

Community REPORTER

SERVING WEST END NEIGHBORHOODS, DOWNTOWN ST. PAUL TO FORT SNELLING, SINCE 1970



EMBRACING THE
BOLD NORTH
Page 5

ELISHA MAY JACOBSEN

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Shall we return to the way things were?

BY JERRY ROTHSTEIN

This is the first installment of Voices of the West End, a new series in which neighbors discuss essential questions of policy, development, culture, community values and justice that deeply affect our lives. The format includes a kickoff essay followed by responses, with a diversity of perspectives reported. Topics can be revisited when their importance generates new ideas and participation.

Our first discussion responds to the commonly voiced idea that when the COVID-19 pandemic is “over,” we’ll be able—we’ll want—to return to *the ways things were*.

The Jewish teaching on “Tikkun Olam”—our responsibility as individuals to contribute to the necessary “repair of the world”—is vitally important today. There is growing awareness that our physical, political, economic, social, cultural and spiritual worlds have been damaged, disrupted and threatened from many different directions.

The pandemic intertwines with all dimensions; climate change approaches the point of no return; the assault on our ability to talk with each other through shared facts seems endless. Millions of people experienced startling revelations of the injustices and inequities common in the lives of those who are Black, Indigenous and people of color, and the insecurity and burden they face in every aspect of “ordinary” life.

President Biden spoke of our need now to “Repair, restore, heal and build,” and Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman emphasized rebuilding, reconciliation and recovery.

I interpret these ideas and experiences not as a call to return to the way things were, not to believe we should be “getting back to normal as soon as possible.” This so-called “normal” refers to a time when far too many of our fellows experienced challenges to their day-to-day security due to the lack of adequate and affordable housing, food resources, childcare services, health care or transportation. Without a safety net to catch us, a crisis in any area might bring one’s entire house down.

But I’m not referring only to “the poor,” whom we must always keep at the top of our mind. The pandemic showed us how vulnerable anyone can be to all the ills that poor people live with every day. It made everyone’s fragility obvious, and when people began to experience those burdens, many became capable of understanding “otherness” and what it means to be defined as “the other.”

This capability, I believe, is what allowed the outrage over George Floyd’s killing to transport so many people from a theoretical understanding of the racial injustice in our country to a visceral experience of what it must mean for a police officer to feel entitled to ignore another person’s pleas for life.

So the first question for discussion is this: “How do you see the work of repair we need to do, and what should we aim to accomplish?”

Please send your response to editor@communityreporter.org for consideration in this series. We look forward to sharing your perspective.



A drill team performs at the Rondo Days festival in which residents celebrate the onetime Black cultural center that the City of St. Paul took by eminent domain nearly sixty years ago. Bottom right: A historical car common on Rondo’s streets calls back memories at the parade.

158 Years Post-Emancipation, St. Paul Turns to Reparations

BY DAVID LAMB

“This is where I used to live,” Linda Garrett sometimes tells her grandchildren as they zip down I-94 through St. Paul. But instead of gesturing at one of the fenced-in homes along Concordia Avenue or toward any number of other streets that overlook the highway, she points down at the roadway itself. In the late 1950s and the ’60s, the City of St. Paul gradually acquired the Rondo neighborhood via eminent domain, eventually bulldozing the place where more than 80 percent of Black St. Paulites once lived to make way for the interstate. After growing up in a home on Rondo Avenue, purchased by her great-grandmother in 1907, Garrett was one of the children forced to move.

Criticisms of the decision to dismantle the city’s Black cultural, business and religious hub have only grown in strength in the decades since. Marvin Anderson, a former Rondo resident who collaborates with a onetime neighbor to run the annual Rondo Days festival, told the *Star Tribune* last year that he believed city planners selected the area for the I-94 project because they could buy the land inexpensively and without political pushback. Others have condemned the effects the decision had on displaced families. After being forced from their

homes in the neighborhood, many struggled to purchase houses elsewhere in the region because of unwritten covenants that at the time often prevented Black people from buying properties.

The destruction of Rondo, those covenants keeping many Black residents out of the neighborhoods left intact and other forms of structural racism in St. Paul are all topics of the resolution that the city’s councilmembers passed unanimously on January 13. It calls for the formation of a new commission to study reparations for the descendants of American slavery now living in St. Paul.

The resolution points out that after slavery was abolished in the U.S., former slaveholders were reimbursed for what the government considered a loss of property, while formerly enslaved people were given no compensation for their lifetimes of exploitation and abuse. It also draws attention to Minnesota’s involvement in slavery—though it was illegal in the territory, some were kept in bondage at Fort Snelling, including Dred and Harriet Scott, the plaintiffs in the landmark Supreme Court case that ruled Black people were not conferred Constitutional rights, later overturned by the by the Fourteenth Amendment.

REPARATIONS, PG 3

[A]fter slavery was abolished in the U.S., former slaveholders were reimbursed for what the government considered a loss of property, while formerly enslaved people were given no compensation for their lifetimes of exploitation and abuse.

BUILDING COMMUNITY Thermostats and norms



TIM JOHNSON
columnist

No one had touched the thermostat, but within minutes of his beginning to speak one could literally feel the chill in the room. He came to the meeting with what one might fairly assume were good intentions. He began by offering praise for the work we were doing, how needed it is and what an excellent job we had been doing. The praise was followed by a constructive critique of how we might even do better.

The lowering of the temperature had little to do with the content of his words, but everything to do with how they were spoken. The people to whom he was speaking had developed what the group considered to be appropriate norms or guidelines for their time together. Among

those norms is a recognition that some of us who are accustomed to having our voices heard (those of us who are white and male), need to work harder at listening, and those who are often silenced are encouraged to speak up. This was his first meeting and, as a white male, he had assumed the privilege of sharing his insights without first taking the time to listen and discover the needs, desires and aspirations of our diverse group. He meant well. It came off as arrogant. More importantly, it broke a major norm around which the group was creating its life together.

Norms are the spoken or unspoken practices that form the infrastructure for our common life. They exist in our homes, our places of work, our communities and our nation’s capital. Norms help us navigate our lives together so we have a mutual understanding of what we might expect from one another. In a family, a norm might be that we share our evening meal together. Breakfast is eaten when you arise. Lunch can

happen midday as you are hungry. But when it comes to dinner, or supper as we called it on the farm, we sit down together, catch up on our day and share a meal. This is a norm, and those living by it know what to expect from one another. It helps bind us together.

For the past four years, the person in the Oval Office has operated with great indifference to the norms of the presidency and the country, awakening us to the value of traditions like accepting the consequences of elections as those norms fall away. His norm-shattering has come at considerable cost to the cohesion of the nation and a shared sense of unity and purpose.

Yet as many fight righteously to uphold certain democratic norms that our outgoing president threatened, prominent thinkers have drawn attention to the dangers of other norms. Norms indeed build family, community and national cohesion, but the nature and character of that cohesion can be just or unjust, caring or indifferent, inclusive or exclusive. It can, for example, be a norm in a family that “Father knows best” and therefore always has the last word. In his

NORMS, PG 6



FEDERATION UPDATE

882 West 7th, Suite 6
fortroadfederation.org

Board Update
At the January meeting, they heard a request for support of changing a portion of the exterior material of The Alvera apartments being built at 337 West 7th Street from metal panels to EIFS. The change of building materials is to allow for hand painting a mural on four sides of the building. The Board also saw initial concepts for the building's mural.

Get to Know Your Neighborhood Organization - West 7th
Curious about what the West 7th/Fort Road Federation does? Want to get more involved with your neighborhood? Two virtual sessions of the same event will answer these questions and also recruit volunteers for committees and Board candidates. Virtual events Sat, Feb 13, 1-2pm; Wed, Feb 17, 6:30-7:30 pm. Join us!

Upcoming Meetings, via Zoom. Info: fortroadfederation.org/calendar

- Transportation & Land Use Committee - Wed, Feb 3, 6:30 pm
- Joint Riverview Task Force - Thu, Feb 4, 6 pm
- Board - Mon, Feb 8, 7 pm
- Community Engagement and Outreach Committee - Thu, Feb 18, 6:30 pm
- Get to Know Your Neighborhood Organization - West 7th: Sat, Feb 13, 1-2pm and Wed, Feb 17, 6:30-7:30 pm

Stay in touch
"Like" us on Facebook. Subscribe to its e-newsletter fortroadfederation.org.

Contact
Emily Northey, executive director, 651-298-5599; emily@fortroadfederation.org; 882 West 7th St, Suite 6, Rathskeller Building.

Editorials & Opinions

The letters, opinions, and editorials expressed on this page do not necessarily reflect the views of the Board of Directors of this newspaper or any of our advertisers or sponsors.

Your involvement is requested

As a nonprofit organization we are governed by a Board of Directors, and we have openings for community members to join. We encourage your involvement in the creative side of things. We have correspondents, reporters, reviewers and general writers involved. You can write a letter to the editor on a topic we have written about, or in response to one of our columnists, 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 for stories and topics are always welcome. Discuss the many possibilities with the editor at editor@communityreporter.org.
-- David Lamb, Editor, *Community Reporter*



WEST END HEALTHLINE

Modern Medicine's Promising COVID Vaccine

BY JONATHAN COLIN RIZO, MD, PGY2
In December 2020, The BioNTech-Pfizer BNT162b2 and Moderna mRNA 1273 vaccines were granted emergency use authorization for the prevention of COVID-19. The rapid development of these new vaccines was expedited in part because of previous gains made in the research for the vaccines used to prevent SARs and MERS, both of which are forms of coronaviruses.

How It Works
Recognizing that a "spike protein" common among all these coronaviruses' strains played a role in attaching to human hosts and facilitating infection, scientists developed vaccines to target that protein. The recipe to produce this protein is written as code in mRNA, our natural protein-building machinery. When we have been infected by the virus or given the vaccine, our mRNA builds the spike protein and releases samples of it into the body. Your body then recognizes the protein and mounts an immune response to neutralize it. The vaccines essentially allow your body's immune system to practice and learn how to neutralize the coronavirus using harmless versions of some of its components so that your body can mount a quick and efficient immune response when it is encountered in earnest. While some conspiracists have shared wild theories about phantom dangers involving the virus "reprogramming" one's DNA, the truth is that the mRNA never enters the nucleus of the cell, where human

DNA is stored, or makes any changes to it another way. mRNA is only used to produce a protein and then recycled into basic building blocks.

The Evidence
The first human clinical trials for the BioNTech-Pfizer vaccine began as early as March 2020 and have consistently shown excellent efficacy. In a study including over 21,000 vaccinated participants, it was found to be 95% effective in preventing COVID seven days after the second dose. Only 1 of the vaccinated individuals in this study developed a severe case of COVID, which was non-fatal. Similar efficacy between 90-100% was observed across groups of all ages, sex, race, ethnicity, BMI, and presence of co-existing conditions.

Adverse effects have often been misinterpreted in popular media. Side effects are oftentimes a clear sign that the body is mounting an appropriate immune response against the foreign vaccine. Among participants younger than 55 years of age: 16% had a fever, 4% had severe fatigue, 3% had a headache, and 2% had chills after the second dose. These side effects are even less common in older adults and can often be treated by over-the-counter analgesics. People who have experienced allergic reactions with other vaccines or injectable therapies are at higher risk of an allergic reaction and are routinely monitored for 30 minutes after receiving the vaccine. Serious allergic reactions known as anaphylaxis are rare and reported to be occurring at a rate of 11

per 1 million doses. Some highly "adverse events" such as Bell's Palsy, which was noted in the phase 3 trial at a rate of 4 of 23 thousand participants, were highly misinterpreted in highly publicized media coverage, creating unnecessary fear when, as was the case with Bell's Palsy, the rate it occurred in the study matched that of the general population.

My Experience
After a long year taking care of clinic and hospital patients at Allina Health United Hospital, I was delighted and relieved to receive my second dose of the vaccine. The only side effects I experienced were a sore arm and multiple likes and comments on my Facebook and Instagram vaccine selfie. I hope that enough people in this country become vaccinated to bring the pandemic to an end. Vaccines have completely eradicated Polio, and nearly eliminated others, like Measles, Mumps, Tetanus. In 2019 vaccine hesitancy was cited by the WHO as a top 10 global health threat. Misperceptions of corners being cut and misinformation about the severity of the disease, vaccine safety, and utility are threatening this world's public health recovery. I encourage everyone to read up on the facts and advocate for our community health. More information is available at cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19

Dr. Colin Rizo works at Allina Health United Family Physicians. You can schedule an appointment with him at 651-241-5200.

COUNCIL PERSPECTIVES

Help for those struggling



SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL MEMBER CHRIST TOLBERT
WARD 3
columnist

The ongoing pandemic and the economic recession that it has caused has put a huge burden and strain on many people, families and businesses in our community. Through no fault of their own many people have lost hours, lost business, or lost their jobs, because of Covid-19. This is in addition to the serious health issues and death

that Covid-19 has caused. The City of St. Paul in close partnership with Ramsey County and the State of Minnesota has tried to step-in to help people who need help during this unprecedented time. The Federal Government has also responded with help through CARES Act funding, but we still need more help from the federal government. With how many people in our community are struggling right now, I think sharing resources that can help you, your family, your friends or your business is the best use of this column. Here is a list of current local resources that you can get help from if you need it. One of the silver linings of the pandemic is how closely the local

governments are working together, so if you're not sure where to reach out, please just try one, and if that program can't help you, they can connect you with the program that can. Also, please never hesitate to contact my office, as we can help connect you with the right resources too. Chris. Tolbert@ci.stpaul.mn.us or 651-266-8630.

St. Paul workforce, housing and family support information. Also lists programs from outside agencies and non-profits: <https://bit.ly/2KAbP1a> 651-266-8989

Emergency Assistance: Get help with rent, mortgage, utilities or car repairs at <https://bit.ly/3bZMo4p>; Emergency Assistance Hotline: 651-266-4884

Connect with Ramsey County Workforce Services for employment assistance, including dislocated workers services with funds for training and support: <https://bit.ly/3sIEbYm>; 651-266-9890

MN Dept. of Economic Development Unemployment Insurance program: <https://www.uimn.org/> 651-296-3644

Find food and meals: <https://bit.ly/393T0gg> 651-266-8500

St. Paul business resource page: <https://bit.ly/397UtCt> 651-266-6600

Ramsey County Covid-19 Page: <https://bit.ly/39SliJY>

Letter to the Editor Fighting for Better Transit

BY JAMES SCHOETTLER AND KENT PETERSEN
For any transit project to succeed, community members—the very people who hope to someday use the service—need to be in support of it through a process in which their voices have been heard. And if the County will not provide its residents a venue to address our concerns, we must bring our worries to them directly.

Our concerns are abundant and fundamental to the plan itself, whose construction may devastate local merchants the way the Green Line extension did to many on University Avenue without providing nearly as useful a transit option as already exists on West 7th. After Riverview construction is finished, public transit on West 7th will consist of a "streetcar" that is easily stuck in traffic and can only make 8 or 9 stops on Fort Road.

Still want a ride on the "streetcar"? Don't forget your best walking shoes: with fewer stops than the 54 bus line currently servicing West 7th, the average walk will be up to a half mile—at both ends of your trip.

The streetcar will also do major damage to Historic Fort Snelling, one of our state's most important cultural sites, which it will blast through for an added cost of a quarter billion dollars over that of a better

crossing. It will not serve the Ford site, the largest new development in our section of the city, whose closest stop will be nearly a mile away. The project will disrupt Downtown St. Paul streets, first from construction and then the ongoing operation of two light-rail shaped "streetcars" down two parallel streets. All of this disruption will result in the addition of just a single stop at the Xcel.

Why can't we rely on the assurances from our local leaders, vague as they may be, that the "modern streetcar" will improve mass transit in the neighborhood? Unfortunately, Ramsey County's record on this project speaks for itself. Leaders promised a "Modern Streetcar," but what they delivered in their proposal is no such thing and cannot be since it must accommodate light-rail (LRT) stations at each end. (Instead of a "modern" streetcar, which is narrower and lower to the ground to allow for quick entry and exit, what the County proposes will be an LRT vehicle, only shorter in length.) County leaders also promised a 2018 study of transit service to the Ford Site, which never happened. In order to force the project ahead, they stipulated that residents would have the opportunity to reconsider acceptance of the LPA in 2020, which hasn't occurred and isn't scheduled. After two decades of study, they have left us with an LPA that shows they understand neither the transit needs of the "Riverview Corridor" nor what an effective transit solution for our community would look like.

Given that West 7th street isn't wide enough for a true LRT line, effective transit around the neighborhood and region will require both frequent bus service on West 7th Street and a regional LRT link, one that transports people not in the middle of traffic on a thoroughfare but safely through the Corridor and across St. Paul.

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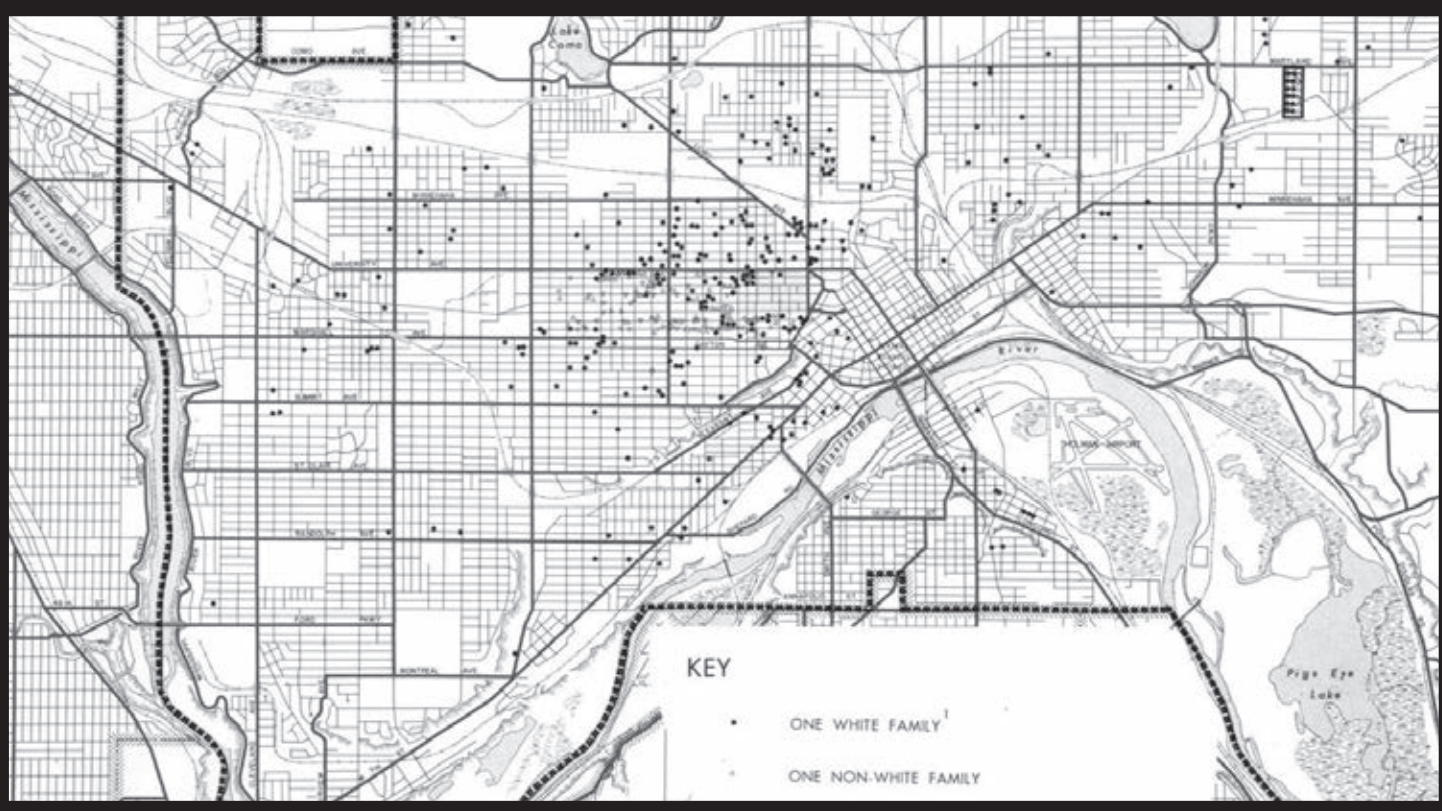
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A map from St. Paul's Housing and Redevelopment Authority shows the destinations for 1,064 families and 253 other individuals relocated from the city's development areas from 1954 through 1957. The dense concentration of triangles, each signifying a non-white family, within a several-block radius indicates the difficulty Black people faced finding housing in most of the city. During the three-year relocation program featured here, 77 families left the city entirely.

REPARATIONS, PG 1

CITY OF 'SUBTLE RACISM'
Garrett, now 70, remembers a form of what she calls "subtle racism" prevalent throughout institutions of the city in previous decades. Her father, James Stafford Griffin, who worked for the St. Paul police department for 42 years, experienced it repeatedly: first after passing his civil service test to get his first policing job, only to be told he had failed the physical exam on account of his flat feet; later as he finally succeeded at the dubious physical evaluation to become one of four Black officers on the force; and toward the end of his career, when he sought a promotion to the role of deputy chief of police. Despite attaining the top exam score among candidates for the second-in-command position, which had previously been awarded based on the test, Garrett's father didn't get the nod, she said. Instead, he discovered that the chief had already made up his mind to promote another candidate, going so far as to print new stationery. Only when her father hired a lawyer and threatened a discrimination lawsuit was he allowed to share the job with the colleague whose score he bested.

"That is one kind of discrimination that's happened a lot," Garrett told the *Community Reporter*, "in hiring, with the trade unions, which controlled whether you could become a carpenter or a plumber, and with housing."

Growing up in Rondo, where businesses—often themselves Black-owned—catered to Black customers, Garrett described feeling insulated from some of the racism that she came to better understand in adulthood. But she also remembers taking swimming lessons at a public pool in Highland Park as a child in the '60s and being confused by other kids telling her and her siblings to "get out of our pool." And how, on a family road trip to California, her father brought with him a letter from his supervisor, signed on the man's letterhead, assuring that he was a police officer of good moral character. One evening in Nevada, as they looked for a place to stay, motel after motel with vacancy signs hanging outside turned the family away. Garrett watched from the car's backseat as her father drove to a small-town police station and begged him to call a hotel to tell them he had a family at the station that he wanted a room for.

"Until white America can start understanding the humiliation, the hurt, the roadblocks that were placed that explain many of the issues that we have today," Garrett said, "we won't get anywhere."

'POWER IN APOLOGY': TAKING ON INEQUITY
St. Paul's city councilmembers hope the reparations commission will provide an important step to understanding those experiences and changing the conditions that facilitated them. "Part of this is about accountability," said Councilmember Rebecca Noecker, who represents Ward



A float for the St. Paul Public Schools at the Rondo Days parade.

"Until white America can start understanding the humiliation, the hurt, the roadblocks that were placed that explain many of the issues that we have today, we won't get anywhere."

2. "Local governments like ours were not innocent in perpetuating Jim Crow and systems of exclusion. We need to apologize, and there is a power in apology." Yet Noecker said the resolution is far from empty words. "With the commission, we are looking backward to take responsibility but also looking at the present to see how our racial divisions are hampering us and looking to the future to determine what we can do to address these inequities."

The resolution puts St. Paul at the forefront of a national movement. Last year, Asheville, North Carolina and Evanston, Illinois became the first American cities to approve programs seeking to make reparations for slavery.

The two local activists who brought the initiative to the City Council, Georgia Fort and Trahern Crews, were not fazed by the fact that no U.S. municipality of St. Paul's size had attempted such a program. For months, they coordinated meetings with individual councilmembers to rally their support.

The idea of enacting reparations on the local level came to Crews in 2018 after he had spent three years studying the racial wealth gap. He realized that the hurdles that stopped other attempts at reparations could be overcome in the right contexts and began developing the concept for the new resolution, which is officially called the St. Paul Recovery Act. "When we first started the process," Crews wrote in an email, "I didn't know it was going to be unanimous."

Even though a city budget may not allow for the largest-scale solutions, Noecker felt that she and her peers needed to pursue reparations because, unlike in Congress where scant legislation has passed in recent years, cities and counties are closer to the problems Americans face and more able to take action. "In city government," she said, "we're on the ground level. So we can see these big systemic challenges that are hurting people in a way that others might not. We can see how the fraying of the social safety net has affected our residents during the pandemic, how racial divisions factor in."

In the public comments on the resolution, some residents disapproved. "Apparently the council is unaware that this great nation fought a civil war to end the immoral subjugation of slave[ry]," wrote Betty Newburgh, who lives in St. Paul. "Our First Minnesota is still regarded with awe," she noted later in the letter, "because of our suicidal charge at Confederate troops at Gettysburg that allowed precious minutes for the Union to regroup." Several other residents registered support for the reparations commission.

Rev. Curtiss DeYoung, CEO of the Minnesota Council of Churches and coauthor of *Radical Reconciliation: Beyond Political Pietism and Christian Quietism*, is one of several religious leaders to endorse the initiative. He pointed out that the Twin Cities have sharp racial disparities— "some of the most extreme in the U.S.," he told this newspaper—a reality that led his organization to launch the Truth and Reparations project last October, a 10-year-long racial justice initiative. "I hope we can work in partnership with the City," DeYoung said, adding that the two initiatives can "learn from each other."

Rev. Grant Abbott, the former executive director of the organization now called Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul, who worked for years to bring together diverse religious groups to fight for progressive causes, described the resolution as vital. "There's a logic behind why we need to take action now," he said. "We know that the inequity in income and generational wealth is growing, largely because of the structure of the economy, with those who are able to invest getting richer and richer." For Abbott, understanding the need for reparations begins with accepting how, aware of it or not, regardless of whether their particular ancestors enslaved people, white people have in his words "been riding on the wave of inequity for more than 150 years....As the great Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said, 'We're not all guilty, but we're all responsible.'"



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Arts & Culture

Welcome to the Keg-O-Verse

BY DAVID LAMB

Throughout the 1980s and '90s, Phil Gagne rose through the ranks of the breweries occupying the Schmidt site, working dozens of jobs. By the time brewing halted in 2002, he was head brewmaster, and he figured there wasn't a machine in the brew-house he hadn't stuck his hand in or a part he hadn't MacGyvered.

In 2012, the interior of the brewery was gutted to make way for the Schmidt Artist Lofts. Gagne visited the site occasionally, at times troubled to find mechanical treasures strewn across the floors that had once been the center of his work—CO2 tanks, bottle fillers, kegs. Fearing the history would be lost, Gagne collected what he could, unsure how he would put the parts to use.

Earlier this year, with the help of Craig Cohen and several other investors, he opened Phil's Well House and Brewery Park (882 W. 7th St.), offering public access to the pristine aquifer water that had supplied the brewery since 1952. As he visited with customers filling their water jugs, Gagne got the idea to offer them a form of entertainment. "I saw people having lunch," he said, gesturing to the picnic table he had set up in the pocket park, "and I wanted to give them something to look at." Then, after he started crafting a rudimentary base, two neighbors from the Artist Lofts encouraged him to keep at it. "I never would have finished it without the help of MaryBeth Garrigan and Peter Lommen," Gagne said. Garrigan, an artist who founded the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, Minnesota, and Lommen, a retired art professor, shared their advice about working with a variety of materials.

The result—called the Keg-O-Verse—brings together Gagne's world and ours, representing the cosmos entirely through found objects from the Schmidt site. An old parking sign, jutting out of a keg at the base of the structure, provides a scaffolding on which several of the objects hang—a



(above) Gagne shows off the history of the brewery at Phil's Well House and Brewery Park. (right) Keg-O-Verse installation created entirely through found objects from the Schmidt Brewery site.

onetime corner conveyor that represents earth is linked by the celestial chains of a German brew kettle to another saucer-like object that calls to mind a satellite. Above the scene hangs a silver bottle-filler with ray-like notches emanating from its center, the sun in Gagne's conception. A patterned silver vent cover once in the Rathskeller building represents the International Space Station. During the holiday season, the installation twinkled with ornaments.

"These are bottle-house pieces," Gagne pointed out, "front-office pieces, and brewhouse pieces." He backed away from the arrangement, taking it in as he quietly let memories carry him. "You can look at it and let your imagination run wild."



Pixar's *Soul* is strange, inventive and ultimately touching



REVIEW BY ZACH MURPHY

Pixar's latest film *Soul* is a strange, inventive and ultimately touching exploration of life and death, music and passion, success and happiness and what it takes to truly follow your dreams.

Joe Gardner (voiced by Jamie Foxx) is a wildly talented jazz musician who teaches band part-time at the local middle school. After suffering an untimely accident (don't worry, this isn't a spoiler), his soul winds up in a surreal and effervescent realm called "The Great Before." There, he meets a fellow soul named 22 (voiced by Tina Fey), and the two of them attempt to discover their own purposes — or "sparks."

Minnesota's own Pete Docter directs this glowing gem in an imaginative and thoughtful key. You could definitely view *Soul* as a spiritual companion to 2018's Oscar-winning sensation *Inside Out*. The film pulsates with striking visuals — from the star-splashed skies, to the trippy and

abstract character designs, to the impressively photorealistic views of bustling city life. New York City, to be exact.

The film's funny and acerbic script is full of whip-smart lines and clever jokes about personality tests, philosophers and the New York Knicks. And while there are plenty of comical shenanigans to keep young children entertained (Joe at one point winds up in the body of a cat), this is definitely Pixar's most contemplative and mature film to date. It's painted with themes of regret, disappointment, the pains of adulthood and deep-seated fears of wasting away. "Can't crush a soul here," 22 says. "That's what life on Earth is for."

But *Soul* definitely isn't a downer. Nor is it cynical. In fact, it's a wonderfully rewarding experience. A life-affirming celebration of passion and drive. An optimistic tribute to the meaningful notes that can light you up and sweep you away. What is your spark?



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The **BOLD** North

In the darkest and coldest months of the year, West Enders and other St. Paulites find a multitude of ways to enjoy the nature our neighborhood has to offer. Staff photographer Elisha May Jacobsen captured the winter hubbub.

Kristen Richards, a West End resident and yoga instructor leads class in Palace Park, www.facebook.com/kristinrichardsyoga



A pickup hockey game at the Palace Park brings out healthy competition.



Megan Tews and Jaylen Lyless of Eden Prairie make their way through the snowy woods of Crosby Farm. The couple finds new parks to visit each weekend to get out and walk, outings they are using to count down to their wedding in October.

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Community Nourishment



HALLE O'FALVEY
columnist
halleofalvey@gmail.com

COVID fatigue and politics—as well as Basal cell carcinoma—have been kicking my butt this winter. Even still, I have a wee bit of inspiration left within me. I look forward to writing you each month. It keeps me going. As well as a walk.

Our winter seasons are changing, the 'January Thaw' was early this year. We had 39 degrees and rain on January 13th. Even so, this month, we've had spectacular black ice for rink and lake skating. I was up in Ely, MN for the month of November, my son Myles and I hiked a lot with very little snow cover. We went to the South Kawashiwi River to skate. He brought along his long arm axe, I wasn't sure why. Then I saw the axe go down on the ice every few steps. We were good to go.

As for our metro snowfall, *The Farmers' Almanac* prediction for our region could not compete with the concrete and steel urban

BIRDS IN PARTICULAR The Mixed Precipitation We Call Winter



landscape (and its "heat island" effects) in the Twin Cities. Most of the snowfall occurred North or South of us. Even the wholesome woolly bear caterpillar, said to have been a salient predictor since its controversial hypnosis in the winter of 1948, struggled to make sense of this winter. The black and brown segmented creature could not decide between indicating a mild or a harsh winter this season. Eventually, mild was the word. Unpredictability incurred.

And then there was...snowga! On January 16, at Palace Playground, an instructor named Kristin led public outdoor yoga in snow pants, mittens, hats and boots. It was a bit windy as we came into child's pose that early afternoon. I will take another class, because that is who we are here in the "Bold North." (You can view photos of the outdoor yoga session and find out more about "Yoga with Kristin" on page 5.) We made snow angels during shavasana. We all need to continue to play.

This month's activity is blowing bubbles. Water and soap transporting itself through air with the warm breath of humans. Get out there blowing when it is snowing. If it's below zero, the bubbles may freeze.

Make your own bubble solution with one cup of joy or dawn dish soap (they are the best) one gallon of warm water, two tablespoons of glycerin and two tablespoons of baking powder (NOT baking soda) gently stirring ingredients. This is the preferred bubble recipe of the Barron of Bubble, Larry Ripp: <http://strib.mn/3sMGPWj>



ERIN BRANDEL DYKHUIZEN
columnist

I haven't been to my (now virtual) book club in three months. I haven't even tried to read the books. For the past ten years, I have been lucky enough to be in a great book club. It's been a steady source of support, connection and sometimes the only social interaction I have outside of family members. And lately, I've been blowing it off -- not because my book club friends aren't lovely people, but because I am tired of all the Zoom meetings, and lately I just don't feel like doing a whole lot.

Maybe you've been letting a few things slide, too. Maybe your craft projects have been gathering dust, your friends' texts have gone unanswered or you've found yourself zoning out in front of the TV instead of doing things you really care about. All of these things can be a warning sign that your mental health needs some attention.

It's no surprise that many of us are not in such great spirits. After all, we are in the thick of winter -- the holiday season is over, the thrill

BEING WELL Escaping the Spiral of the Winter Blues

So, what's the answer? Acknowledge the resistance, but don't believe it.

of fresh snowfall is gone and the pandemic rages on. Spring feels immeasurably far off, despite the days steadily getting longer.

When our mood gets low, it's natural for us to feel like doing less. When we do less, our mood often gets worse, which in turn makes us want to do even less.

It's easy to get stuck in that downward spiral of poor mood and inactivity. It's especially easy when a lot of the things that used to get us out of that spiral are not available. We used to blow off steam with friends over dinner or seeing a play. Now, it's Zoom calls, take out and Netflix. These are all fine, but we're all a bit sick of these modifications, and sometimes it just feels like too much trouble.

As human beings, we are remarkably bad at anticipating how we will feel when we do something. Specifically, we underestimate the extent to which things that are good for us also make us feel good. For instance, let's say you planned to get up early to start the day with a walk. When the time came to get going, you probably felt a little bit of resistance, thinking that it would feel nice to stay in bed just a bit longer.

The problem is that, once we've done it, we rarely ever regret taking that walk or waking up early for the online yoga class. Yet time and again, that same inertia stops us from doing what we know will be good for us.

So, what's the answer? Acknowledge the resistance, but don't believe it. Instead, do the thing that has made you feel better before even if you don't feel like doing it. In fact, make a plan to actively incorporate the things that have been helpful to you in the past into your life. If you know that you've felt good in the past when doing a jigsaw puzzle, now is the time to get one out. What if you don't want to? Well, that's even more reason to do it. You will be surprised at how good it makes you feel. As for me, I have a book to go read.

Erin Brandel Dykhuizen, MA, MSW, LICSW is a psychotherapist living and working in the West Seventh neighborhood. You can learn more about her work at www.erinbdlicsw.com.



BEATRICE COSGROVE
reviewer

very hard but being courageous and rising up. There are several stories, each of which include

BEA'S BOOKS *Rise Up: Ordinary Kids with Extraordinary Stories*

★★★★ (4 out of 5 stars)
Rise Up: Ordinary Kids with Extraordinary Stories by Amanda Li is about kids doing amazing things or going through something

extra information at the end about activities or how to handle things that like the ones in the story. It is a great book to page through, looking for a story that appeals to you. It is also an inspiring read—if you are inspired by one of the people in the book, you can learn more about what they do and how they do it.

One story is about a person named

Mohamad Al Jounde, who moved from Syria to a refugee camp in Lebanon and learned how to use a camera from a photo journalist. Mohamad taught the other children in the camp how to use the camera. At the end, he tells you how to take a good picture and how to be a good leader.

I recommend this book to ages 8+.

NORMS, PG 1

newest book, *Long Time Coming: Reckoning with Race in America*, author Michael Eric Dyson writes, "The rules of the white world are communicated through cultural habits and social norms that reinforce Black fear and carry a message that cannot be missed: white spaces are sacred and not to be invaded or tarnished." It is a norm that gives whites authorization to let Black people, Indigenous people and those of color know they are unwelcome in spaces to which whites lay claim. For years these norms were spoken, even written into covenants that preserved segregation. Now those same norms are mostly unspoken but reinforced in ways that are both subtle and at times violent.

TRANSIT, PG 2

If we demand changes as a united community and show our leaders what kind of transit we need, we can improve our bus service on West 7th and build new streetscape amenities to promote its use. Then, we can build a regional LRT link on another route where the mass transit vehicles will have an exclusive right-of-way. We can completely eliminate all impacts on Historic Fort Snelling, serve the Ford Site and save a quarter billion dollars in the process. We can even eliminate the disruption to downtown St. Paul with a short tunnel under the neighborhood.

It is invariably better when norms are named and spoken, for if they are worthwhile, they can be defended and upheld. A community governing board might have an unspoken norm that gives permission to one or two individuals to dominate all decision making. But if that same board is asked to identify the norms by which it wishes to actually live, it is unlikely it would include a norm that gives privilege to one or two voices, while silencing others.

Because norms are intended to shape and form our common life, it is always best if they are challenged by those who oppose them, rather than simply ignored or discarded as if they have no relevance.

And, using the CP-Spur, we can build a bike and pedestrian trail from Minneapolis to Downtown St Paul.

But this won't happen without you. If you want a transit solution that preserves West 7th and moves residents efficiently throughout the neighborhood and the region, call your St. Paul City Councilmember as well as the Ramsey County Commissioner who represents you, and demand a reconsideration of the LPA. Together, we can make it happen.

James Schoettler is a member of Citizen Advocates for Regional Transit (C-A-R-T.org) and Kent Pettersen is a member of the West Seventh Joint Riverview Transit Task Force.

Interrogated with openness, a norm about male dominance can give way to a norm of mutuality. A norm that privileges whites can give way to a norm that seeks to undo the damage done by that privilege. Norms are the thermostats that help regulate the environment in which we live. To be sure, from time to time they need adjusting. But on this there can be no question: norms are essential for healthy families, strong communities and a thriving nation.

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

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By Cate Sering, Library Manager

Library Express

With the new year, comes exciting changes to our Library Express services. We have extended our hours on Thursdays to offer additional evening hours to make it more convenient to browse and pick-up holds.

The West 7th Library is now open:
• Mondays 1-7:30pm
• Thursdays 10am-5:30pm
We have also extended our express internet services to 30-minute sessions. Stop by to check email, browse the web and print. No appointment necessary.

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If you have questions about a subject, call 651-266-7000 to speak with a Librarian.
• Mondays 10am-7:30pm
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News and Information

It is essential to a democracy that its citizens have access to credible news sources and information. With your Saint Paul Public Library card, you have online access to both local and national newspapers, including the Star Tribune, Pioneer Press, New York Times, Washington Post, and more. For information on how to access these news sources from home, visit sppl.org/resources-types/newspapers/

The Library will be closed Monday, February 15 for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

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Keystone has launched a new FREE grocery delivery program to increase food access for low-income seniors and adults with disabilities. To qualify, participants must be over the age of 60 or adults with disabilities in low-income households of three or fewer individuals within our program services area. For more specifics about qualifications and information on how to sign up for deliveries, please visit keystoneservices.org/seniors/grocery-delivery/ or call 651-645-0349.

Community Kids

Looking for opportunities for your child to grow socially, emotionally, and educationally during this unprecedented school year? Keystone's accredited program that serves youth, grades K-10 Community Kids program is accepting new students! You can register for 2-5 days per week, and exact times depend on their grade level. Please email info@keystoneservices.org.

Fare For All

On February 12, 10am-12pm, West 7th Community Center is back with their drive-through model, offering low-cost, delicious packages of fresh food! Featured packages will be hot food, produce packs, and meat packs. Packages costs \$10 to \$30. Visit www.fareforall.thefoodgroupmn.org

AARP Tax Prep

Beginning Feb 1, Keystone will offer tax prep assistance through AARP's Tax Aide Program at our Merriam Park Community Center location. This year, taxes will NOT be completed in-person. Instead, AARP will make an appointment for you to bring in your documents, where they will be scanned securely and the tax preparer will complete your taxes over the phone with you. Once the volunteer has completed your tax return remotely, you will schedule an appointment to pick up and sign your materials. To learn more and make an appointment, visit www.keystoneservices.org/seniors/tax-preparation-assistance.



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