A Greener St. Paul

When you think of city government, what comes to mind? For most of us, it’s a lot of day-to-day problem-solving—sweeping the streets, cleaning up trash, filling potholes, fixing park benches. Increasingly, though, cities are starting to tackle much bigger problems, the solutions to which will determine how we, our children and their children experience life in St. Paul. Local government is more nimble and closer than the federal or state government to the problems Americans face on a daily basis, and cities are increasingly the primary engines of social, economic and environmental innovation in response to daunting challenges.

One of those challenges is how to grow in an environmentally sustainable way. The Metropolitan Council estimates that St. Paul will add 54,000 new residents and 19,000 new jobs by 2040. The prospect of that growth is exciting. However, it will take thoughtful planning and policymaking to ensure that we can welcome new people and jobs while minimizing the impact on the environment and reducing the stress of immigration across the city, we’re doing a lot of that work now.

New residents and workers will need homes and offices—but as we construct space for them, we must do so knowing that buildings are the city’s biggest source of carbon emissions. To ensure that new construction is as efficient as possible, we’ve passed an energy benchmarking ordinance requiring building owners to monitor and report on their water and energy use. We also created the City’s Rental Assisted Housing Program that provides resources for property owners and residents to make their buildings more efficient and reduce pollution and utility costs.

Cities also have a profound impact on our environment, so we need to make it easier for all of us to get around without them. Traffic and parking congestion in some of our neighborhood corridors is already congested, and it will only get worse if we welcome thousands of new residents without multi-modal transit options. To expand travel options, we’re creating new bike lanes and trails, like the recently completed Robert Firmin Trail from Harriet Island to South St. Paul, the Capital City Bikeway in downtown, and The Grand Round, which will provide 30 miles of off-road bike paths around the city. We’re also collaborating on several substantial transit projects, including the Gold Line along I-94E, the Rush Line connecting White Bear Lake to downtown St. Paul, the Riverview Corridor from downtown St. Paul to the MSP airport and the Mall of America; and three new bus rapid transit lines which will serve the Setby/Marshall, Rice/Robert and Como/Maryland corridors.

Demand will still be necessary at times, so we’re reducing pollution by facilitating car-sharing and investing in hybrid technology. The City’s new Eevie Carshare fleet will be powered by renewable energy and will expand into neighborhoods that historically lacked access to car-sharing and robust transit service. In addition to being the first in the country with a fleet of old, high-polluting diesel engines over the last three years, we’ve achieved a decrease in.

“...we’re reducing pollution by facilitating car-sharing and investing in hybrid technology.”

COUNCIL PERSPECTIVES

Jonathan Hatch (left) stands outside the office at 506 W. 7th St. with creative director Tasha Klettenburg (center), Rosie the office pug, and Julianne Ragland, the company’s lead owner.

By David Lamb

Jonathan Hatch grew up in the northern Minnesota city of Bemidji, a picturesque corridor from downtown St. Paul to the Chippewa National Forest and between the tribal reservations for members of Red Lake, White Earth and Leech Lake. Beneath the area’s pristine backdrop, as Hatch found, lurked a vein of bigotry. “People didn’t realize my native ancestry,” he told the Community Reporter, describing his life as a teenager, and they would make racist jokes in his presence that at times angered and other times repulsed him.

In 2007, having saved up the funds In 2007, having saved up the funds to take a seat in business class rather than remain in a window seat, Hatch looked to build his life in a place that he hoped to find more inclusive. He moved to the West End, and after two years of honing his work development skills launching content-driven websites and earning income from their ads, he eventually decided to start a business in the neighborhood as well.

It felt like I had won the lottery. The flight attendant had informed me that my international flight was overbooked and wished to know if I would be willing to take a seat in business class rather than remain in the main cabin. This was a difficult decision. In short order, I was offered an array of alcoholic beverages as I relaxed with much-improved leg room and a wider, more comfortable seat. My warm meal was served on a ceramic plate with silverware and a cloth napkin. From my place of comfort, I could look back into the main cabin and see the majority of passengers crammed into stuff seats while eating their meals out of a box. I could also peer ahead, around the edge of the curtain separating us from first class, and see some of the added perks provided to those receiving the highest level of comfort and service.

It’s not only what the added perks provided to those receiving the highest level of comfort and service. It’s not only what the added perks provided to those receiving the highest level of comfort and service. It’s not only what the added perks provided to those receiving the highest level of comfort and service. It’s not only what the added perks provided to those receiving the highest level of comfort and service. It’s not only what the added perks provided to those receiving the highest level of comfort and service.

“...the hope of winning the lottery raises billions of dollars a year for the states who run it, the allure of upward mobility makes the existing economy system palpable for many.”

GeoRge Floyd and America’s Racial Caste System

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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, and general writers involved. You can write a letter to the editor on a topic we have written about in response to our columns, or a longer “Neighbors Speak Out” piece.

**LWOC**

LWOC has received multiple donations, and a grant from the Minnesota Foundation. We thank all of our advertisers and sponsors.

(Jenier Carter, MD)

LWOC also has an Instagram (@LWOCwomenofcolor) for additional questions. If you have any questions, please email editor@communityreporter.org.

(Jenier Carter, MD)
Resources for Residents and Businesses in case of Home Eviction

As people prepare for possible unrest as the trial of former Minneapolis Police officer Derek Chauvin moves ahead, the City of St. Paul has collected resources for residents that list a series of “Business Owner Safety Sessions,” helping people make plans to keep businesses and workers safe. As businesses owners with the Twin Cities Community Reinvestment Coalition, which offers building materials and consulting services to impacted businesses and additional information regarding community healing and racial accountability. Browse available resources at bit.ly/3C9uHC5.

Riverview Corridor Seeks Community Artists

The mass transit project is seeking up to three artists with experience using artistic and creative means to build relationships and engage communities and are interested in making a difference. The landscape architecture firm 4RM+ULA will hire the selected artists will work alongside lead project artists, planners, engineers, architects and designers. Together, the team will engage the community in building around the locally preferred alternative for a modern streetcar. The artists will also help build relationships with the neighborhoods, local businesses and organizations along the 13-mile stretch of Riverview Corridor.

The ideal candidates will have demonstrated backgrounds with community-engaged art, live and work along the Riverview Corridor, and have experience working within diverse communities. We strongly encourage applications from people who identify as members of marginalized and underserved communities. This is a part-time independent contractor position, funded through 2023. The artists will be responsible for creating a series of materials and consulting services to impacted communities. This is a part-time independent contractor position, funded through 2023. The artists will be responsible for creating a series of materials and consulting services to impacted communities.

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Community News & Events

Community Events

Extraordinary Women Exhibit at the Minnesota History Center


Series Focusing on Name Change and Restoration in Public Places

Explore the public process of renaming and why these efforts matter in a new series, presented by the Minnesota Historical Society, of Share Spaces & Public Places virtual programs that focus on topics of legacy through naming at public spaces. On March 18, moderator for the MPR news host Tom Weber and community members launched a conversation about the process of rechristening the Dakota name Ribiz-Maka Ska in Minneapolis, the first in a 4-part series of Share Spaces & Public Places conversations using case studies to provide a common language on renaming and name reclamation. Future case studies will include Justice Page Middle School, University of Minnesota’s Coffman Union and Henry Sibley High School. These free sessions are designed to help facilitate context for the public on topics of public memorialization. They take place as the Capital Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB) continues to seek public input on the process for adding, altering, or removing memorials, monuments, and artwork displayed on the Minnesota State Capitol grounds. Learn more at the CAAPB at mnhs.org/caapb/

2021 Celebration of JFS’s Service Honorees

9th Annual Jewish Family Service of St. Paul (JFS) Celebration of Service event can be streamed live on the JFS Facebook page May 12, 7-7:30pm. René and Barry Glaser are scheduled to receive the Community Service Award for their outstanding, ongoing commitment to JFS and the community. Their accomplishments serve as inspiration for the Celebration of Service fundraising goals. All proceeds raised will benefit essential JFS programs with a focus on services for seniors. Visit jfs.org/celebration to access the live link to the event, donate or leave a virtual greeting for the honorees.

ST. PAUL, PG 1

in pollution equal to taking over 20,000 vehicles off the road.

When people are less car-dependent, new developments need to be designed with as much space for parking. City staff are currently studying whether we can reduce or eliminate minimum parking requirements, which will allow us to land more efficiently and reduce climate unfriendly surface parking lots.

These are a few of the ways in which the City is preparing for a resumption of business that is both denser and greener - and there’s much more we can do. I want to be a part of those who come together on this subject, and I hope you’ll continue to share your thoughts on how we can grow into a greener St. Paul.

ST. PAUL, Automotive

website, would not allow me to do this. Suddenly, we were getting way more than we could handle,” Hatch said, “and we were seeing money being invested in websites that we never expected.”

Now, he is looking to hire a new project manager to take some of the load off his existing employees. As he continues to grow the business, Hatch wants to do so in a way that continues to fulfill the mission he set out on in 2009.

The success is rewarding, he said, “but I have mixed feelings about the fact we’re making money, because we’re working with organizations that serve the undererved, the economically stressed, the community that come to us usually tell us that people who work for them are financially unstable with their services, and if we take their project on, I want to be sure that everything we do is helping to make that happen.”

Bend it for the business. Bend it for the brand. Bend it for the situation. And, of course, bend it for thehorizon. An amazing day for a Minneapolis artist. And, of course, bend it for the horizon.

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Virtually Roundtable on Trans Rights

The Hennepin Theatre Trust recently hosted the newest installment of its virtual roundtable series, featuring local photographer Ryan Cot discussing transgender equity in the military, which is available on its website at bit.ly/3bjBNWy. Ryan is joined by his portrait subjects: Britt London, Reverend President for Twin Cities T-Rexx and US Army career counselor; and Ashley Scott, Vice President for Twin Cities Spectrum, public speaker and US army veteran.

Openings to Serve on St. Paul Commissions

The City of St. Paul actively seeks applicants with diverse backgrounds and experiences to reflect the views and effectively represent the diverse communities of the city. Appointments are generally made when no member has reached their term limits or when members leave the committee, board or commission for other reasons, such as resignation. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and are considered as openings become available (as current members resign or reach the end of their terms). Application online, visit www.stpaul.gov/departments/mayors-office/commissions-committees-and-commissions.

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The Intersectional Feminist of Early 20th Century St. Paul

BY DAVID LAMB

In many of the histories of the period that mention her name, Nellie Francis, the subject of a new exhaustive biography by William D. Greer (Degrees of Freedom, Children of Lincoln), is identified only as the wife of William T. Francis, the U.S. minister to the Republic of Liberia and the first Black diplomat in Minnesota. But as Nellie Francis—Fighting for Racial Justice and Women’s Equality—confirms, such assessments ignore the stunning contributions of a local trail-blazer of civil rights, who, perhaps because she sometimes obscured her own feelings in service to the causes she pursued, has gone astonishingly overlooked.

Francis spent her early years living “just beyond the shadow of the capital” of Tennessee, then overseen by a governor that was a KKK member, later growing up in St. Paul, where she attended Central High School from 1888–1891. In a time when, as Green notes, faculty at the school “advised Black boys and girls to drop out,” Francis instead graduated the star of the debate team, having already shown a talent for winning hearts and minds for causes of racial equality. Pioneering the legal profession as an early woman in the field, she worked skills as a diplomat. Yet she found a way to, social categorizations such as gender and race—what other feminists would begin to study 75 years later under new theories of intersectionality—starting a suffrage group for Black women in 1914. The circumstances of the women’s suffrage movement, in which Southern Democrats pitted white and Black women against each other, dashing offers to pass the Nineteenth Amendment so long as Black women were excluded, tested Francis’ skills as a diplomat. Yet she found a way to, for a person who left behind an unparalleled legacy, Francis’ personal reflections are, as a rule, scarce. There is no confessional journal to bring her preoccupations to life, no letter written to her newfound Billy Francis gushing over their love.

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West End Artist Profile: Chris Bremicker

BY MIMI ROTHSTEIN

Chris Bremicker is a West End writer who resides at the Montreal Hi-Rise. He has now published his third book, Eagle Claw and Other Stories, a work of true stories well told. Before the pandemic, in the days when he was writing theater reviews for the Community Reporter, you might have run into Bremicker working on his laptop at one of our many coffee houses: Fresh Grounds, Claddagh or at Fran Gray’s Mad Hatter.

Bremicker was a Special Forces medic stationed at Ft. Bragg, NC from 1968 to 1973. He has a BA in English and an MBA, both from the University of Minnesota. He is a newspaperman, downhill skier, game hunter, and he plays handball. He was also a sales associate at Walgreen’s in St. Paul MN, his forty-sixth job since high school. His hometown is Cable, WI, and he plays a mean game of handball: “Eagle Claw and Other Stories is about my life after I outlasted schizophrenia,” he explains. “It is characterized by an acerbic look at life, an askance view of people, and a faith in that innate goodness. It is how the world looks to someone who walked away from an airplane crash. For the first time in my writing career, I am selling life, not
In the Community

GARDEN VIEWS
Growing Your Sustainable Lawn

A reader named Paul sent me a question about the grass on his boulevard—or should I say lack of it. As he noted and many other readers will find, Kentucky Bluegrass is not the best choice of plant for the inhospitable environment at the edge of our streets. In Paul’s case, living on a major roadway, the municipal use of sand and salt during the winter season and the heat sink of summer blacktopped roads combined with low-soil fertility kills a lot of lawn grass. More tenacious and prolific plants such as dandelion, crab grass and quack grass take over.

The University of Minnesota has been doing research on the commercially available “aliggrass” that is advertised as salt-tolerant. Testing has indicated these are not performing well in our northern climate. Researchers have, on the other hand, found success with a mixture of fine fescue grasses. For details I would recommend consulting https://turf.umn.edu for recommendations for your specific situation. Seeding may be the best option, but as an option it might be worth checking with a turf company to see if they are offering salt-tolerant sod.

Spring is here. It is the second-best time to be seeding lawn grass in Minnesota. (The best is the cooler weather of late summer or early fall.) Go ahead and take this opportunity to overseed or patch small problem spots or to renovate your entire lawn. Moved grasses do not go to seed if allowed to, in the case of ornamentals, the seed they produce is wind pollinated. Grassy areas are cover habitat for insects, but grasses are mostly a food desert for insects. Insect food is found at plant flowers. Recent interest in insect pollinators has raised awareness of their relationship to wild flowering plants. Many gardeners have been working, some gradually over time, others all at once, to convert their lawns into habitat for insects that provides both cover and food. Wildflowers do that time with wild plants. The interdependent insect and flower relationships are striking and important. Learn more about it here (https://bit.ly/30Prjmk) and you could be able to retire the lawn mower!

A kind of mondo grass like others are researching are studying for their sustainable practices.

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NELLIE FRANCIS, PG 4

as Green recounts, “militate her sisters to push beyond long memories of abandonment by white allies during race riots and uncheked terror that had erected every decade since ratification of the last voting amendment fifty years earlier.”

The celebration of the passage of women’s suffrage would prove short for Francis. Thirteen months later, a mob lynched three black men in Duluth, one of the deadliest such killings in U.S. history. Francis, who had already been fighting the rising tide, moved Francis back to the center of the stage, where she belongs.

In this biography involves marveling at how Green reconstructs Francis’ psyche by exploiting the themes and events that swirled around it. Ultimately, he reveals this reader to be a strategist of the highest order, who sacrificed many things—the human desire to share one’s personal world, perhaps even pursuing a more emotionally compatible marriage—in order to move social causes forward.

In showing her purposes for lingering at times in the background, Green has allowed Francis back to the center of the frame where she belongs.

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BEING WELL
Snakes!

So, why is it that my life-long dislike (or fear, preferably) of the four-legged reptiles that I live in our neighborhood? This is the principal habituation that happens over time when you are exposed to the thing you are afraid of. When you become familiar with the thing you are afraid of, you actually experience an increase in anxiety when you first encounter the object of your fear. But then, as you watch it step by step, your anxiety does not last. Over time, you build confidence and a certain familiarity with the feelings, and with practice the initial anxiety abates.

One might wonder why habituation does not always work. After all, there are plenty of us in the neighborhood who see lots of snakes every year and still are terrified of them. The reason is typically that if we are afraid of something, we are afraid of only briefly, without allowing ourselves to experience the anxiety reducing while in the presence of the feared thing, we won’t experience habituation.

Since our natural response to fear is to avoid the thing we are afraid of, we do not often have many opportunities to overcome our fear. When we do try to seek them out, instead, by naturally avoiding the things we are afraid of, we make the fear worse. The more experiences we have where we are forced to experience something that we are afraid of, the more we reinforce the idea that we can’t handle it, sharpening our fear.

When you get too stuck in avoiding your fear, you sometimes need to force yourself to seek habituation. When we do this, it is called exposure therapy, and it is highly effective for addressing a lot of fears, including those related to trauma-experiences. Within a period of warning, if you have experienced a traumatic event, such as a situation where you felt violated or your or someone else’s life was in danger, do not try to induce habituation on your own, which can make it worse. Confronting intense trauma in this way should be done with a professional.

Bremicker is a natural story teller. His stories are not just a vehicle to tell a particular story, but a window into the things he has experienced in a stream of consciousness. And it is highly effective for addressing a lot of fears, including those related to trauma-experiences. Within a period of warning, if you have experienced a traumatic event, such as a situation where you felt violated or someone else’s life was in danger, do not try to induce habituation on your own, which can make it worse. Confronting intense trauma in this way should be done with a professional.

ERIN BRANDEL DYKHUIZEN
columnist

BIRDS IN PARTICULAR
Way, way up in the sky

I was driving home from Ely, MN and spoke with a friend in the town of Virginia at the food co-op. It resides in an agricultural community, not one tree to be seen for a mile around. As I faced the dark clouds off in the distance, I gazed into my car. I noticed something in the very large brilliant blue sky. It was a tiny glimpse of an eagle soaring in the sky. Now, if it weren’t for my trained brain that instantly reacts to any bird at flight, I would not have seen that bird very high up in that sky. Now, I only need a glimpse, a moment to recognize it. The next moment, I pulled out my binoculars to find the bird again. Reactions from the light gage electronics in my phone, I had my scope and bird was gone. I then noticed a bird that was a potato-shaped circle; I saw white bodies swooping and diving and talons out. I thought these birds were in a kettle; riding the thermals. As a cold front approaches, birds leave the shoreline surrounded by a 20-acre prairie. Attacking many migrants birds, short-tailed and ducks that would otherwise not visit Minnesota. Several birds next in here including the Wilson’s phalaropes, which has a spectacular spinning technique on the surface of the water. In years with low water levels, the Wilson’s phalaropes were almost shorebirds racing along the shoreline. This unusual ecosystem uses their bright colors, which are a large flower? Hi Bud.

Phil had a habit of setting the hook several times after he caught a fish and seemed to yank their teeth out of their mouths, even after he hooked them. Literally, he set the hook when the fish was already coming in. This was unnecessary but Phil could not be cared of it. We never mentioned it to him nor criticized him for it. Tim and I laughed about it but not in front of Phil.

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**Rhythms of Loving Kindness**

WDC has a wellness team of four dynamic women practitioners bringing complementary skills to workshops focused on self-care, relaxation and empowerment. The first event, “Rhythms of Wellness,” received rave reviews from participants. Continuing in this vein, the team will be offering a one-day event entitled “Rhythms of Loving Kindness.” Please visit www.womensdrumcenter.org/programs-2. These Wellness Events will give you tools for mind, body, and soul! Stay healthy with these amazing resources.

**Bill to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products Advances**

The Minnesota House Preventive Health Policy Division voted to advance Representative Cedrick Frazier’s bill to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Minnesota. Advocates with the Minnesota Tobacco Coalition and Minneapolis Public Health testified in support of the bill. Removing flavored tobacco products from the marketplace is an important step to prevent youth addiction, improve lung health and encourage adults to quit. “Minnesota has been a leader in taking on tobacco addiction, but we continue to play catch-up with a deadly industry that spends $100 million a year marketing their products in our state. Ending flavored tobacco product sales is an important next step in our efforts to reduce tobacco use and to protect kids from lifetime addiction. Let’s put the health of our kids – and the health of our Black brothers and sisters – ahead of Big Tobacco profits, so that we all may live healthier and longer lives,” said Representative Cedrick Frazier, chief author of the bill.
Easter is a time for new beginnings and through our rehabilitation programs and experienced staff, we offer fresh starts every day.

FIND YOUR NEW START WITH US.

Call 651-220-1700 to schedule a tour.

Cerenity Humboldt accepts a variety of payment options:
short-term rehabilitation | long-term care | assisted living
514 Humboldt Ave. | St. Paul | CerenitySeniorCare.org

WE ENGAGE/WEST END

Wishes the community a safe and healthy engagement with the challenges of 2021.

Honoring the lessons we have learned from the pandemic, the killing 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