended in an eviction the next morning. Those renters "were noisy and they broke the law," Reisberg said. "We haven't had any issues since." Barrett wrote that the guests "did not comply with our rules, had too many guests on site, and became a nuisance to our neighbors."

Two days after the eviction, the Mpls.St.Paul Magazine story named D'Amico as a catering partner. "You could do a welcome dinner with 100 people, at the high end, and then the wedding party or family has a place to stay," Barrett told the magazine.

The second call came about 1:30 a.m. on Aug. 8, when a caller reported a loud party at the house. About 20 minutes later, the caller called back to say the party was getting louder. No officers were sent. A police sergeant advised that the call could be deactivated because of the time it had been pending, according to the report, and it was canceled at 5:36 a.m.

A License for 10

On Aug. 19, months after Reisberg said the family began renting the house, the city issued it a short-term rental license. It is the only license the house holds, a city spokesperson said in written answers to my questions.

Occupancy caps for short-term rentals are based on a property's square footage, according to the city. "For this property, the maximum is 10 people," the spokesperson said.

An Airbnb listing for "Moore House Minneapolis" displays the license number, STR-426982, and advertises eight bedrooms, 11 beds and room for "16+" guests. Reisberg said groups of "really 12 to 15 people" stay at the house. He said he understood the limit to be "based on beds."

Asked whether neighbors received the notice required as part of the license application, he said, "it should have been all sent out." He said the family has not met with the Kenwood Neighborhood Organization.

The City Issues Orders

Since Jan. 1, 311 has received two reports about the property: one asking whether it complied with short-term rental regulations and a second asking about its zoning.

On Sept. 18, the city's zoning office issued orders on the property. The house is in the UN2 Urban Neighborhood District, with a BFI2 Interior 2 built-form overlay. "A reception/meeting hall is not a permitted use in this zoning district," the city spokesperson said. The house has no conditional use permit or other city approval for events.

> **" You could do a welcome dinner with 100 people, at the high end, and then the wedding party or family has a place to stay."**
>
> **— Jessica Barrett, to Mpls.St.Paul Magazine**

After issuing the orders, the city's lead zoning inspector spoke with one of the owners of Bigger Picture Solutions. The city has not said what the orders require. Reisberg told me they essentially mean the house cannot be used as a reception hall. "We're not trying to skirt the zoning ordinance here, but there seems to be some difference in opinion as to some of what is," he said.

Six days after the orders, on Sept. 24, KSTP published the video that started this story, titled "Mary Tyler Moore House now available for events and rentals." In it, Morrison said, "We'll be donating a percentage of any profit we do make to her foundation." The video had more than 54,000 views on YouTube as of Oct. 26. Neither KSTP nor the magazine mentioned the 10-person limit or the zoning.

Still Marketed for 130

I contacted Bigger Picture Solutions on Oct. 25 through The Moore House's online inquiry form. A reply the same day said the firm would "love to be in the issue" but was "just wrapping up a busy event season," and asked to talk after my Oct. 28 deadline.
That night, Reisberg said, the house hosted a church fundraiser that lasted about three hours, which he said "has nothing to do with the business of short-term rental."

When When we spoke on Oct. 26, Reisberg said the house is meant for overnight stays. "The house is not there for a frat party. It's not there for receptions. It's there for people to use it to stay overnight," he said. He agreed that the zoning does not allow a reception hall. "They can't have a 60-person reception," he said.

He said the capacity figures in the marketing were something the managers "did incorrectly" and that they "should be taken off." That day, the firm's listing still read, "Capacity: 3–130 (depending on use)," with an "Event capacity: 30–100 for cocktail-style receptions." Uses it recommends include "weekend wedding hubs," rehearsal dinners, fundraising evenings and galas.

A listing on the event site PartySlate gives a capacity of 45 seated and 110 standing, with a four-hour minimum and a $1,400 minimum spend.

Barrett answered my written questions by email on Oct. 27. "To date, we haven't had a contracted event on site," she wrote. Historic homes in Kenwood, she wrote, have "a long tradition of hosting intimate events, such as political or nonprofit fundraisers, birthday parties, or other small gatherings."

She described the firm's goals for the house as "making it an accessible Minneapolis landmark where vacation rental guests can create some great memories" and partnering with Meet Minneapolis and other city organizations. She did not address the zoning orders, the 10-person limit, the capacity figures in the firm's marketing or the foundation donation.

What Comes Next

A city spokesperson confirmed that the restrictions are in place

and enforceable. The Sept. 18 orders are on hold while the zoning inspector talks with the owner. "We are working with the owner and he has said he intends it as a short-term rental — not a rental hall," the spokesperson said. The city plans to keep working with the owner on how to avoid further problems and to make sure guests know events are not permitted.

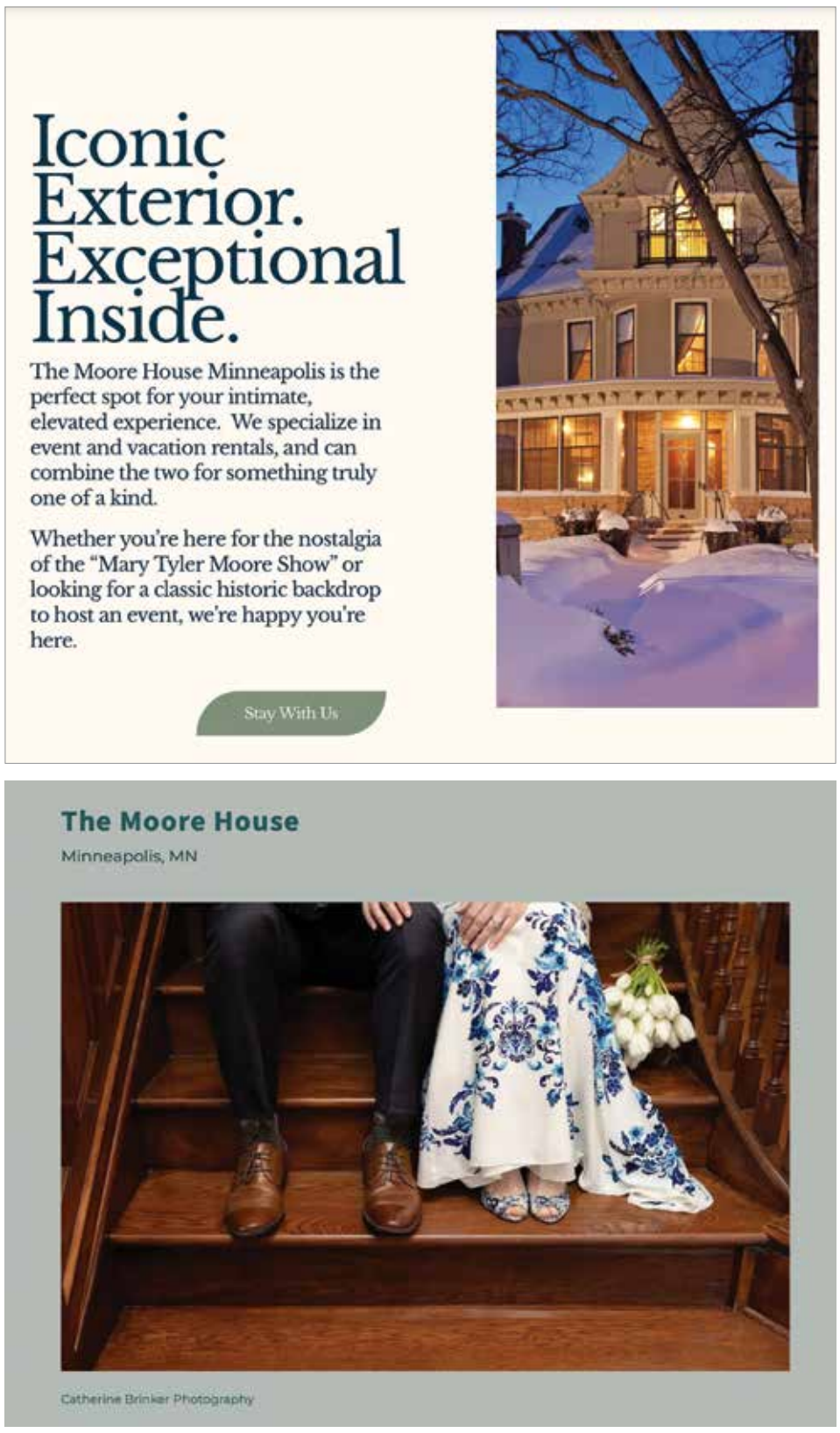
Zoning treats the house as a dwelling. Residents of a dwelling can host events or parties "like normal," the spokesperson said, but not on a regular basis, and "a paid event would not be allowed at a dwelling in this zoning district." A reception hall "is not allowed by zoning," and no one has applied for a conditional use permit, variance or other approval.

If events continue, "orders and citations would be issued for non-compliance," the spokesperson said.

The 10-person cap applies to overnight guests. The house holds a short-term rental registration, the type for a homesteaded property whose owner leaves while it is rented, and the city has not inspected it. The application included a management plan and a neighborhood notification letter, the city said.

Occupancy limits are harder to enforce. Enforcement "can be challenging simply because the occupant may no longer be at the property when an Inspector follows up on a complaint," the spokesperson said. "However, if we obtain sufficient evidence of over-occupancy, the City issues a notice of the violation to the owner, which could result in citations and/or the property being vacated."

Craig Wilson is the editor of the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill.



Online marketing images for The Moore House Minneapolis. (Images: Catherine Brinker Photography)

MOORE HOUSE TIMELINE

September 2017:
The Arrowhead Revocable Land Trust buys the house for $1.45 million. Bernie Reisberg tells the Star Tribune it will be a private residence.

Fall 2025:
The Reisbergs move to the western suburbs.

Late 2025:
The house opens as an event space and vacation rental, according to Mpls.St.Paul Magazine.

Spring 2026:
The family begins renting the house, Reisberg says.

July 26:
Morrison calls police for help evicting guests who held an unauthorized party.

July 28:
Mpls.St.Paul Magazine quotes manager Jessica Barrett: "You could do a welcome dinner with 100 people, at the high end."

Aug. 8:
A caller reports a loud party at 1:30 a.m. No officers are sent.

Aug. 19:
The city issues a short-term rental license. Maximum occupancy: 10 people.

Sept. 18:
The city's zoning office issues orders on the property. The city has not said what they require.

Sept. 24:
KSTP publishes "Mary Tyler Moore House now available for events and rentals." It draws more than 54,000 YouTube views.

Oct. 25:
Bigger Picture Solutions asks to talk after my deadline, saying it is "just wrapping up a busy event season."

Oct. 26:
Reisberg says the house is "not there for receptions." The managers' website still lists capacity of 3 to 130 and receptions of 30 to 100.

Oct. 27:
Barrett writes, "To date, we haven't had a contracted event on site."

THE Moore HOUSE | MPLS

FRANKLIN'S MYSTERY STRIPES continued from page 3

genuinely hard to find. Street parking was extended farther down Franklin.

That created a puzzle: how do you fit parked cars, bike lanes and two directions of traffic onto the same stretch of pavement? The answer was this hybrid, which runs for the several blocks where parking is allowed.

Drivers often find it confusing. That is more or less the point. The idea is that a driver who isn't quite sure what is going on slows down and pays attention, which is exactly what you want on a street shared with people on bikes.

Does It Work?

Minneapolis tested advisory bike lanes in October 2011 on East 14th Street and Grant Street East, between Portland Avenue South and 11th Avenue South. A later evaluation found the share of people biking in the bike lane area rose from zero to 92%, and sidewalk riding fell from 10% to 3%. Bicycle crashes dropped from six in the three years before to two in the three years after. Typical speeds there barely changed.

Not everyone was a fan. "The lack of a yellow line is the confusing part," one driver told evaluators. Still, the report concluded that the confusion did not show up in crash data or in how people actually drove. In other words, drivers were baffled and behaved anyway.

"So if those stripes on Franklin feel like an experiment, technically, they are."

Still an Experiment

According to the city's guide, the Federal Highway Administration still considers advisory bike lanes an experimental treatment, so a city must get federal approval through a request to experiment before installing them. So if those stripes on Franklin feel like an experiment, technically, they are.

Craig Wilson is the editor of the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill.



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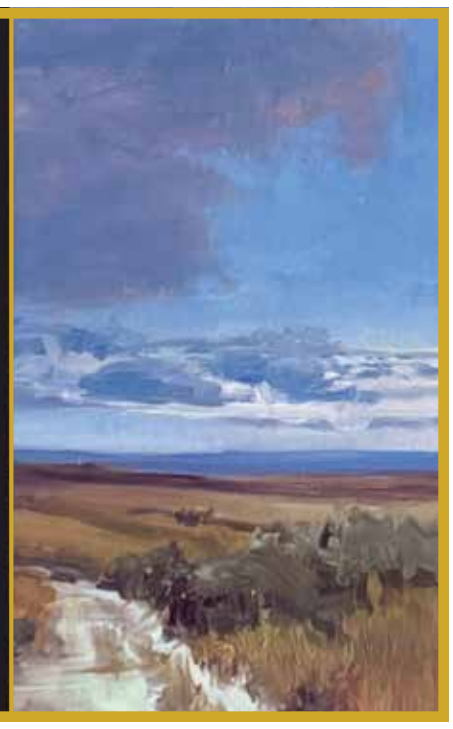


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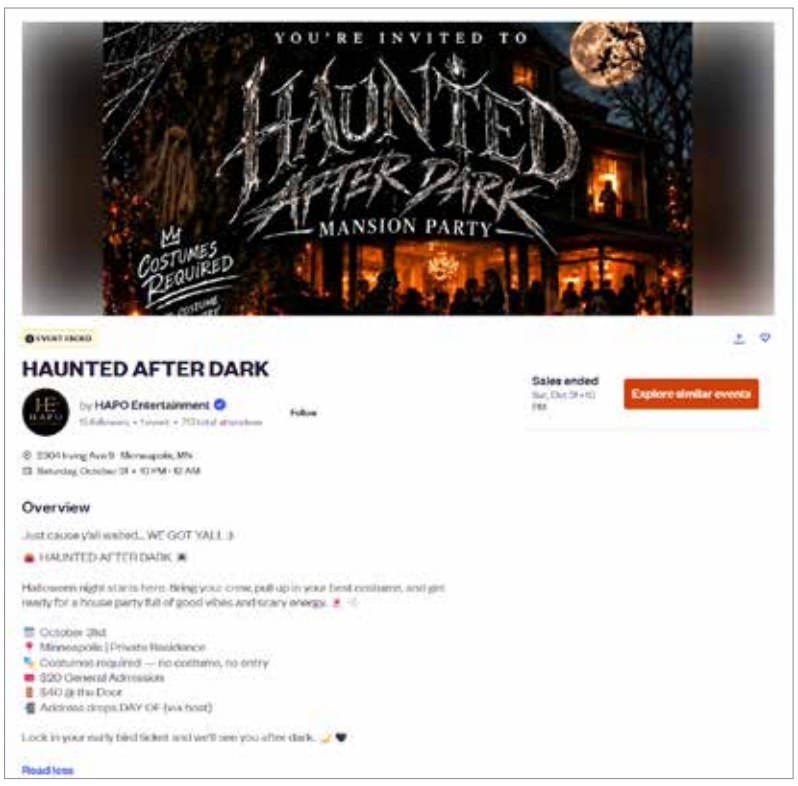
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HAUNTED HOUSE PARTY LEAVES HOME IN RUINS

By Craig Wilson









The Eventbrite listing for "Haunted After Dark" promised "Halloween night starts here." Also shown: damage to the house and the police response. (Images provided by the property owners)

The Lake Place rental was booked for five. Online, 712 signed up, and the door was open to anyone with $40. What the Halloween party left behind: shattered windows, a wrecked kitchen, ruined furniture, art and rugs, trash everywhere and a neighborhood that still can't believe it.

On Halloween night, a short-term rental on Lake Place booked for five adults became the site of a ticketed party that drew hundreds of strangers, set off a massive police response and left the house trashed.

The guest booked the house for Oct. 30 to Nov. 1. The rental agreement bans events and large gatherings.

Meanwhile, an organizer listed as HAPO Entertainment was selling tickets on Eventbrite to "Haunted After Dark," a "house party full of good vibes and scary energy" at the home's address, 10 p.m. to midnight Oct. 31. Tickets: $20 in advance, $40 at the door. Costumes were required: "no costume, no entry." "Address drops DAY OF," the listing promised. It shows 712 attendees.

"This is not a typical guest having a party that went out of control," one of the owners said. "This is an explicit planned event."

A Long Night on Lake Place

Earlier, a family trick-or-treating on the block found the windows covered with black trash bags. "They didn't have any candy for us, so we moved on," the mother said. The guest also shut off the security cameras, the owners said.

"They all came walking back in their costumes, climbing over, trying to get back in the house to party."

The crowd arrived around 11 p.m. By midnight, police had shut down Irving Avenue. Neighbors reported as many as 30 squad cars. Officers told the owners they cleared between 500 and 1,000 people.

The crowd spilled onto neighbors' yards, stoops and retaining walls. "They were blocking all our driveways," said a longtime neighbor.

Night of the Living Partygoers

"I looked out again later and they all came back," the neighbor said. "They all came walking back in their costumes, climbing over, trying to get back in the house to party."

Officers kept repeating, "Please disperse. Go home now." But, the neighbor said, "the kids had no fear."

One neighbor, driving home from a party, got stuck in the crowd on Irving. Her daughter was at a sleepover nearby, and she feared the night could turn into a gunfight. The partygoers she talked with mostly appeared to be 16 to 20.

Nerves on this block were already raw. A few years ago, a stolen Audi sped down Irving, vaulted a retaining wall and landed inside a neighbor's house. Last year, a stray bullet came through a kitchen window on the same block; police traced it to gunfire near Karmel Mall. Stray bullets were neighbors' biggest fear.

Other neighbors said young people held up phones to record officers, as if to provoke a reaction. As they left, some cursed about being chased out. A young woman passed out on the sidewalk had to be carried away.

Police reached the owners at 1:40 a.m. They drove over and, with officers, locked the house down.

"I was grateful there was not violence," one neighbor said of the police response. "I'd rather it take a little bit longer and everybody keeps their cool."

What Was Left Behind

By morning, trash, beer cans and shoes littered the yard.

Inside, the owners reported structural damage to police. Windows were broken throughout, many of them custom. Furniture, artwork, rugs and the kitchen were destroyed. "You name it, the whole place is just turned upside down," one owner said.

A neighbor who went inside saw liquor bottles everywhere and artwork hanging off the walls. "They just trashed the house."

The owners sent an apology to about 70 households through the block club. "We are so deeply sorry for the noise, stress, and disruption this caused your families last night," they wrote.

One owner said the money matters less than "the emotional hurt, the sacredness of the place being violated, not only about my home .. but the entire neighborhood."

Not Just an Airbnb Problem

Police in other cities call events like this "pop-up parties": a short-term rental booked for a night, promoted online and opened to anyone who shows up.

Closer to home, teens smashed the front door of the Venue on Knox apartments in Uptown in April and threw a rooftop party, Fox 9 reported. In Crystal, police have closed Becker Park to head off youth "takeovers" promoted on social media.

"It's not an Airbnb problem. It's a societal problem."

"It's not an Airbnb problem. It's a societal problem," one owner said. The owners hope neighbors will come together so that organizers of parties like this think twice before trying it again.

Craig Wilson is the editor of the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill.



BUDGETS ARE OUR VALUES

Opinion By Council Member Aisha Chughtai, Ward 10



(Image: City of Minneapolis)

Higher property taxes and fewer services: that's how the City Council's budget chair sees Mayor Jacob Frey's 2027 proposal, and she says she's ready to fight for a budget that delivers.

It's no secret that our democracy is under attack. I believe more strongly than ever that local government is the first line of service and the last line of defense — for every Minneapolitan, for our community's shared values and for our democracy.

Our federal government's disdain for Americans, especially Minnesotans, is profound. When President Donald Trump weaponizes the Department of Justice to threaten our elections, it's your city government safeguarding democracy by administering fair and free elections.

"When our federal government abandons us, your local government should wrap its arms tighter around the people of Minneapolis."

When cuts to SNAP food benefits leave children hungry, when 1 in 6 Minneapolis households face food insecurity in the wake of Operation Metro Surge, it's your local government using empty lots to expand community gardens and provide fresh food for local food shelves that closes the gap.

When U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents swarm our city to abduct our neighbors based only on the color of their skin, it's your local government expanding civil liberties and investing in immigration legal services that makes the difference. When our federal government abandons us, your local government should wrap its arms tighter around the people of Minneapolis.

Cuts in the Mayor's Budget

If budgets are a reflection of our values, and they certainly are, it breaks my heart that, knowing the impact of the decisions our federal government has made, Mayor Jacob Frey has proposed a budget that leaves the most vulnerable of our neighbors behind.

He wants to eliminate a modest program combating food insecurity, fully defund a civil rights program that has recovered millions of dollars in wages stolen from low-wage workers and spend more money on police overtime than on preventing or responding to homelessness. Frey wants to replace the people who support our neighborhood organizations with public relations professionals.

He wants to cut emergency housing vouchers that are a lifeline for neighbors and families fighting to escape homelessness, and cut inspectors who hold slumlords accountable and help make sure our children don't become lead detectors. While our state and city are under a microscope, the mayor proposed cuts to independent oversight that prevents fraud, waste and abuse.

As the voice of Ward 10 in City Hall and as the City Council's budget chair, I see these proposals as harmful to my constituents and to people across Minneapolis.

"In other words, you are being asked to pay more to get less."

Pay More, Get Less

Budgets are our values. In a year when Minneapolitans walked, talked, sang, marched, went on strike and protested at great risk out of our deep commitment to our values, Frey's proposed budget only retreats from what we hold dear.

This elimination of programs, services and government oversight came alongside a proposed double-digit property tax hike. In other words, you are being asked to pay more to get less. That is why I'm ready to fight for a budget that meets the needs of working people, makes policy changes to increase oversight and ensures our local government is delivering services that allow people to thrive in our city.

It is our moral and democratic imperative that everyone gets the opportunity to share in a basic standard of living. It's the city's responsibility to build a budget for the public good, one that recognizes the moment we are in with our federal government and steps up to deliver. It's the job of elected leaders to ensure those dollars are spent responsibly, within their means and in a manner that is accountable to residents.

Over the next several weeks, the City Council will work to adopt a final budget for 2027. A final public hearing and vote are expected Dec. 15. My commitment to you is to do every last thing in my power to build a budget that delivers, that ensures you get what you pay for, that's responsive to your needs and that's accountable to your expectations.

Aisha Chughtai represents Ward 10 on the Minneapolis City Council and chairs its Budget Committee.







BUDGET SEASON 2026: WHERE WE ARE HEADED

By Council Member Elizabeth Shaffer, Ward 7



(Image: City of Minneapolis)

Minneapolis takes about twice as long as its peers to write a budget. This year's comes with an 11.9% levy ceiling, a warning from S&P and a hard stop on Dec. 28.

As vice chair of the City Council's Budget Committee, I want to give readers an overview of where things stand in the city's budget process.

A staff report the council requested this summer compared our budget process with those of Seattle, Denver, Milwaukee and Detroit. None of those cities takes longer than two months. Ours takes four, running this year from the mayor's proposal Aug. 13 to the Truth in Taxation hearing Dec. 15. I don't think this is to our credit, and I'm hoping it's something we can change in next year's cycle.

"Last year's budget came down to the eleventh hour, and this year could be worse."

That said, here's how we do things in Minneapolis.

August: The Mayor's Proposal

In August, the council received the mayor's proposed budget for 2027. This year, Mayor Jacob Frey proposed a $2.3 billion budget, with $753 million in general fund spending, which pays for core services like police, fire, 911 and street maintenance. The proposed budget relies on an 11.3% increase in the property tax levy.

Part of that levy increase isn't new spending at all. For the most part, commercial and industrial property values in Minneapolis fell again this year, shifting more of the tax burden onto residential homeowners and renters.

Notably, this budget increases the Minneapolis Police Department's overtime from $2 million in 2026, which will be greatly exceeded by spending this year, to $13 million in 2027, which the mayor proposed as a more accurate forecast given continued officer staffing shortages. It also cuts around 100 positions across city departments and proposes increasing the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's levy by only 2.5%, instead of the 5.86% the Park Board was seeking.

September: Setting the Levy Ceiling

Next, the Board of Estimate and Taxation set the maximum levy. This year the board was deeply divided, but it ultimately decided to give the Park Board and the mayor their full asks. That brought the maximum approved levy increase to 11.9%.

That 11.9% figure represents a ceiling and not a floor, and I've been very vocal in urging my council colleagues to think about it that way. This is the largest levy increase since at least 2000, and with Minneapolis' commercial valuations continuing to fall, we are not on sound financial footing.

In fact, S&P Global Ratings recently put the city on notice, lowering its outlook on our AAA bond rating to negative and citing expected declines in our reserves. Losing that AAA rating would make it more expensive to borrow money, which means we could do fewer capital projects, like replacing roads and bridges, in the future.

September and October: Department Presentations

September and October have been filled with nearly 40 budget presentations from city staff. Each city department gives an overview of its proposed spending and cuts for 2027 based on the mayor's budget and answers questions about how those cuts would affect the services it provides.

"That 11.9% figure represents a ceiling and not a floor, and I've been very vocal in urging my council colleagues to think about it that way."

November and December: Amendments, Votes and a Deadline

After these presentations, council members can submit their own amendments to the budget, which are due Nov. 18. The marked-up budget, with all council members' amendments, will be published Dec. 7 in LIMS, the city's online legislative system, so residents can see what's on the table before we vote.

We begin voting at a markup session Dec. 10, with more sessions Dec. 11 and Dec. 14 if needed. On Dec. 15, the council will hold the Truth in Taxation hearing, the final public hearing on the budget and levy. Once the hearing closes, we take up any remaining amendments and vote to adopt a budget.

Adoption takes at least seven votes. If the mayor vetoes the budget, the council can override with nine votes. Otherwise, we go back into negotiations to hammer out an agreement with him. State law gives us a hard deadline of Dec. 28 to certify the final levy.

What's at Stake

Last year's budget came down to the eleventh hour, and this year could be worse. With the council closely divided, the mayor's veto of any budget the council passes would likely be upheld.

To ensure the future fiscal sustainability of our city, I remain committed to fully funding our core services, bringing down the levy and putting the city's finances on solid ground. I firmly believe these three goals are shared by a majority of my Ward 7 constituents, as well as a majority of the entire city. It's common sense.

Elizabeth Shaffer represents Ward 7 on the Minneapolis City Council and is vice chair of its Budget Committee.



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WHAT'S UP, AND DOWN, IN UPTOWN

By Susan Lenfestey





Open Streets Hennepin turned Hennepin Avenue in Uptown into a car-free celebration of community on Sunday, Oct. 11. Organized by the Uptown Association, the event drew visitors who strolled the street, sampled food truck fare, cheered on Mexican wrestlers, explored Uptown's small businesses and enjoyed free activities. It was the last of the City of Minneapolis' three Open Streets events this year. (Images: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)

First the rain: break-ins, boarded windows and a boutique that gave up. Then the rainbow: new leadership, a returning art fair and a holiday passport.

A conversation about Uptown with Judy Longbottom, owner of The UPS Store at 28th Street and Hennepin Avenue, is a little like walking through a rain shower and winding up under a rainbow.

"But then comes the rainbow."
— Judy Longbottom, owner of The UPS Store

Break-Ins and Boarded Windows

She cites the property crimes that she and other Uptown business owners endure: entry through rooftops or doors jimmied open, and theft of or damage to equipment that falls below their insurance deductible, so repairs and replacements come out of their own pockets.

She doesn't understate the expense and exhaustion of boarding up, cleaning up and installing new security systems. These are not crimes against people, but they deter new businesses from opening and make it hard for established ones to stay open.

Shop My Closet, a resale boutique inside Seven Points, closed after less than a year in business. The owner said she had hoped to be part of the Uptown renaissance, but she is now looking for a new location.

But then comes the rainbow.

New Leadership, Big Crowds

The Uptown Association is growing and has new leadership. Stefani Pennaz, who lives in the neighborhood, is the new executive director.

Andrea Corbin has stepped down as president of the board of directors, and Lawrence Thomas has stepped up. Thomas owns the Lawrence Thomas State Farm Insurance agency, owns residential property in Uptown and is active in the community.

The association worked hard to bring the art fair back to Uptown, and it was a big success, with more than 175,000 attendees. Thousands of dollars in proceeds are being put back into Uptown through beautification and revitalization efforts.

The association also helped coordinate the neighborhood super sale and once again hosted Open Streets, turning Hennepin Avenue from 26th to 36th streets into a bike- and business-friendly street festival for one afternoon.

Uptown United, a group started by neighbors Kevin and Gina Norman, collaborates with the Uptown Association to encourage people to live, work in and enjoy Uptown and its environs. Members of both groups join the Friday evening community walks started by Uptown United and partner in supporting the farmers market, movie club and other community-building efforts.

What's Coming

And Holidays on Hennepin will be back for a second year. The brainchild of neighbor Will Stancil, it encourages local shopping, and more than 70 neighborhood businesses take part with festive decor and fun prizes. Get your passport now at holidaysonhennepin.com. The Hill & Lake Press covered the program last year; you can read that story at hillandlakepress.org.

Finally, the city's Community Safety Ambassadors are on target to hit the streets in November, just in time for — winter! They will serve as an unarmed, visible street presence to complement police work, not replace it.

"Are there still problems in Uptown? You betcha."

Are there still problems in Uptown? You betcha. But there is also a dedicated group of citizens and business owners digging in and contributing ideas, energy and long hours to help solve those problems. This being the November issue, it's a good time to give them our thanks.

Susan Lenfestey writes for the Hill & Lake Press. She lives in Lowry Hill.





OPEN STREETS HENNEPIN





Open Streets Hennepin turned Hennepin Avenue in Uptown into a car-free celebration of community on Sunday, Oct. 11. Organized by the Uptown Association, the event drew visitors who strolled the street, sampled food truck fare, cheered on Mexican wrestlers, explored Uptown's small businesses and enjoyed free activities. It was the last of the City of Minneapolis' three Open Streets events this year. (Images: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)

























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MORE PUBLIC SAFETY RESOURCES COMING TO UPTOWN

By Ellen van Iwaarden



(Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)

City ambassadors this month, private security after that. Uptown is getting more eyes on the street, and business owners say the nights still need them.

This fall, Uptown will get two additional resources to improve public safety.

City Ambassadors on Patrol

The first is the Uptown launch, planned for November, of the city's Community Safety Ambassadors program. The program, which is funded in Uptown through December 2027, will put city employees trained in public engagement and conflict resolution on the streets, patrolling regular routes.

The ambassadors will provide safety escorts, wellness checks in public areas, connections to city services, help filing police reports, support for businesses and basic first aid.

After the program was announced in April, Monica Herrera, a senior public health specialist who will oversee it for the city, met with area businesses and community members to get their input on priorities and on the best routes and times for the ambassadors to be on duty.

Private Security for Uptown

The second new resource will be private security officers assigned to Uptown and funded by the Uptown Special Services District (SSD). Currently, the SSD uses tax money paid by Uptown businesses to provide snow removal, graffiti removal and general upkeep in the neighborhood. By adding private security to that list, the city will be expanding what the Uptown SSD does and putting more eyes on the street.

" Stuff is still happening, particularly at night."

Judy Longbottom, owner of The UPS Store in Uptown, supports this new priority for the SSD. While acknowledging the improvement in public safety since the arrival of the 5th Precinct's dedicated patrol, Longbottom said, "Stuff is still happening, particularly at night."

Working Together

Both groups will coordinate with the Minneapolis Police Department's 5th Precinct, Uptown businesses, neighbors, the Uptown Association, Uptown United and other community groups.

Stefani Pennaz, executive director of the Uptown Association, welcomes the new resources. "The Uptown Association has seen what a huge difference the 5th Precinct's dedicated patrol is making," she said. "Crime numbers are down. We are excited about these new partnerships between the business community, the neighborhood, the city and the MPD to continue this progress in Uptown."

" Crime numbers are down."

Ellen van Iwaarden writes for the Hill & Lake Press. She lives in East Isles.



CARLA GODWIN

By David Piper



Carla Godwin, executive director of PERIS Hill (image: Jade Lott)

Fifteen apartments, one stubborn idea: reach young people leaving foster care before they ever land on the street. PERIS Hill marks five years in Lowry Hill this month.

The sad truth is that many kids age out of foster care with nowhere to go.

PERIS Hill, at 1930 Hennepin Ave. S., provides permanent supportive housing for young people aging out of foster care, with the goal of reaching them before they become homeless.

The building has 15 permanent supportive apartments for those young people and 30 affordable apartments for adults of all ages, where needs-based supportive housing is available. Tenants of the 30 affordable apartments must earn no more than 50% to 60% of the area median income (gross).

I interviewed Executive Director Carla Godwin at PERIS Hill on Oct. 13. The interview has been edited for brevity and clarity.

Why the name PERIS Hill?

PERIS came from our youth advisory council, which was helping us design the building before we opened. The council wanted to call it Periscope, but there was already a Periscope in town, so they chose PERIS. Plus, it sounds cool with Hill, so PERIS Hill.

What brought you to PERIS Hill?

I had been working at the Graves Foundation and was recruited by then-executive director Courtney Kiernat to take on the role after she moved onto the board.

On a personal note, my great-grandmother was committed to a state hospital in Wyoming, and my grandmother grew up in an orphanage. They experienced family separation, as some families involved with child welfare do. I have this sense of obligation to my grandmother and my family, and I think about what it would have taken, what I would have wanted for my grandmother and for her mother.

It all matters to me as I run the property and think about what needs to go well for people and their families to be able to recover. So I am working at that intersection of family history and supportive housing for young people who have experienced foster care.

How do you select young people aging out of foster care?

PERIS does not use coordinated entry. Coordinated entry helps people find housing once they are experiencing homelessness. We want to be able to reach young people aging out of foster care before they become homeless.

We work directly with Hennepin County extended foster care, and they give us referrals while kids are getting ready to exit foster care. Some funding streams have been limited because we do not use coordinated entry.

What can you tell us about the demographics of the young people in your program?

Most of the young people who live here in supportive housing are African American. Black, brown and Native American families have been disproportionately affected by family separation. We do have Native American and multiracial young people as well. Unfortunately, it reflects the proportions in foster care.

"We want to be able to reach young people aging out of foster care before they become homeless."

All our staff are African American. We try to respond to the cultural needs of our clients. We use Kente Circle, a mental health organization whose mission is to provide a culturally relevant space for healing, particularly for people of color. We also partner with Queer Space, which is just down the street, on some joint programming. About 25% of the 23 kids we have served in our five years identify as queer.

Do the young people in your program work or go to school, or both?

About 93% of our young people are either in school or working. One resident is dealing with some physical health issues and one with some mental health issues, but that means 13 of our 15 are in school or employed. One is at Augsburg, and some are at Minneapolis College.

Most are employed in the neighborhood. We find that our location, at Hennepin and Franklin, is great because it is walkable to a lot of work.

How long can your young adults live at PERIS Hill?

We are permanent supportive housing, not transitional housing. There is no time limit on how long a young person can stay here, but we do have a program to help them launch, named, not surprisingly, Launchpad.

We start by heavily subsidizing their rent at about 15% of area market rents and then gradually increase it to 30%, matching the increase with contributions to a savings account, so at the end of five years they would have about $5,000 saved.

In sum, we want them to want and work toward something else. When we talk with staff about it, we think of it as a two- to five-year program. It seems to take roughly two years for a young person to get stable, and by five years, we hope they are thinking about their next steps.



How has PERIS Hill's relationship been with the neighborhood?

Mostly good. When we started, there was some push back from concerned neighbors. I think at this point we have proven that we respond quickly to anything that's going on, especially involving law enforcement.

"In sum, we want them to want and work toward something else."

We have a security system that youth and neighbors have asked us to keep current, and we make sure we are paying attention to that. We contribute video and make sure we are on top of things.

For the last couple of years, I have been going to Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association meetings to keep up good neighborhood relations. The association has been very supportive of PERIS Hill, helping us raise funds and supporting our efforts.

What are the plans for PERIS?

It will be open five years this November. We are holding a free fifth-anniversary celebration Nov. 12 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Glasshouse in Minneapolis.

We are also thinking about what we are calling PERIS Next. We are considering two specific options in Minneapolis, including partnering with other permanent housing providers and developers. Ideally, within the next three years we would have 20 additional apartments for young people aging out of the foster care system.

David Piper writes for the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Kenwood

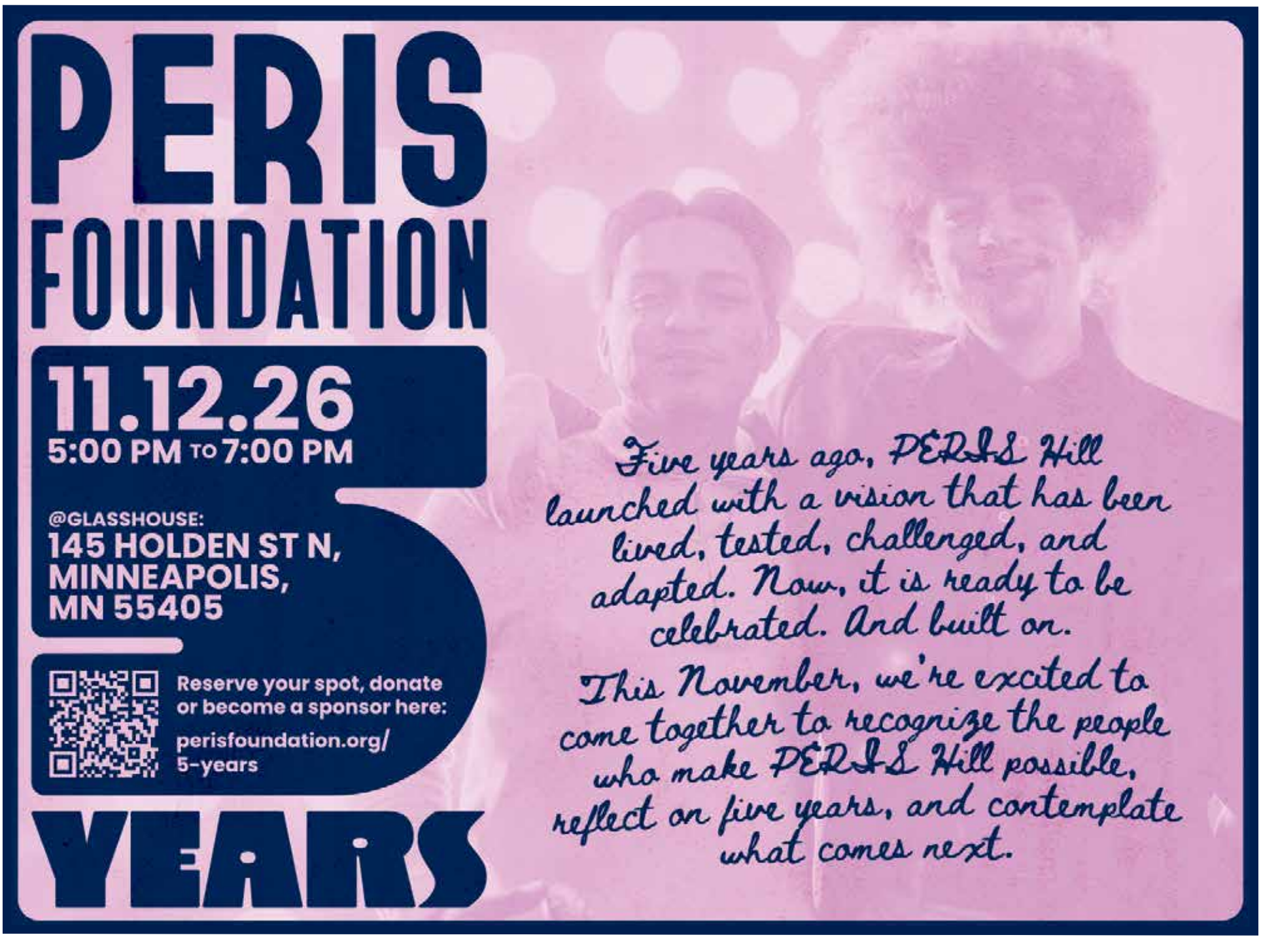


PERIS Hill, at 1930 Hennepin Ave. S. (Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)

PERIS HILL

Godwin welcomes questions, comments and offers to contribute at **carla@perishousing.org**.

The free **Five-Year Celebration** is November 12th from 5 to 7 p.m. at Glasshouse, 145 Holden St., Minneapolis. Reserve a spot at **perisfoundation.org**.



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LOWRY HILL UPDATES

LOWRY HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS & EVENTS:

Seeking 2 Lowry Hill Board Members

Interested in getting more involved in your neighborhood? The board carries out the association's mission to work toward the preservation and improvement of Lowry Hill, and provides a forum for fostering communication, participation, and advocacy on issues meaningful to our community.
Apply online at **lowryhillneighborhood.org/nominate**.

Volunteer for 'Holidays on Hennepin'

You can volunteer for door-to-door business outreach or help bring some holiday magic to some of the Uptown businesses. Not sure where you fit? We'll help you find your spot.
Sign up at **holidaysonhennepin.com/volunteer**.

Our monthly board meetings are usually the first Tuesday of the month from 6:30–8 PM at the Kenwood Community Center, at 2101 West Franklin Avenue.

For full details, newsletter signup and more go to – lowryhillneighborhood.org

EAST ISLES NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

- **EINA is seeking a part-time Coordinator**
  The Coordinator will manage and conduct the everyday business of EINA in order to grow the organization and to make the neighborhood a more connected and thriving community. Apply online at **bit.ly/4iYpih8**.

- **Become an Uptown Community Safety Ambassador Supervisor**
  The City of Minneapolis is looking to hire someone to supervise the daily operations of Community Safety Ambassadors, ensuring consistent patrol coverage, professionalism, and adherence to protocols. You can read more about the job and apply online at **bit.ly/4xSGEQg**.

- **Calling all walkers**
  East Isles Safety Walking Club tyocially meets the first Saturday of the month. It is an opportunity to get outside, meet neighbors, pick up litter and contribute to community spirit.

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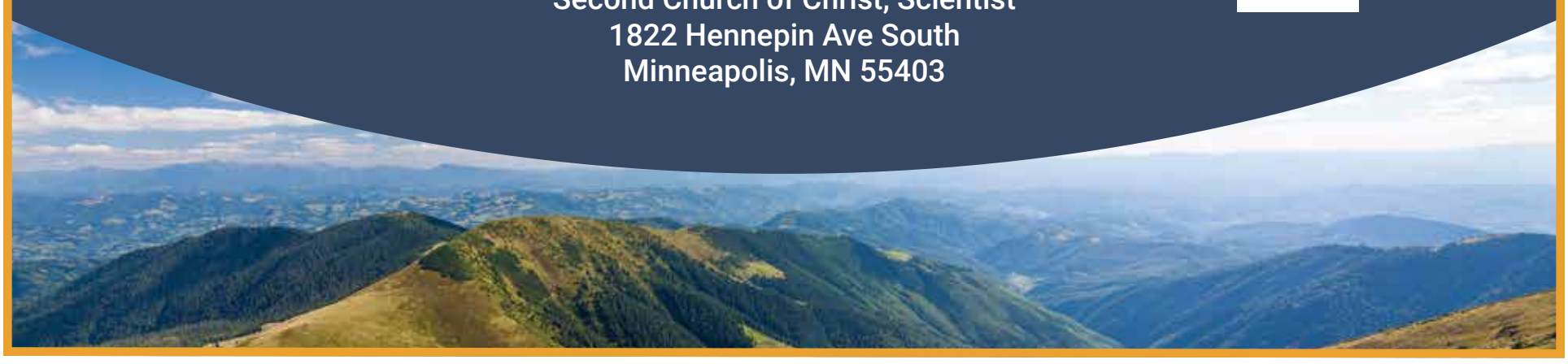
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CELEBRATING FALL

Images by Courtney Cushing Kiernat

With October temperatures at record highs, people were outside enjoying the outdoors - biking, swimming, sailing, relaxing, sharing coffee with neighbors and more. Witches were sighted floating on Bde Maka Ska. According to Meteorologist Sven Sundgaard, October 10th is the latest we've ever hit 90 degrees in the Twin Cities since recordkeeping began in 1873. Sundgaard predicts more "wacky weather" to come with the forecasted El Niño and our warming climate.

























OCTOBER SURPRISES

Opinion by Susan Lenfestey



(Image: Paul Wellstone campaign)

A green school bus, a letter that backfired and a memorial that did too. Minnesota knows a thing or two about October surprises. By the time you read this, we'll know whether 2026 added one.

By the time you receive this issue of the Hill & Lake Press, the midterm elections will be over and, barring a lengthy recount (or "outside interference"), we will have a new governor, a new senator and a new county attorney.

But I'm writing this nearly three weeks out, and an October surprise could still happen, as it did in Paul Wellstone's first campaign for the Senate in 1990.

Out of Northfield

Wellstone came out of nowhere. OK, out of Northfield, where he was a tenured professor of political science at Carleton College. If he was known at all, it was as an organizer and activist, a leader in what Rep. John Lewis would later call "good trouble." His only political experience was running for state auditor a few years earlier and losing to Republican Arne Carlson.

" It turned out that voters didn't care about what kind of Jew he was. They cared what kind of senator he would be."

Political bigwigs argued that Wellstone was too unknown and too radical to win. Only his wild-haired, bright-eyed students and a few farsighted urban progressives, including Sam and Sylvia Kaplan, were backing him. But with the power of his ebullient personality and the passion of his supporters, he won the DFL endorsement over a well-known and respected state legislator, Tom Berg (a Hill & Lake neighbor at the time).

His opponent was incumbent Rudy Boschwitz, the owner of Plywood Minnesota, who appeared in TV ads wearing a plaid shirt and being an affable Minnesotan. (Both men came from Jewish immigrant families: Boschwitz's fled Nazi Germany when he was a small child, and Wellstone's parents came from Ukraine.)

Boschwitz outspent Wellstone 7-to-1, but Wellstone out-campaigned Boschwitz 50-to-1. His ads were quirky and fun to watch. He traveled the state in a battered green school bus. His old-fashioned stem-winder speeches roused people to their feet, especially young people who had never heard anyone like him. And he organized, organized, organized, as he always urged us to do.

The First Surprise

He closed the gap. Boschwitz held the lead, but as the election grew near there was talk of an upset. And then we got an October surprise.

Just days before the election, a group of Boschwitz's supporters sent a letter to members of the Jewish community urging support for Boschwitz. In what became known as the "good Jew" letter, they wrote that Wellstone, although Jewish by birth, was not a good Jew like Boschwitz. And he had married a woman who was not Jewish.

Boschwitz distanced himself from the letter, but it hit his campaign like a torpedo. Wellstone went on to win with 50.49% of the vote.

It turned out that voters didn't care about what kind of Jew he was. They cared what kind of senator he would be. He didn't tell them who he was; he wanted to know who they were. His identity was secondary to his ideals. His wardrobe secondary to his words.

A Tragic Surprise

In 1996, he once again defeated Boschwitz. In 2002, he was in a close race against former St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman when he, along with his wife, Sheila, daughter Marcia and several staff members, was killed in a plane crash in the brushy woods outside Eveleth on Oct. 25. It was a tragic October surprise that no one should ever experience.

Former Vice President Walter Mondale stepped up to run in his place, and a new campaign had to be assembled in just days. With his name recognition and sympathy for the Wellstone family's loss, Mondale seemed on track to win.

But a hastily put-together memorial service at Williams Arena delivered another October surprise. The memorial went off script into what some described as a political rally. Vin Weber, a Republican operative at the time, later described seeing that memorial and having a light bulb moment: Instead of building sympathy for the Mondale campaign, the service could be turned against him. And it was. Norm Coleman became our senator.

" His identity was secondary to his ideals. His wardrobe secondary to his words."

A Surprise for Governor

Curiously, in 1990 Arne Carlson became a last-minute candidate for governor, also because of an October surprise. Jon Grunseth, the Republican nominee, was forced to drop out nine days before the election over allegations of sexual impropriety.

Carlson, then the state auditor, stepped in and went on to defeat incumbent Gov. Rudy Perpich.

What We Will Know

These October surprises happened before early voting was an option in Minnesota. Would they have the same impact on results today? We'll never know.

But we will know whether a candidate can still out-organize and prevail, with or without a surprise, as Wellstone did in 1990.

Susan Lenfestey writes for the Hill & Lake Press. She lives in Lowry Hill.

TITUS KAPHAR AND THE ART OF FORGIVENESS

By Josie Owens





Pictured at left: Titus Kaphar, *I hear you in my head* (detail), 2023. Oil on canvas. Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida. Above: Titus Kaphar, *Do You Remember Douglas Street*, 2023–24. Oil on canvas. (Images: Courtesy of Minneapolis Institute of Arts)

A painter, his father, a mugshot and a coat of tar. The paintings from Titus Kaphar's film, now at Mia, ask what it takes to forgive without forgetting.

Near the end of Titus Kaphar's movie "Exhibiting Forgiveness," an artist takes a portrait of his father off a gallery wall and hands it to him. The portrait is based on a mugshot. Half the face is masked in tar.

Nine of the 15 cathartic paintings seen in the film are on view at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) in the Bell Family Decorative Arts Court.

Kaphar wrote and directed the semi-autobiographical film in 2024. It explores the troubled and often abusive relationship he had with his father. Tarrell (the Titus character) seems to have moved past his tough childhood: He is a successful artist in a happy marriage with a son of his own. Then his estranged father, La'Ron, now a recovering addict, pays him a visit, forcing Tarrell to revisit painful memories.

What the Paintings Erase

Kaphar's signature techniques are excising and erasing figures to convey loss, hurt and suppression. In one scene, Tarrell paints "So vulnerable" (2023), three young boys balancing on a fence rail, then erases them with bold white paint. Why? Two of the figures are his cousins, one who died and one who is in prison. They are absent from his adult life, yet still present in his fading childhood memory.

> **"One does not have to forget the past hurt, but one can choose to change the narrative."**

The portrait of his father, "For your prayer closet 2" (2023), is intensely complicated. Kaphar based it on his father's mugshot as part of "The Jerome Project," a series of paintings of convicted men. He painted it in oil and gold leaf so that it resembled a religious icon, then immersed it in tar so that half the face is masked: the amount of his father's life spent in prison and hidden from society.

The Cost of Holding on

"Forgiveness means different things to different people," the Mayo Clinic website says. "But in general, it involves a combination of acceptance and an intentional decision to let go of resentment and anger." The article lists five risks of failing to forgive. Throughout the movie, Kaphar wrestles with every one.

Tarrell brings his anger into new relationships: At an art opening, he angrily chastises a collector, a loss of control that follows seeing his father. He is so wrapped up in past wrongs that he can't enjoy the present. When he helps his mother pack and move, she sees joy in pictures and keepsakes, and he is only angry. He lashes out and has to leave.

He sleeps fitfully and often wakes violently. At times, he cuts his childhood self out of a painting as an act of self-preservation.

He is at odds with faith. His mother handles the past through prayer and ready forgiveness; she quotes the Bible and says she forgives because she wants others to forgive her. La'Ron, whose own abusive father was a minister, has returned to church.

And he loses connections he can't get back. When his mother asks him to forgive La'Ron, Tarrell answers with the story of Abraham sacrificing Isaac and confronts her failure to protect him as a child. Soon after, he learns she is in the hospital with a serious health condition she has not shared. He never gets to speak to her again.

One Word

"Do You Remember Douglas Street" (2023–24), a recent Mia acquisition, features prominently in the movie. Adult Tarrell faces young Tarrell, who is pushing the large painting. Young Tarrell answers his counterpart's questioning eyes with one word: "Don't."

Sometimes one just needs to let go of the pain. By choosing to recognize the pain and remove it, Tarrell can move forward to the bright life he now has. When he hands his father the portrait, he finally chooses to release the power his father holds, and forgive.

"Exhibiting Forgiveness" is a master class in the complexities and benefits of forgiveness. One does not have to forget the past hurt, but one can choose to change the narrative. Or, as the Mayo Clinic puts it, forgiveness "can bring a kind of peace that allows you to focus on yourself and helps you go on with life."

Mia will screen "Exhibiting Forgiveness" on Thursday, Nov. 12, at 6 p.m. The exhibition is free and runs through Jan. 3, 2027.

Josie Owens writes for the Hill & Lake Press. She lives in Lowry Hill.

ON VIEW NOW

Exhibiting Forgiveness

What: Nine paintings from Titus Kaphar's 2024 film

Where: Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia), Bell Family Decorative Arts Court (Gallery 333), 2400 Third Ave. S.

When: Through Jan. 3, 2027

Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday through Sunday; until 9 p.m. Thursday; closed Monday

Admission: *Free*

Film screening: Thursday, Nov. 12, at 6 p.m. in Pillsbury Auditorium, free, during Meet at Mia (5 to 9 p.m.). Guided tours of the paintings at 6 and 7:15 p.m. No registration needed.

Info: artsmia.org or 612-870-3000

CITY OF LAKES ART FAIR

Images by Courtney Cushing Kiernat



The 2026 City of Lakes Art Fair drew about 200 artist booths of fine art and handmade goods to the northwest shore of Bde Maka Ska, where visitors strolled under sunny skies and warm temperatures.



















CEDAR MEADOWS: A TINY WETLAND WITH A BIG JOB

By Jackie Colburn





(Images: Jackie Colburn)

It's 4.6 acres, it smells and it filters about 90% of the water headed into Cedar Lake. After nearly 30 years, the wetland is due for a rehab, and there's a role for you.

Cedar Meadows Wetland may not seem like a big deal. After all, it's only 4.6 acres. But this little plot of land packs a big punch and matters not only to the people and waterfowl who visit it, but also to the health of our lakes at large.

The wetland sits just west of Cedar Lake. The small body of water, surrounded by walking paths, is nestled between France Avenue, Cedar Shore Drive, Cedar Lake Parkway and Jones-Harrison Senior Living.

I walk past Cedar Meadows Wetland at least three times a week and have for years with my family and our black goldendoodle, Dante. Over the past few years, the paths have become increasingly ruptured and rutted, and the wetland more and more overgrown and stinky.

A few of my neighbors have complained to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board about how unusable the paths are, and one resident even fell into a giant pothole. With the property right next to a senior residence, it seems a further shame that it isn't more enjoyable and navigable for the people who live there.

My wonderings about the wetland led me to ask about ownership, stewardship and the current status of the property. What's at play? Why is it so lackluster and smelly? And what can we expect, or do, about it?

A Bit of History

Longtime residents have told me that for a period of time the land was used as a sports field where the baseball diamonds were perpetually muddy. But in the 1990s it became what it is today: a wetland meant to act as a stormwater filtration site. It's been nearly 30 years since that project was completed.

Anna Eleria, administrator of the Capitol Region Watershed District (and a Bryn Mawr resident), told me that systems like this generally last 25 to 30 years before they need major rehabilitation. At nearly 30, Cedar Meadows is right on schedule.

"Cedar Meadows is an upstream helper for the lakes we love, but it can't do it alone."

Who's the Boss?

A friend and local conservationist, who chaired the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund for 14 years, told me that the property falls under several jurisdictions. The land itself is split between Minneapolis and St. Louis Park. The Park Board handles the grounds, and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District is responsible for the health of the water and the wetland itself.

A Tiny Powerhouse

Cedar Meadows Wetland has a much bigger job than looking pretty for waterfowl and walkers. It filters stormwater from about 1,932 acres of nearby streets and yards, roughly three square miles. A single inch of rain falling on that area adds up to about 52 million gallons, enough to fill 80 Olympic pools.

That runoff, much of it from St. Louis Park, flows into the wetland. There it slows down, so dirt and grit settle out before the water moves on to Cedar Lake.

Along with that sediment, the wetland captures "nutrients," mainly phosphorus and nitrogen. It sounds like a strange word for pollution, but these things are nutritious, just for algae. Phosphorus from leaves, grass clippings, dog waste and fertilizer feeds the algae blooms that turn lakes green and murky.

The smell? I learned that it's to be expected. As plants and other organic material decompose, bacteria release gases that can cause earthy or sulfur-like odors. These processes are a normal part of a wetland ecosystem, recycling nutrients and supporting plant and wildlife communities. When we live near these systems, the smell is more noticeable, but it's quite natural.

The water Cedar Meadows collects is about 90% of what drains into Cedar Lake. That matters well beyond Cedar. Cedar and Brownie are the headwaters of the Chain of Lakes, so what flows into Cedar eventually reaches Lake of the Isles, Bde Maka Ska, Lake Harriet and Minnehaha Creek.

A Coffee Filter, Not a Cure-All

Think of the wetland as a coffee filter. It's great at catching the grounds: sediment and the phosphorus that clings to it. But anything dissolved passes right through, just like the coffee.

Road salt is the clearest example. Once it dissolves, it rides with the water all the way downstream. The wetland also can't be counted on to reliably remove bacteria from pet waste, or oil and other petroleum products from cars and pavement.

For those pollutants, the best fix happens before the rain: salting sparingly, scooping dog poop, skipping lawn chemicals and keeping more rain in our own yards with rain gardens, rain barrels and fewer paved surfaces. (More on that below.)

Working Overtime

Cedar Meadows has even more to handle these days. Heavier, more frequent storms and fast snowmelt send surges of water the ground can't soak up, so it all rushes in at once. And like a coffee filter that fills with grounds, the wetland slowly fills with sediment and needs regular maintenance to keep doing its job.

What goes in our yards and streets flows downhill, and what can't be captured by Cedar Meadows ends up in our water. Cedar Meadows is an upstream helper for the lakes we love, but it can't do it alone.

Coordinated Efforts

With so many players involved, strong partnership is required to make sure the wetland is well cared for and maintained.

A project to rehabilitate the wetland is underway. The Min-

nehaha Creek Watershed District is at the helm, and an evaluation phase is happening now. The project isn't being done in isolation: A broader coalition formed in 2024, the Minneapolis Thriving Waters Partnership, brings together the players who need to be aligned to prioritize and carry out meaningful water resource improvements.

" Dante and I will keep walking the rutted paths, knowing that this muddy little wetland is doing essential work for every lake downstream."

I spoke with Michael Hayman, director of project planning at the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, about Cedar Meadows. He said that while the district is still in the monitoring phase, which concludes this fall, the wetland is a big deal, and the district recognizes the importance of rehabilitating it because of its effect on all of our lakes.

A coordinating team of leaders from the city, the Park Board and the watershed district guides the work, with technical staff from each doing the planning and analysis.

"It's very collaborative and very integrated, because there's multiple entities with different ownership and different responsibilities, and so we've tried to create this clear structure, so everyone understands their roles and responsibilities as we move these projects forward," Hayman said.

What's Next?

The rehabilitation will not be speedy. According to the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District website, design will take place in 2027 and 2028, with construction in 2029 and 2030. The project won't be finished until at least 2030.

When I asked about opportunities for residents to take part in the design process, Hayman said there would likely be community engagement events hosted by the Park Board.

"As we move from our early diagnostic and planning efforts towards feasibility, we'll work directly with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to develop a community engagement process," he said. "They have a very strong community engagement presence and policy, and so we'll follow their lead on how they'd like to establish citizen advisory committees, or technical committees, and bring residents into the process."

The goal is a comprehensive retrofit and restoration, including updates to how people can enjoy the site. The vision is a project that considers not only water quality protection but also the park amenities that make park land such an asset to the community.

Until then, Dante and I will keep walking the rutted paths, knowing that this muddy little wetland is doing essential work for every lake downstream.

Jackie Colburn writes for the Hill & Lake Press. She lives in Fern Hill.





(Images: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)

TAKE ACTION

There are things you (yes, you) can do to contribute to the health of the wetland and the lakes at large.

Stay Permeable:
Man-made impervious surfaces like roads, sidewalks, parking lots and rooftops block absorption completely, forcing water to become surface runoff. The more paved an area is, the more runoff goes to a place like Cedar Meadows Wetland.

Keeping your own lot as permeable as possible helps. If you do install a hard surface, consider porous asphalt or concrete, which is engineered with extra spaces (pores) that let water trickle down to a sand and gravel base beneath the surface that filters out pollutants.

Grow Flowers:
Rain gardens are a great way to capture runoff and filter water right in your yard. Perennial plants break down pollutants and absorb excess nutrients that harm our lakes, wetlands and streams.

A rain garden is a bowl-shaped garden filled with plants that lets water soak into the ground. Even if you don't plant your garden in a bowl, simply adding deep-rooted perennials can help. Those roots break up soil and increase its ability to hold water and draw it deeper into the ground. Turf grass has shallow roots that don't provide the same benefits.

Scoop Poop:
Beach closures at the lakes are typically not the result of harmful algae blooms but of E. coli. The source of that E. coli? Poop. We can't scoop up goose poop (or maybe we can?), but we can scoop up dog waste.

If you think it's fine to let your dog's poop decompose naturally in the woods, or no big deal to wait to scoop your yard, think again. A big rain washes that waste into storm drains and straight to the lakes, carrying E. coli with it.

Capture Rain:
Capturing rainwater reduces the amount of polluted stormwater that enters our lakes, rivers and streams. A rain barrel collects rain from your roof that you can then use to water your yard and plants. Barrels range from 50 to 130 gallons, and a rain garden can be paired with a barrel to catch the overflow. You can build your own or buy one; an easy-pour spout lets you connect a hose or fill a watering can.

Just Say No (to Lawn Chemicals):
Consider a natural lawn: clover, native plantings or simply rejecting the idea that your lawn needs to look a certain way. If you do fertilize, do it only in the fall, when it's most effective. Apply only the amount directed and choose a zero-phosphorus fertilizer. Many lawns already have plenty of phosphorus in the soil, and any excess just runs off into local waters and feeds algae. Aerating your lawn is another alternative to fertilizing.

Salt Sparingly:
Did you know that just one teaspoon of salt can permanently pollute five gallons of water? Salt can help keep sidewalks clear in winter, but excess salt harms fish, wildlife, plants and even people if it contaminates drinking water.

Reduce the need for salt by shoveling early and often to keep ice from forming in the first place. Salt sparingly where needed, and use sand when it's below 15 degrees. When possible, sweep up leftover salt to reuse later instead of letting it wash away.

Resources:
Smart Salting training (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency): pca.state.mn.us/business-with-us/smart-salting-training
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District best practices: minnehahacreek.org/best-practices
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District partner organizations: minnehahacreek.org/get-involved/partner-organizations
St. Louis Park Rainwater Rewards Program: stlouisparkmn.gov (search "Rainwater Rewards")
Lawns to Legumes (Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources): bwsr.state.mn.us/l2l

CIDNA FALL FESTIVAL

Images by Courtney Cushing Kiernat and Alysa Merritt



















HOW THE LYNX MADE ME A FAN

By Dorothy Richmond

She read "Encyclopedia Brown" at the Twins, Tolstoy at the Badgers and most of Sinclair Lewis at the Timberwolves. Then the Lynx came along.

Dear Neighbor,

It's November, when we celebrate Thanksgiving and, for many people, the main course: football. I will not be present in the viewing lounge.

I loathe watching football for the singular reason that I don't understand it: the rules, the violence, the endless timeouts, the pathological fandom, the player worship, to say nothing of the next day's autopsy of the game.

None of this makes sense to me. I'm not a team player. Never was.

It isn't that I hated the enterprise; I truly didn't get it. I used to feel the same way about church: All these people showed up week after week when they didn't have to, and I couldn't understand why. I didn't learn until much later that a lone wolf can still happily be part of, and loyal to, various groups.

Off to the Met

My dislike for watching and participating in sports hardened when I was 7. One Sunday on the way home from Mass, my parents announced that we were all going to the Twins game that afternoon. My siblings were thrilled; I was not. I'd already been dragged to church, and this loomed as another round of alienation.

What I'd wanted, and planned on doing, was diving into the newest edition of "Encyclopedia Brown," a series of books about the boy detective who solved neighborhood mysteries. That, to me, was a perfect Sunday afternoon. I offered to stay home alone, but my age quickly nixed that suggestion.

Off we went to the old Met Stadium in our green Oldsmobile, six of us (three in front, three in back) with zero seat belts and zero air conditioning, standard in those days. It was July and blisteringly hot, and I, in the backseat's passenger side, was miserable. I dangled my foot out the window to cool down, which worked brilliantly until a bee stung my big toe at a stoplight.

We sat in the bleachers, broiling under the sun. No amount of Frosty Malt could assuage my misery (still, I indulged with gusto). I brought along "Encyclopedia Brown" and read throughout the game. That was the most enjoyable part.

Always With a Book

Books have both saved me and caused consternation to my co-attendees at games over the years. In 1990, I visited an old friend in Madison who told me he'd gotten us tickets to a Badgers game. I read "Anna Karenina." He's still a friend, but he continues to harangue me for that crime.

In the early '90s, I dated a basketball devotee who invited me to join in his fun. I told him up front that I didn't like watching sports; he assured me I'd grow to love watching the Timberwolves. I did not, and I read nearly the entire Sinclair Lewis oeuvre throughout countless games. My boyfriend declared us (he, Lewis and I) a ménage à trois, yet continued to invite me.

He was an attorney, and his firm once gave him courtside tickets, on the floor where the likes of Spike Lee and Jack Nicholson sit. I was warned not to read during the game, as it would be televised and he'd be ostracized if any of his partners saw his "weirdo date," which I didn't regard as an insult. I got hit by the ball. Twice.

I've been invited to many sporting events (Twins, Vikings, Kicks, Timberwolves, North Stars), always attending with a book in tow, and when I looked up, it was to watch the clock more than the game. I must say the St. Paul Saints are fun to watch because they're so goofy.

Then Came the Lynx

Then, a few years ago, the Lynx entered my life, courtesy of Daisy's law firm's season tickets. I was actually looking forward to the first game, against the Phoenix Mercury, whose star player was Brittney Griner, my hero for surviving Putin's petty wrath after a Russian court sentenced her to nine years in prison for less than a gram of medically prescribed cannabis. (A prisoner exchange released her after nine months.)

The Lynx were different. Oh, so different. Five minutes in, I said to Daisy, "It's like watching ballet!" It seemed more relational, not combat-based as in men's sports. Also, WNBA players, by and large, can't dunk because of height (though my gal Brittney Griner currently holds the record with 27 career dunks), which makes shooting more spectacular.

This past September, I was at Target Center when the Lynx played the Indiana Fever, and I got to see Caitlin Clark play. A true thrill.

Less than a week later, while Lily was visiting from New York, she, Daisy and I sat in the basement watching the Lynx play the New York Liberty. It was my idea, and I'd looked forward to it for days. We had pizza and stared, mesmerized, at the screen. We cheered and we screamed, at times in delight, at times in fury.

During the fourth quarter, I said to the girls, "This is how real fans feel when they're watching the Super Bowl."

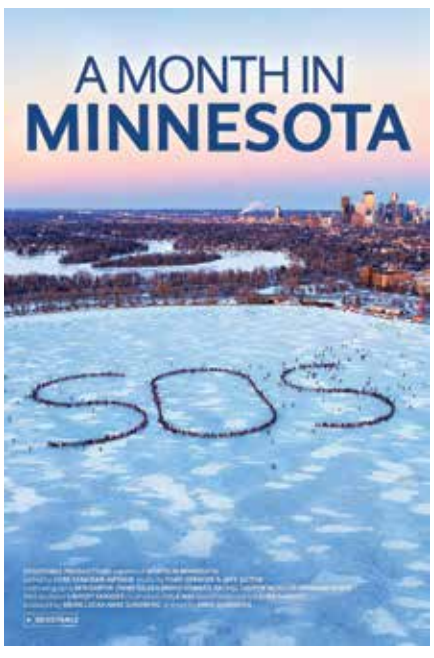
I finally got it.

— Dorothy

Dorothy Richmond writes for the Hill & Lake Press. She lives in Cedar-Isles-Dean.

DOCUMENTARY TELLS METRO SURGE STORY THROUGH NEIGHBORS

By Craig Wilson



(Image: Resistance Productions)

Brian Lucas looked past the tear gas and focused on quieter stories of Metro Surge.

Brian Lucas says the real story of Operation Metro Surge was not the chaos on the streets. It was how neighbors responded.

"The real story and the one that was inspiring the entire country was this idea of neighboring as a verb," he said, "and how this community came together to resist a federal occupation and stand up for our neighbors."

That idea drives "A Month in Minnesota," the documentary Lucas made with filmmaker Annie Sundberg and executive producer Laura Gabbert. After the Twin Cities Film Festival, it heads to festivals in Woodstock, N.Y., Chicago and Washington, D.C.

It started with a phone call. As federal agents arrived in January, Lucas, who began his career in radio news at Minnesota Public Radio, called Sundberg, a friend since high school who had become a documentary filmmaker in New York. "I said, 'Hey, I think that you need to be here because this is a story that needs to be told,'" Lucas said. She wrote back that she had been thinking the same thing and asked him to make the film with her. The focus on neighbors came later, the deeper they got into the work. Lucas, Sundberg and Gabbert formed Resistance Productions.

Lucas was the boots on the ground, working with local photographers and sound crews and meeting people for coffee to earn their trust. Many were scared for their safety.

"We have a long history of being able to take something that can be thought of as harsh, like our winters, and turning it into something beautiful."

Rather than chase the confrontations, the team relied on crowdsourced footage for those, and went looking for quieter moments. "You can find the chaos anywhere," he said. "For us, it's the smaller stories."

Among them are a singing resistance group and the Bird Dogs, community activists who traded door knocking for ICE watch patrols, with music, dancing and potlucks along the way. "It was such a Minnesota way to go about it," Lucas said.

That Minnesota streak runs through the film. "We have a long history of being able to take something that can be thought of as harsh, like our winters, and turning it into something beautiful," he said.

One example is the gathering where neighbors met on the lake and spelled out SOS with their bodies, holding candles. A drone photo of it, with the skyline in the background, became an iconic image. It is also the film's poster.

Lucas hopes the film reaches across the aisle. The people in it, he said, "are not of one political stripe. This is not about immigration policy, this is about cruelty and human decency."

Some early viewers have told him it was hard to dive back in, and he understands why. There is no streaming date yet. In the meantime, Lucas wants neighborhood groups to request screenings at amonthinminnesotafilm.com.

"We don't have an immense budget to publicize this," he said. "We need to rely on the community."

Craig Wilson is the editor of Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill. Brian Lucas serves on the Hill & Lake Press board and occasionally writes for the paper.

BARBETTE

By Jason Suss







(Images: Jason Suss)

A slow Wednesday-night lap of Uptown ends at Barbette, on a corner Kim Bartmann has held for 35 years. The steak frites were good. The crowd was the surprise.

OK, so I basically crossed the street from last month's column.

I was trying to decide where to visit this month. It was just a normal Wednesday night around 7:30 p.m., so I decided to take a little drive. I started at Franklin and Hennepin and worked my way down to 31st Street. Traffic was slow, of course, so I had plenty of time to look around.

Azia Luna isn't open yet, so that was out. Tom's Thai is still dry.

I headed toward Lyndale. Vuka Peri Peri chicken is open at Lake and Lyndale. It looks interesting, and I do enjoy peri-peri, but I was in the mood for more of a full-service restaurant. Haraz Coffee House is also open and seemed to be fairly busy, especially for a Wednesday night. I'll get there soon. It looks like a great date spot or a morning coffee-and-pastry option.

I made it up Lyndale, passing Jade Dynasty, which is best with a group so you can try more items; Nightingale, one of the few late-night full-service options; and The Bulldog, which would have been my choice if I had been in the mood for a burger.

Then I remembered Barbette. It had been a long time since I'd been there, so I did another slow drive down Hennepin and worked my way to the parking lot behind the building.

35 Years on One Corner

Barbette has been there since 2001. With the exception of Susan Lenfestey, there probably aren't a lot of people who remember when it was Café Wyrd. I certainly don't. It was Kim Bartmann's first restaurant, and it opened in 1991. That puts Bartmann in that spot for 35 years, an incredibly long time for any restaurant, especially one in Uptown.

Since then, she has opened, closed or sold a number of restaurants. Bryant-Lake Bowl, Pat's Tap, Book Club, Bread & Pickle, Tiny Diner, Gigi's Cafe and Red Stag Supperclub are some that come to mind.

Why You Should Go

Let's talk about why you should go there. The place is super cute, with a real French bistro feel. The layout (with that weird big round table right as you walk in), the decor, the chalkboard menus, the sidewalk tables and, of course, the classic French fare give it a nice, cozy vibe.

Steak Frites, Full House

I opted for the steak frites, about as classic French bistro as it gets. You have the option of an 8-ounce sirloin for $46 or a 6-ounce "bistro steak" for $35. I chose the latter, cooked medium, and paired it with a glass of French Malbec.

The fries were hot and crispy (which seems to be less common than it should be at most places), the green beans were tender but still had a crunch, and the steak was good, but probably more of a medium-well.

"What surprised me was that the place was almost completely full."

For comparison, a similar steak frites (minus the beans) at North Loop's Bellecour runs $36, and Meritage has one on the menu for $45. Beef, along with just about everything else, is expensive now, but the prices at Barbette seem in line with the market.

After tax, credit card fee and tip, my entree and glass of wine came to $70. Is that a lot for one person for a Wednesday night dinner? Yes, but that's just how it is now.

What surprised me was that the place was almost completely full. On my lap around the area, nearly all the other restaurants were sparsely populated at best. So walking in and getting one of the only empty tables was a bit of a surprise, albeit a good one.

Groups of all ages and sizes were chatting, eating and drinking, and at least half were dunking their bread into the broth from the mussels, which was clearly the most popular item on the menu. It quieted down a bit as I ate, but even as I was leaving, more people were arriving. There was even a table or two seated outside, enjoying our unusually warm October.

Before You Go

A few more bits of useful info: The menu is large. Dinner is served daily from 4 to 11 p.m., and until midnight Friday and Saturday. There are small shareable plates (tartare, oysters, charcuterie and the like), at least five salads to choose from, soup and about a dozen fully composed entrees. Brunch is served daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The drink list is substantial, with lots of nonalcoholic, light or full-strength options. A weekday social hour from 2 to 5 p.m. has a bunch of $6, $8 and $10 options. The Trapeze space next door can host private events for 15 to 50 guests.

So, if it's been a while since you've been there, it's probably time for another visit. Bon appétit!

Jason Suss spent 15 years in tech before leaving the corporate world to pursue his passion for cocktails. For the past 12 years, he has worked on both sides of the bar at local restaurants. He now lives in Lowry Hill and owns @AProperPour.

BARBETTE
at a glance

Location:
1600 W. Lake St., Minneapolis, in Uptown. On this corner since 1991 (as Café Wyrd); Barbette since 2001.

When:
Brunch: Daily, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Dinner: Daily, 4 to 11 p.m.; until midnight Friday and Saturday
Social hour: Weekdays, 2 to 5 p.m., with $6, $8 and $10 options.

Don't miss:
The mussels and the steak frites ($35 bistro steak, $46 sirloin).

Private events: The Trapeze space next door, 15 to 50 guests.

Phone: 612-827-5710
Online: barbette.com
Parking: Lot behind the building



MEET THE FLYER GUY

By Craig Wilson



Sammy Letty (Image: Joseph Krattle)

Mid-lunch and mid-work call, an editor bolts out of a Linden Hills restaurant to chase a mustache down the block. It was the right mustache.

I was eating lunch alone at Naviya's Thai Kitchen in Linden Hills, AirPods in, on a call, when a curious fellow walked past the storefront window.

He had an exaggerated, old-timey Western mustache. In a thin frame, he was dressed the way Gen Z does, mixing vintage pieces in new and imaginative ways. And he was carrying a stack of paper.

I had been thinking a lot about a character I'd been reading about and wanted to connect with. I couldn't remember his name, so in my head he was simply "the flyer guy." This fellow looked a lot like him.

Then he came back past the window, and I was convinced. I abruptly ended my call and ran out. By the time I reached the door, he was already halfway down the block.

"Sir! Sir! Are you the flyer guy?"

"Why, yes…yes I am."

I invited him to do a spontaneous interview, and he obliged. His name is Sammy Lett. He's 27, and for about a year he has been taping absurd, deadpan flyers to street corners. One of them, offering stolen artifacts for barter, had already been forwarded to me by a reader who wanted to know if it was serious.

This is what he shared. The conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

So what exactly do you do?

I'm an artist. I would sort of classify it broadly as performance art, and it encompasses three different areas of work.

One is niche event organizing. There's still a poster on the street corner for Nest Fest, which was a little community picnic I did in celebration of the giant wasp nest down at the Rose Garden.

Then some of it is weird performance art stuff. The big one that got a lot of attention was where I sat on a bench in a park, people would come and tie my shoe, and I'd give them $10.

And then there's stuff like this. I've classified it in the past as IRL s***posting, but you can't really print that. So I just say it's a weird genre called fever dream.

About that offer of $10 for strangers who tie your shoe. How did they find you?

That one was only flyering. Other people took pictures and put it on the internet, but it was important to me that I be a little incognito, so people couldn't just know what I looked like and then show up.

What are the flyers for?

They're just silly little jokes. I put it up and people get a kick out of it. If all I can get out of somebody is a smile for five seconds, that's great. People see it and they might not know if it's serious or not. And I think that's fun.

You don't post them online right away. Why not?

I like to let them simmer in person first. I wanted to encourage people to go outside and look for them. Not that people are going out and hunting for posters, but versus seeing it on their phone, I would prefer for people to get outside and engage with their city and see what mysteries are out there.

People see all the weird posters and they're like, "What in the world is going on?"

About those stolen artifacts. Our reader was worried. Should they be?

That one was funny because those were artifacts from various cultures around the world that are now in the British Museum. They're already stolen artifacts. So there's sort of a meta commentary going on. Some people texted me and pointed out the joke, and I'm like, "Yep, you got it."

Honestly, that wasn't intentional. I was just like, it'd be kind of funny if somebody would try to barter a priceless artifact. People would message me and they'd be like, "Could I just do cash?" And I'm like, "Sure, it's approximately a hundred million dollars if you're willing to Venmo."

Paper posters seem like a lot of work.

It's so much more work to put up a poster versus putting something on Instagram or Facebook. You have to design it, go print it somewhere and then physically walk around and tape it up. Since I started doing it, I'm constantly looking at street corners and seeing what people are putting up.

Who inspired you?

Danielle Egan. She shares a lot of her stuff on Substack, and she's out in San Francisco doing similar silly poster stuff, event organizing, weird things that are just looking to introduce a little bit of randomness into people's lives.

And Alan Wagner, who uses the moniker True Wagner online, does a lot of absurdist poster art. He influenced me in terms of the totally bizarre style, where you look at it and you're like, "Is this person okay?"

Were you a practical joker in school?

I probably fell pretty firmly into the category of class clown. I did a yearlong senior prank where I hid copies of this weird DVD all around school.

Where are you from, and what brought you here?

I'm originally from the Green Bay area. I moved here in 2017 to study political science at the University of Minnesota and stuck around ever since.

I was sort of the poli-sci kid who was convinced he was going to be the president someday. I'm not on that track anymore. I didn't do a lot with art in college. It took getting through the pandemic and gradually growing into adult life before I found that I had all of this creative energy that needed somewhere to go.

The Hill & Lake Press runs an April Fools' story every year. One announced that Kenwood Park would become a water park, with Wisconsin Dells slides photoshopped in where the park's old, towering oak trees used to stand. I didn't tell my partner it was a joke. He read it, threw down the paper and said, "This city's insane." The council member and Park Board commissioner got a bunch of calls. You approve?

April Fools is one of my favorite traditions. What I've noticed is that in recent years it's been waning in popularity, because I think the world is just a much scarier place. And I'm sad about that.

Any pushback? From the city, or anyone?

Nothing from the city. Online it's overwhelmingly positive. Somebody commented on the reel the Strib posted and said something like, "This guy needs to go back to California." It's not for everybody, and that's all right with me.

The main way I would notice pushback is when I walk around and see a poster's been torn down. To me, it's a great mystery, because I have no idea who rips them down or why.

What do you hope people get out of it?

Putting this stuff out there kind of incentivizes people to pay more attention to their world as they're walking around, versus being buried in their phone. Look up. See what's going on.

Craig Wilson is the editor of Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill.

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Preferred qualifications:

- **Can cry on command**
- **Owns black clothing (goths especially encouraged to apply)**
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Please contact me if you are interested. Serious inquiries only.

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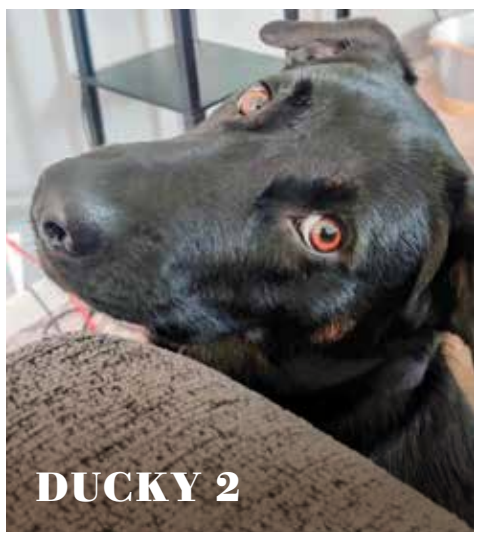
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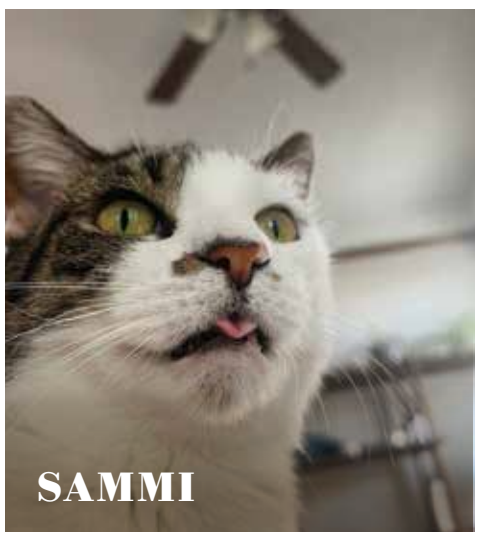

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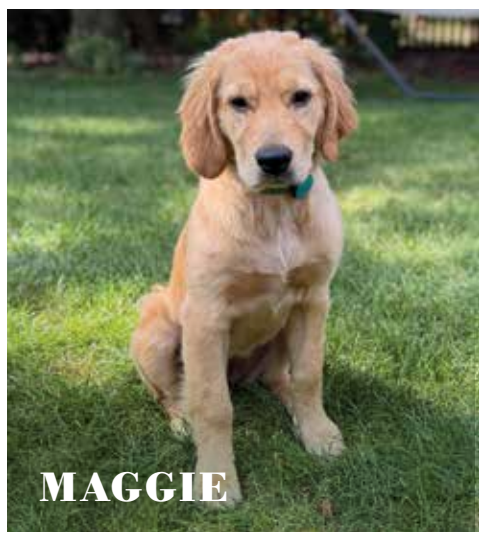

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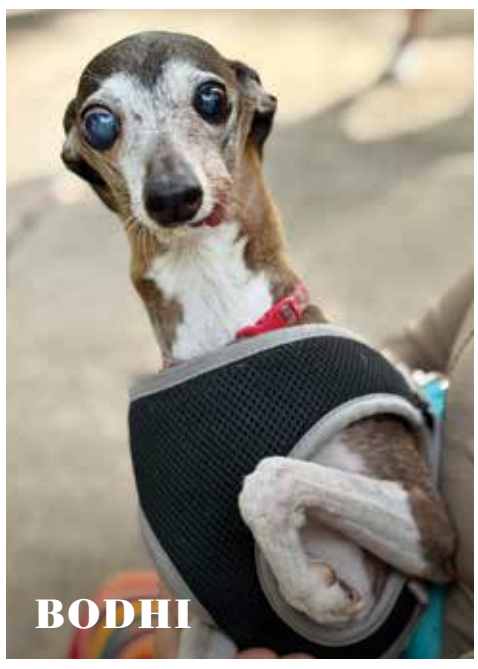

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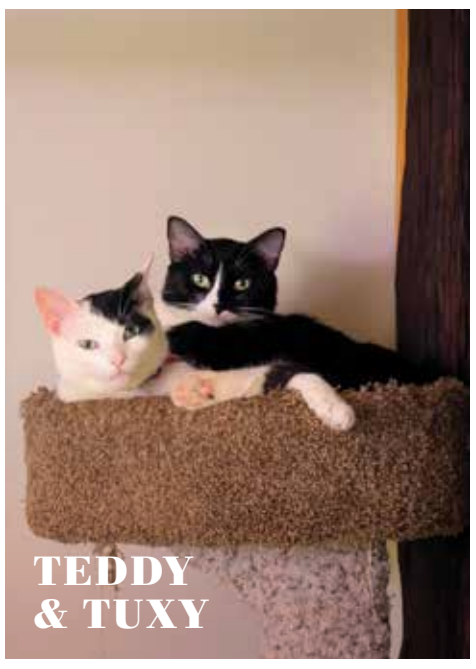

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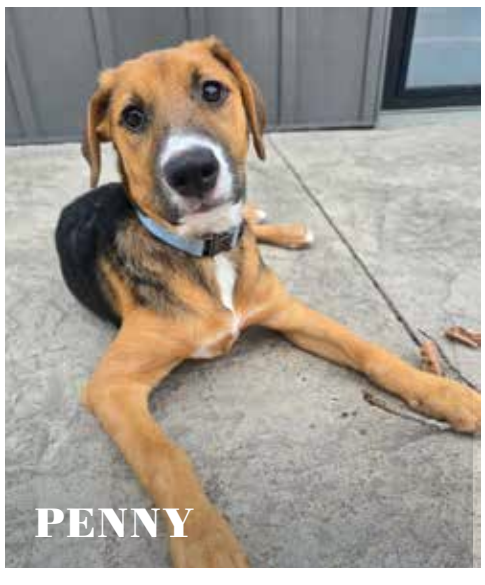

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