PERSPECTIVES

Hope for the Year Ahead

“Man plans, and God laughs.”

As I looked back at the columns I wrote this time last year, this old Yiddish saying came to mind. At that time, it had set the mantra of 2020. My final column for 2019 teemed with concrete plans for the new year: bulleted lists of things to work on in the brave new decade, problems to solve and policies to put in place. Reading it now, at the end of this collective nightmare of a year, I’m struck by how senseless its certainty looks. As anyone who has ever made a New Year’s resolution knows, making plans is always a fraught enterprise. But the notion of planning for a certain future has never seemed more fantastic than it does now. No matter what personal, professional or civic goals we’d set for ourselves in 2020, all our plans were completely upended as the COVID-19 pandemic came to dominate all else.

By spring, we’d embarked on a new reality—and my March column had a very different tone. Instead of talking about plans, I wrote about our values. Our values would restore us to our values of community and generosity, that it would remind us of our common humanity and our obligations to one another, that it would challenge us to be better selves. That hope has been borne out again and again in countless acts of individual sacrifice and collective action. Though this has been one of the two hardest years many of us have ever experienced, we haven’t given into despair. Our values—working hard and caring for each other—have prevailed as we’ve reached out and supported one another.

I experienced our values in action again a few weeks ago during an online meeting with some of the city’s 7th and 8th neighbors. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the City’s proposal to locate a new shelter for people experiencing homelessness in the fire station near West 7th and Grand Avenue. I was nervous going into the conversation. The urgency of the situation meant that we hadn’t had time for the robust community engagement that would normally be part of any such development, and services for people experiencing homelessness are often opposed and unwanted by neighbors.

From the very first question, however, I knew I’d had no reason to worry. While there were natural concerns expressed about the logistics of the shelter and how it would be managed so as to serve both guests and the surrounding community, the vast majority of neighbors welcomed the shelter, supported the City’s work to help people experiencing homelessness, and were only concerned that we were doing more. Our neighborhood values of caring and compassion grounded the entire discussion.

At the end of the meeting, I took off my headphones, closed my laptop, and took a deep breath. I realized that I felt more centered than I had in weeks. While the daily onslaught of death, disease and doom—scrolling, made it feel like everything was out of control, my home—my city—was the same as it had always been. Because a city isn’t defined by its plans. It is defined by its values. And while our plans have never been stronger, if there is one thing that gives me hope for the year ahead, it is that.

Allina Health to open United Patients Physicians Clinic

BY DAVID LAMB

A few months of swirling rumors about the future of Allina Health’s residency program at the Rainy River House in the United Family Medicine (UFM) clinic, Allina announced its plans a new community-based primary care practice called the United Family Physicians Clinic; to open later this month at 235 Grand Avenue, the same block as United Hospital—the residency program’s primary teaching site—and Children’s.

The clinic will train 21 residents per year in family medicine, a specialty that research in the Annals of Family Medicine suggests will see a projected shortfall of doctors that will grow to 33,000 in the U.S. by 2035. “With the opening of this new clinic, we are deepening our commitment to the health-care needs of the community,” senior vice president of Allina Health Operations and president of United Hospital Sara Criger described in a press release. She said the new site would provide a home for “Allina Health’s well-respected family medicine residency program that is training the next generation of committed and compassionate caregivers.”

Dr. Stephanie Rosener, director of Allina Health’s United Family Medicine Residency Program at the new clinic, noted that, given its employees’ tenure at UFM for years, the program’s “physicians and residents are deeply connected to the West 7th neighborhood.” (Allina Health’s family medicine residency program has been operating at the UFM clinic since 1995.) While the opening of the new clinic marks the end of a long and meaningful partnership between UFM and the residency program, Allina’s press release said, “Allina Health looks forward to collectively working to serve the West 7th community that both organizations cherish.”

“We may have a new address, but we are the same community, with the same mission, same vision and same heart.”

Dr. Stephanie Rosener, Director of the United Family Residency Program

West Seventh Street is not a corridor; it’s a neighborhood

The following letter, signed by the board of directors of the West 7th Business Association, was sent on December 8 to St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter, the City’s seven commissioners, and Ramsey County’s seven commissioners:

Honorable Public Servants,

It should be no secret to you that the West 7th Business Association represents a constituency that has been strongly opposed to the RCRRA’s Community Advisory Committee’s determination of the so-called Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) in a massively expensive proposal for transit between downtown St. Paul and the airport and Mall of America.

During the process, we presented a petition signed by more than 3,100 individuals and businesses opposed to the most expensive proposal for light-rail transit on West 7th Street. Our local representatives on the PAC consistently argued against the direction being taken. We provided steady and public constructive criticism via the Community Reporter during the years of process.

In the end, the LPA decision effectively denied all those efforts, without proving the validity of the ideas being adopted, its employees’ tenure at UFM for years, the program’s “physicians and residents are deeply connected to the West 7th neighborhood.” (Allina Health’s family medicine residency program has been operating at the UFM clinic since 1995.)

We may have a new address,” Rosener said, “but we are the same people, with the same mission, same vision and same heart.”

While the exact day of the clinic’s opening remains uncertain, information will become available at allinahealth.org/ufpclinic, and appointments will be scheduled at 651-241-5200 once its phone lines are active.

Dr. Tim Rumsey, who has served as a faculty physician in Allina Health’s residency program for decades while it has been located at UFM, described the experience of leaving the site of the program’s founding as “survival.” But he added, “We’re very excited about the new location and glad to move ahead and continue to serve and teach.” One of the updates of the new location, he said, is the proximity to United Hospital, where the residency program will continue its inpatient service. “Caring for the underprovided requires 24-hour care,” Rumsey said. “We’re delivering babies at six in the morning, for instance. Hospital service helps facilitate that kind of continuity.”

Rumsey also noted other advantages of the new location, such as being near marginalized people who the program can serve, from the residents of Catholic Charities’ Higher Ground homeless shelter to those at St. Paul’s new treatment center at nearby St. Joe’s, a Fairview.

ALLINA, PG 2

West Seventh Street runs along West Seventh Street in 1988.

But at least, we believed, the adoption process included a commitment to review the decision — to confirm the validity of those ideas after several years in which they might be tested and confirmed.

That commitment called for a review of the decision as follows:

In December, 2020, the PAC will reevaluate the technical and financial outlook for the Riverview Corridor Project, to determine whether the chosen LPA is likely to become a reality by 2025, and make alternate plans if necessary. We learned that the earliest projected “reality” for this project is 2031-2032, six or more years after the original target.

Yet the RCRRA recently began the process of convening a new PAC, and announced that the December meeting would not be pursued by the new PAC. This decision, in addition to its abandonment of a commitment made as part of the original approval of the proposed LPA, is also remarkable for its inability to ignore several vital points:

• The project cannot be achieved by 2025.

The transit needs of the West End and Highland areas have remained poorly addressed in the years since the LPA was proposed, and Highland areas have remained poorly addressed in the years since the LPA was proposed, and Highland areas have remained poorly addressed in the years since the LPA was proposed, and...
As a nonprofit organization we are governed by a Board of Direc- 

tors, and we have openings for community members to join. 

We have correspondents, reporters, and general writers 

involved. You can write a letter to the editor on a topic we 
have written in response to one of our columns, or a longer "Neighbors Speak Out" piece.

You can also contribute story ideas: We aim to cover a wide range of interesting areas in the neighborhood. Your ideas are always welcome. Contact the Community Reporter editor or the Community Advocate editor or the Community Editor at editor@communityreporter.org.

--- David Lamb, Editor, Community Reporter

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Community News & Events

St. Paul Winter Carnival 2021

BY DIANE GERTR

As we know, the idea of a transit corridor along West 7th Street has been kicking around for decades, even in the 1990s, and the latest iteration, the Riverview Corridor, is getting closer to becoming a reality. Connecting and hearing from business owners and residents can often lead to more in-depth conversations about the project. “I asked Blackmon how he will be working on having his voice heard, she stated that she “didn’t think our skinny street are the number one consideration of those planning the project. After spending four years working on having her voice heard, she opted to step aside.”

New rep joins Advisory Committee

Policy Advisory Committee

B’Yachad Gift Bag Program

As the Jewish Family Service’s annual B’Yachad Gift Bag Program has for 10 years offered several ways to volunteer, either by donating, shopping, wrapping or delivering gifts to people throughout the community who are in need emotionally, physically or spiritually. The program is funded exclusively by donations of time and money.

The non-alcoholic soda is now available at groceries and other retailers. Blackmon explained that he has lived along West 7th, and knows of the need for improvement along the corridor. It is “much not only for long-invested, improved transit, but recognizes that there are immediate needs that are not in the waiting for the building of a big project.”

The Riverview Corridor is bringing together traditional hot cocoa and rice crispy bars event outdoor. A digital contest in which you submit photos of your catch, the competition will award Minnesotans highest rises spanning categories such as largest walleye, largest northern pike bass, and others.

The festival is organizing socially distanced events, including a drive-through ice view and another its shops and attractions. Find out more about Minnesota Birch Beer Collaboration Launches.

Volunteers safely delivered gift bags to nearly 185 people, who could be no groups of people wrapping gifts; no in-store shopping; people to volunteer, program leaders acknowledged that there was too much risk for the time being. Trying to identify safe ways for residents, providing comfort, essential items such as food, clothing, shelter and medications, and help beginning the long-term recovery process. “As we continue to help our neighbors in need, we urge everyone to take to minimize the risk of a fire occurring in their home,” said Phil Hansen, Regional Director for the Minnesota Region of the American Red Cross. An average of 17 people per day die in the U.S. due to a home fire, thus reminding people to donate gift bags for additional free resources and safety tips.

The 135th edition of the winter tradition will be better this time around. The frustration of residents with prizes spanning categories such as largest walleye, largest northern pike bass, and others. The effects of a yearlong study on the impact of coffee-based engangement and other factors in care for patients with diabetes. The study is part of the organization’s broader efforts to empower health care professionals with meaningful data to drive improvement and details the pharmacist collaboration shows what can happen when residents, providing humanitarian aid, and the wounded or those who are taken prisoner. This two-part program will cover the background of International Humanitarian Law, the treaties on which it is based, a historical resolution in international law, January 23, 10-11:30am. For the general public, $5 for students and seniors. Register online: rby6tyb2bjg.

Eight St. Paul Residents Receive Assistance Following Apartment Fire

Eight St. Paul Residents Receive Assistance Following Apartment Fire in apartment building in the Novo view neighborhood of St. Paul. American Red Cross volunteers connected with the eight residents, providing comfort, essential items such as food, clothing, shelter and medications, and help beginning the long-term recovery process. “As we continue to help our neighbors in need, we urge everyone to take to minimize the risk of a fire occurring in their home,” said Phil Hansen, Regional Director for the Minnesota Region of the American Red Cross. An average of 17 people per day die in the U.S. due to a home fire, thus reminding people to donate gift bags for additional free resources and safety tips.

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St. Paul Teacher Joins Hall of Fame, Recognized for Outstanding Work in Youth Service

Keystone Community Services is proud to announce that one of our staff, Ed Steinhauer, was inducted into the Youth Intervention Hall of Fame on December 4. The annual award is presented by the Youth Intervention Programs Associations (YIPA) and honors individuals for their work with vulnerable youth.

“We know how hard our Keystone teamwork, to deliver services in neighborhoods across Saint Paul, and to have a teacher be recognized for that dedication is really special,” said Mary McKeown, President of Keystone. Steinhauer was nominated for the Friends of Youth Leadership Award and was selected to join others who have demonstrated an “above and beyond” commitment to helping their students and their families.

Keystone’s Kids Program is a 21st Century Community Learning Center and an accredited program that serves youth, grades K-10, and their families living, working or attending school in the West 7th neighborhood.

“I feel honored to be recognized by YIPA,” said Steinhauer. “As a teacher, I’ve learned that learning happens when we’re able to build trusting relationships with children. Trust comes when we model empathy, curiosity, and playfulness. We also have to tacitly acknowledge that our kids get to make choices, like showing up with an open mind and an open heart. You just can’t coerce choices like those. So as leaders of children, we have to model open-heartedness, too.”

McKeown said another Keystone staff member was inspired to nominate Steinhauer and shared this anecdote about his impact on a young person in the Community Kids program:

“One of Ed’s students was sad when her family moved out of our neighborhood. Ed kept her enrolled online so she can continue to receive academic assistance and continue to build that connection with friends. Ed checks in with the parents frequently to make them aware of support services. He delivered needed school supplies and books to their new home. Ed has provided a trusted source of support during a difficult transition.”

Since 1999, the Youth Intervention Hall of Fame has recognized only 89 individuals for their work with vulnerable youth and families, youth and seniors. For more information on Keystone, visit keystoneservices.org.

Wishes the community a safe and healthy recovery from the challenges of 2020.

To join the effort, email info@communityreporter.org.

Dave Thune, former longtime St. Paul City councilmember representing the West Seventh neighborhood (1995-2018), responds to the recent changes at the United Family Medicine clinic. Per “Allina Health” on page 1, all but one of the doctors that were practicing at the clinic before the pandemic began will begin practicing at the new United Family Physicians clinic this month answering Kevin’s second question.

Ed mentors students in person before the COVID-19 pandemic forced him to find ways to engage in remote learning.

You can learn more about the award and meet the other youth leaders recognized this year online here - https://yipa.org/membership/youth-intervention-hall-of-fame/

Keystone Community Services was founded in 1939 as a small neighborhood resource center in St. Paul. Today, Keystone supports more than 37,000 people in Ramsey County through a variety of community-based programs serving low-income adults and families, youth and seniors.

In the Community

In Our 27TH YEAR!

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WE ENGAGE/ WEST END
Wishes the community a safe and healthy recovery from the challenges of 2020.

Dave Thune, former longtime St. Paul City councilmember representing the West Seventh neighborhood (1995-2018), responds to the recent changes at the United Family Medicine clinic. Per “Allina Health” on page 1, all but one of the doctors that were practicing at the clinic before the pandemic began will begin practicing at the new United Family Physicians clinic this month answering Kevin’s second question.

Homing the lessons we have learned from the pandemic, the murder of George Floyd and many others, WE ENGAGE/WEST END will develop creative ways to meet each other where we are and encourage new ways of thinking about our community and its values.

To join the effort, email info@communityreporter.org.

Editorial Cartoon

Kevin Says: doesn’t my family deserve REAL healthcare?

Where is my doctor?

THU 2020
Ducks, Swans and Snow Sculptures

The waters of the lakes and rivers are open in many places yet. Lake Phalen, in St. Paul, is one, as is Bass Ponds in Bloomington. Trumpeter swans and goldeneyes are plentiful. There were many mallards, as well as a few pairs of hooded mergansers hanging around each other. The trumpeter swans have their full grown grey colored signets with them as they navigate to their winter residence. You can tell the families apart from one another. They stay close together. Many parents can bring five signets to adulthood. In the late summer the “flight school” is hilarious with five learning to fly at the same time. Lots of short take offs and landings.

The goldeneyes are brilliant with their striking golden eyes. The male has a green head with a white patch below each eye. Its body is mostly white with black tail feathers that seem to stick up. The female has a beautiful warm brown head, a grey body, and a white patch on her neck. The ducklings share that white patch. Both goldeneyes have black bills and gold eyes. They are divers, so their legs are drier back on their bodies, it is more difficult for them to leave the water. Not like their waterfowl relatives, the mallards, who we often see walking on land with great ease. Hooded mergansers are divers too, and the smallest of all the mergansers. With a big white patch on their heads, amber eyes and transparent eyes, male mergansers almost look like an abstract painting in browns, blacks and whites. Both males and females have crests on their heads. It was a great view in the bleak, cloudy landscape this December.

So, here’s my nature joke: If Kevin, our resident white squirrel, lost his tail, where would you to get him another? A "Rental" Store.

This month will be our snowiest but coldest month according to the Farmers Almanac. So, if you are up to it. Here is your winter activity for January: Make Snow Sculptures, but not just any old snow sculptures. Make your own snow-based renderings of “Minnesota Rocks,” stone sculptures located around our city. They were carved over several weeks during a stone carving symposium that came to St Paul in 2006 thanks to St Paul Public Arts. (I visited the carvers many times.) Twelve sculptures were installed in our city. Visit one, two or all twelve sculptures. I have listed the website that has an image of each stone sculpture and its location below this article. Also, North Bridge Park has several sculptures worth an echo in snow. If you take this challenge to make your own renderings in snow, you can use your hands as tools, of course or bring some hand tools. I got some great advice from local artist, teacher and Snow Sculpturer, Dusty Thune, founding member of the Internationally Ranked Snow Sculpting Team “House of Thune.” Dusty recommends using shovels, sandpaper, ice scrapers, curry combs (metal horse brushes), bringing a five-gallon bucket, a sled, wood chisels, and of course, a sharpening stone to keep your tools sharp. Are you up for this challenge? I, for one, will be preparing a large blue, Ikea bag full of gardening tools, sandpaper, ice scrapers, and maybe a few screw drivers and spoons. Send me photos of you and your sculpture for us to share with our readers at hallseafaly@gmail.com.

View the snow sculptures at houseofthune.com/home/ and the North High Bridge Park sculptures at stpaul.gov/facilities/north-high-bridge-park. A guide to the Minnesota Rocks sculptures is available at bit.ly/2ZWEZ4 and more information on them can be found here bit.ly/3hfZVFM.

New light on case sets Myon Burrell free

BY DAVID LAMB

The case of Myon Burrell, of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers on May 25, 2020 squashed renewed interest in issues of institutional racism in the criminal justice system, the questions began. Perhaps because of her high profile as a contender at the time to be the Democratic vice-presidential nominee, some zeroed in on the work of Senator Amy Klobuchar, who had recently brought to light and reforms in the criminal justice system since Burrell’s conviction. Osler described it as exactly the kind of work his clemency clinic focuses on. "These are people [as prison] for whom the at the University of St. Thomas’ law school, played a leading role in it. Selected as one of six legal experts from across the country to comprise the panel, Osler worked with his students to evaluate the case, new evidence recently brought to light and reforms in the criminal justice system since Burrell’s conviction. Osler described it as exactly the kind of work his clemency clinic focuses on. "These are people [as prison] for whom..."
Deborah Padgett
columnist
to discover a shared sense of truth on which we can build.

"...if truth is to be found, it will only happen in the context of relationships that are strengthened and nurtured.

Truth is built on more than specialized knowledge. Truth also requires relationships. The very notion of "fake news" is built and reinforced on the fracturing of relationships, a context in which truth is not only taken out of the lens of conflicting ideologies. It was this broadness of relationship that made it possible for German doctors to experiment on Jewish prisoners, scientists in the U.S. to conduct the Tuskegee syphilis study on African American men, or line 3 advocates in Minnesota to ignore the treaty rights of Native Tribes. Truth requires seeing the whole as well as the parts. Truth is found in anecdote as well as in data. It may be some time before we are able to discover a shared sense of truth on which we might rely all the way. But, if we keep our focus on how it only happens in the context of relationships that are strengthened and nurtured. This, of course, is the basis of all social responsibility. Relationships are accumulated to having our stories heard. There was and is the Easter bunny, the tooth fairy and Santa Claus, but for our children that truth was firmly planted in our love and relationships. It is possible that it is much stronger than the biological truth found in DNA. When the Easter bunny is no longer needed, the truth of our bond remains.

Tim Johnson is a retired pastor of the United Church of Christ.

We live in a time when what is true has changed so much and so fast that it will remain this way for the foreseeable future. We have lived under the influence of the tooth fairy and then Santa Claus. Like dominicus topping one after the other, they all fell to the true or false clarity of a child’s perspective. As a Christian minister, I was glad that Jesus, in his words to the doctors of his day, could stand my no, I have not. We are living in a time when truth is filtered only through the lens of conflicting ideologies. It was this broadness of relationship that made it possible for German doctors to experiment on Jewish prisoners, scientists in the U.S. to conduct the Tuskegee syphilis study on African American men, or line 3 advocates in Minnesota to ignore the treaty rights of Native Tribes. Truth requires seeing the whole as well as the parts. Truth is found in anecdote as well as in data. It may be some time before we are able to discover a shared sense of truth on which we might rely all the way. But, if we keep our focus on how it only happens in the context of relationships that are strengthened and nurtured. This, of course, is the basis of all social responsibility. Relationships are accumulated to having our stories heard. There was and is the Easter bunny, the tooth fairy and Santa Claus, but for our children that truth was firmly planted in our love and relationships. It is possible that it is much stronger than the biological truth found in DNA. When the Easter bunny is no longer needed, the truth of our bond remains.

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the world knows about one day of their life." Osler told the Community Reporter. "Our job is to tell the rest of the story—what happened before that, and what happened after... Burrell's case was a great opportunity for students to make a difference."

The panel determined that Burrell's sentence had, in Osler's words, "fulfilled any legitimate purpose it may have had." While it did not aim to draw conclusions about guilt or innocence, it uncovered what Osler called convincing evidence of jail calls indicating that people involved in the crime knew that Burrell wasn't there. On December 8, it concluded, recommending Burrell's release. Eight days later, the Minnesota Board of Pardons commuted Burrell's sentence to 20 years, his remaining two years to be served on supervised release.

Osler characterized the panel's recommendation as something of a warming shot to weak prosecutions. Asked whether he believed its findings suggested a need to review other cases prosecuted by the Hennepin County attorney's office, he said, "There are weak cases from every prosecutor's office. Some have been more problematic than others, but the problems that we talk about—the tunnel vision, the use of jailhouse informants—are across the board."

The Watermark Art Center in Bemidji, Minnesota has launched its Mashkawiziwag, or "they are strong," exhibit features the work of the Ojibwe ceramic artist, an emerging WiSf photography artist from the Leech Lake Reservation. Her powerful images reveal the unspeakable poetry of our human world. Going to places where people gather, she is a seeker of truth found in the emotions of those she photographs. Her portraits reveal the complexities of the human spirit and the unscripted poetry of our human world. Going to places where people gather, she is a seeker.