Following my interview with Dr. Elaine Aron, who first identified the trait of hypersensitivity to stimuli, I have come to realize that I am indeed a highly sensitive person (HSP). This realization has been both challenging and enlightening. HSPs are known for being especially attuned to the emotions of others, easily overwhelmed in chaotic or loud situations and strongly affected by our environments, easily distracted and often left feeling drained by activities that do not revolve around their internal worlds. HSPs, like me, can find themselves feeling drained and overwhelmed in social situations, and may need to withdraw from large gatherings or noisy environments to recharge. We can also become overwhelmed by bright lights, loud noises, or strong smells.

For over a year we’ve been waiting for the day when we can hug our loved ones who don’t live with us, travel, or get together with a friend without worry. As vaccination rates soar, more and more of us are facing the reality that these things are now possible, at least on the horizon. But with this impending return to how things were in the pre-pandemic times, we may be feeling emotions along with the joy and relief: namely anxiety and hesitance about returning to how things used to be. While there are many reasons for this, which I hope to address in upcoming columns, there is one main reason I personally don’t want to go back to normal.

"There are some activities of daily life that I didn’t even realize were stressing me out to the extent that they did—until the day when I could no longer do them.”

NORMAL, PG 2
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For those who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and are seeking freedom from social restrictions, the CDC considers certain activities an acceptable risk before returning to the US and 3-5 days after international travel. Unfortunately, the CDC still recommends against attending crowded events (such as concerts, sporting events) or spending time without a mask beside others or unvaccinated and at high risk for illness the disease.

In the end, regardless of vaccination status, it seems like a good idea to take extra precautions given the continued spread of COVID-19 and proliferation of emerging coronavirus variants that we do not yet fully understand. But like so many others, you are struggling with the isolation of the past fourteen months and squinting to see some light at the end of the tunnel, the CDC has identified the path through which we can safely begin to reclaim our social lives. 

Jonathan Dickman, MD, PhD is a family physician at Allina Health United Family Physicians. He is available for appointments at 651-241-5200.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Earth Day 2021: Restore Our Earth

Dear Editor,

Earth Day 2021’s theme is Restore Our Earth – focusing on ways to prevent and reverse the impacts of climate change. Many products made from renewable, plant-based inputs into our lives can help address our environmental challenges head on. Using more plant-based products – including cleaning products, household cleaners, packaging, textiles, building materials and more – can decrease our reliance on fossil fuels, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and cut down on landfill waste. As the sustainable inputs used to create these products reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) pollution from the atmosphere. And many of these products are compostable, helping provide much-needed organic matter and nutrients to our depleted soil resources. The Plant Based Products Council is dedicated to promoting the adoption of renewable materials and products. This Earth Day let’s commit to using more sustainable resources to create the products we use every day and move one step towards restoring our earth.

Jessica Bowman
Executive Director, Plant Based Products Council
Washington, D.C.

Dear Editor,

As an educator, I have been teaching about climate change and the need for sustainability for many years. Through my teaching, I have come to understand that educating students about the effects of climate change is not enough. We need to model the behaviors that we want our students to adopt. Therefore, I am reaching out to the email list of people connected with the Fort Road Federation to invite them to participate in a book group to discuss the book “Me and White Supremacy” bylantonyrone.

The book challenges readers to confront their unconscious biases and to participate in discussions about racism and racial inequality. The book group will provide an opportunity for readers to engage in meaningful conversations about race and to learn from each other.

The book group will meet on the first Wednesday of each month from 6:30-8pm via Zoom. The group will consist of 6-10 people who are willing to commit to reading the book and participating in the discussions. The book will be provided by the and will receive a discount for each participant. The group will meet for 8 weeks, starting on June 2.

If you are interested in participating in the book group, please email me at editor@fortroadfederation.org to let me know. I look forward to hearing from you.

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Teen Coaching, Mentoring Organization Takes on Post-COVID Mental Trauma

St. Paul-based Positive Presence Global, the largest mentor coaching company in North America for teenagers and young adults, has announced a new lineup of programming and services specifically designed to tackle the mental and emotional effects of Covid on family and school lives. The first of its kind in the nation, the program works with teens and their parents to provide a path forward that builds confidence, communication, and the tools necessary for personal growth and success. “Being a teenager over the past 18 months has been an unprecedented challenge, especially in an era exacerbated by social media, peer pressure, and political discord,” says Michelle Marie King, Positive Presence Founder. “By providing a series of focused, guided lessons at this stage of a young person’s life, we can not only change their family dynamic but create positive social change for an entire generation.”

The individual path can be custom designed. Personalized coaching helps empower children and families with specific and personalized tools to help them navigate their situations. Since 2013, the award-winning Positive Presence team has worked with hundreds of teens around the world, empowering them to build on their unique strengths and improve their odds of success. No one is too young to be a part of the journey.

CFD Artistic Association’s Spring Exhibition

The “best of the best” work of 40 artists will be featured in a free exhibition at Landmark Center, May 15-21. Wed.-Fri. & Sun., 12-4pm. The exhibit will be open for judges for awards, by Dan Wiemer and parishioners. Call to vote for the “Visiters’ Choice” Award! Find out more at LandmarkCenter.org.

Temporary Road Closures to Support Physically Distant Outdoor Activities

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter announced the closures of four city streets to vehicle traffic to support walking and biking in and around three City of St. Paul parks areas, including Como Regional Park, Phalen Regional Park and Cherokee Regional Park, as well as the southbound vehicle lane along Mississippi River Boulevard. The closures, which have already begun, run through mid-July. Roads closed include: (1) Southbound Mississippi River Boulevard from Ford Parkway to Polham Boulevard as well as Harriet Heights Boulevard from Baker/Chippen to Arnprior.

Building Resilience in Youth After Trauma

From 10am-12pm on May 25, Minnesota’s Camp Ram will host a virtual event about their five-day resiliency program for children recovering from disaster, loss and trauma, experiences that have proved all too common during the pandemic. The Camp Ram program is for “coyote” in Dakota) Pronounced MI-CHEH; and (2) “mother earth” in Dakota) Pronounced MOO-CHAH. Construction is slated to begin later this year.

Sen. Pappas Encourages Minnesotans to Utilize Federal Rental Assistance

The American Rescue Plan, which was passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Biden, provided more than $300 million in federal housing assistance to help renters and home owners in Minnesota who are enduring financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, Senator Sandra Pappas, DFL-St. Paul, released the following statement: “To those individuals, couples, young families, working households, and anyone else who has struggled to make ends meet during the pandemic, I have one message for you: help is on the way. The federal government has made rental assistance relief available for those who are struggling to pay their rent or mortgage, and there is an easy online tool to see if you qualify.” Go to www.renthelpmn.org to get started or call United Way for help at 211. In the midst of a terrible pandemic, it is important that we support one another and look out for our neighbors across the state. If you or someone you know might benefit from this program, please tell them to visit www.renthelpmn.org today.

Ramsey County Master Gardener Plant Sale

Shop at www.RamseyMasterGardeners.org Features native plants, popular vegetables, including a large selection of tomatoes, herbs, annual and perennial flowers, and houseplants. This year, producing plants favorable to conditions in our Minnesota gardens. Exciting Quality Air Grooming gardening gives $5 a pair. Proceeds support U of MN horticulture student scholarships, youth group horticulture projects in Ramsey County. Master Gardener volunteer programs are part of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. May 1-8.

Spring Flower Show in full bloom through May 2

Marine Biological Laboratory, Poughkeepsie, NY. Face coverings are required for all visited to the Como Park, Zoo, Conservatory, and as advanced reservations, which can be made at https://comoconservatory.org/reservations/

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Thomas

BY TIM RUMSEY

Dr. Ravi said we needed an eyelash. A big one—softball-size—to dissect with our family. Practice residences.

“Mr. Thomas Mitchell is our guy,” I said. “He can get one.”

Thomas had been coming to our clinic as a patient for 18 years. He worked the “Kill Floor” at Dakota Premium in South St. Paul. A slaughterhouse. He “dressed out” (dissected) hundreds of Holstein skulls for head cheese and head meat as they came down the butchering line after being guillotined.

One eye was no problem. Thomas left it bagged on ice in a brown paper bag.

It was marked, “Dr. Ravi B. (1) Eyeball.”

Thomas’ forebearers had been enslaved in Louisiana and eventually migrated North. He was born and schooled in the South Side of Chicago. An outstanding basketball player, he led his varsity high school team to many wins and almost made all-state twice. He played against NBA legend Isaiah Thomas.

At 17, Thomas left school for a job too good to pass up. The Illinois Central Railroad. Track repair fitting boxcars. It was good money and good health insurance.

By 2005, Thomas and his wife, Janice, landed in West Seventh. Lived by the High Bridge. He worked meat packing and lived by Schmidt Brewery. Worked Tanning and Rendering. Then worked catering.

And Janice and I played on 1-1 buckets at Playground. I asked how good Janice was. Thomas said she was a good sport.

Thomas took meticulous care of his health. “When everything was wrong,” he told Ravi, “I got it checked out.”

He had asthma as a kid, some pneumonias and TB. But things started going “haywire,” he said, when he was 48.

Diabetes, blood pressure, cholesterol. The colon cancer was 2004. Colon surgery 2006. Prostate cancer 2010. Eventually, he had 23 medical problems, 4 more surgeons, including emergency brain aneurysm repair.

Thomas had missed all his vaccinations. All his screenings, all his procedures. He takes 14 prescription meds a day, having recently dropped three of them with careful weight management.

In her book, Medical apartheid, medical ethicist Harriet A. Washington documents a litany of troubling health metrics:

• African Americans suffer the US’ highest rate of cancer and cancer deaths.
• The Black diabetes rate is probably twice that of whites.
• Cancer is diagnosed later and is more deadly in Black patients than their white counterparts.
• Black men have the nation’s highest rates of developing and dying of prostate and lung cancers.

Kaiser Health Group, one of the largest US medical networks, observed in its research that Black Americans are still receiving vaccinations at dramatically lower rates than white Americans.

I asked Thomas how he managed his health care so effectively.

“Good jobs with good health insurance, and a trusted clinic I could walk to,” I caught Thomas in the clinic hallway pre-pandemic, before the State Fair. He said he was going. Labor Day.

“Janice too?” I asked.

“We went earlier. I always go alone on Labor Day.”

“What’s your favorite place?”

“It’s all good,” he said. “But I save the last half of the day for the livestock barn. It relaxes me. The cattle are so beautiful. I just like to look at them.”

Thomas left (the eye) bagged on ice in a brown paper bag at the clinic front desk. It was marked, “Dr. Ravi B. (1) Eyeball.”

Minnesotans Highlight Need for Care

The Minnesota House passed the paid family and medical leave bill (HF1200) as a part of the omnibus workforce and business development finance and policy bill (HF1342/SF1098) Tuesday night, supporting a critical policy that would ensure all Minnesotans across race, class, and geography are able to care for them.

It’s all good,

Small business owners, union members, family caregivers, and faith leaders celebrated the Minnesota House’s leadership, but noted the companion bill’s lack of passage in the Senate. Now it is the time to pass common sense policies to support our ability to care for ourselves. Seeing the first smile of a newborn baby, holding hands at the hospital with a sick family member, comforting loved ones at the end of life, being able to help and get well without fear of losing income—these are all things every single family in Minnesota deserves no matter who we are or where we come from.

Passing a statewide paid family and medical leave police ultimately makes us a safer and more thriving Minnesota for all.

Joel fights for the electorate.

“Who’s your favorite place?”

“It’s all good,” he said. “But I save the last half of the day for the livestock barn. It relaxes me. The cattle are so beautiful. I just like to look at them.”
Where Do We Go From Here?
A message from Pillsbury United Communities

On Tuesday, 12 jurors cracked open the window of justice. And we see a little light. To be clear, the verdict in George Floyd’s murder should never have been in doubt. But we had reason for pessimism. Only rarely do police-involved killings of Black, Brown and Indigenous people even make it to the doorstep of our courts. When they do, officers are almost never held accountable—even for the most abhorrent abuses of power.

Floyd’s murder is part of a chilling pattern where policing in communities of color leads to senseless death again and again. Our hearts are already heavy this week as 20-year-old Daunte Wright, another unarmed Black man killed by local police in Minnesota, is laid to rest. Again a family and community mourns. Again we hear pleas for justice and voices for change. Again we have reason to doubt justice will ever be served.

What will it take before we say as a state, enough is enough?

Since the murder of George Floyd, our state’s leaders stood up to declare that Black Lives Matter. A year later, we’re fighting for more than a hashtag. You can help us move lawmakers into action. We can’t wait for another tragedy before we act.

The Minnesota House has taken the courage-ous step with a public safety omnibus bill that builds on last year’s Minnesota Police Accountability Act. This state of common-sense measures holds officers accountable for harmful actions and unites the hands of police chiefs in protecting life.

Stand with us in calling on Minnesota state legislators and Governor Walz to take immediate and decisive action on the following items:

- HF1104: End qualified immunity. Help survivors of brutality or harassment by law enforcement get relief in the courts by ending qualified immunity for police officers.
- HF1103: Rules on body cameras. Prohibit law enforcement from tampering with body camera footage of a deadly force incident and require footage to be released to family and representative within 48 hours.

To put it simply, police are taught to escalate as a tool, a means of addressing difficult encounters. Escalation is the tactic of first resort in responding to African American men who themselves have an experiential reason to be afraid. Escalation is the tactic in responding to protesters angered at the killing of yet another black man. To be sure, there are police who take a different approach, but escalation is the governing norm.

One wonders how it is that George Floyd, accused of the minor offense of using a counterfeit $20 bill, ended up dead at the hands of police. One wonders how Daunte Wright, a young 20-year-old African American, pulled over because of an invalid license tab and held because of a warrant for a minor offense, is killed by a 26-year-old police veteran who trains young recruits. Even if one accepts the assertion that this most recent incident was an “accidental” shooting, the question remains: Why did this officer feel it necessary to fire a life-threatening Taser at this young man? In the cases of both police officers, Derek Chauvin and Kimberly Potter, how did the situation escalate so quickly that a Black man lost his life?

Barry Brod, a use-of-force expert hired by Chauvin’s defense, makes it perfectly clear just how and why such situations unfold. According to the Star Tribune, “Brod told the court that Floyd’s death was not the result of deadly force. ‘Police officers don’t have to fight back,’ he said, adding that officers can escalate their use of force up a level from the force they are facing.” To put it simply, police are taught to escalate as a tool, a means of addressing difficult encounters. Escalation is the tactic of first resort in responding to African American men who themselves have an experiential reason to be afraid. Escalation is the tactic in responding to protesters angered at the killing of yet another black man. To be sure, there are police who take a different approach, but escalation is the governing norm.

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West Seventh Business Association

It’s time to renew or begin your 2021 membership!

**Our Advocate for:**

- Paid Family & Medical Leave
- Affordable Healthcare
- Good Jobs
- Racial Equity in Fair Tax

**Our Neighborhood:**

- Our Senator: Sandy Pappas

**Our connection:**

- Visit W7BA.org
- Join W7BA.org

**Our Member Benefits:**

- 20% off membership fee
- Visit w7ba.org click JOIN tab

**2021 Membership Fee:**

**$90**

*If you introduce a new member for 2021!!

Our Advocate for:

- Paid Family & Medical Leave
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- Good Jobs
- Racial Equity in Fair Tax
- A Green New Deal

Connecting Community

- Community Nourishment
- Pillsbury United Communities
- Mississippi Market
- West Seventh Business Association
- St. Paul Fire Station Headquarters

**Our Community Nourishment:**

- Building an Antiracist Community
- Polic ing, Racism and the Problem of Escalation

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Barry Brod, a use-of-force expert hired by Chauvin’s defense, makes it perfectly clear just how and why such situations unfold. According to the Star Tribune, “Brod told the court that Floyd’s death was not the result of deadly force. ‘Police officers don’t have to fight back,’ he said, adding that officers can escalate their use of force up a level from the force they are facing.” To put it simply, police are taught to escalate as a tool, a means of addressing difficult encounters. Escalation is the tactic of first resort in responding to African American men who themselves have an experiential reason to be afraid. Escalation is the tactic in responding to protesters angered at the killing of yet another black man. To be sure, there are police who take a different approach, but escalation is the governing norm.
How are you doing with planning your garden? The weather has been rather perfect for planting. Cold-tolerant plant seedings and started plants are ready to go. I’m ready to plant in quantity you can supply while last supplies. It is good ideas for vegetable gardens, which use up a lot of soil nutrients every year. Two to three inches of mulching every year or so will keep your soil productive.

ISAIAH. “I hope the Senate will listen to Reverend Corinne Freedman Ellis, leader of Pillsbury United Communities by passing a robust statewide paid family and medical leave policy. This commonsense bill when the two chambers agree go into conference committee. As a minister and as a person of faith, I believe every person deserves the security of paid family and medical leave,” said Reverend Corinne, a Human Rights Leader of ISAIAH. “I hope the Senate will listen to the overwhelming majority of Minnesotans – across race, gender, and political ideologies – who want this bill for our state and they act in this moment by passing a robust paid time to care policy.”

Minnesotans for Paid Family and Medical Leave is a coalition of 45+ statewide nonpartisan organizations committed to solving our caregiving crisis while leveling the playing field for all Minnesotans by passing a robust statewide paid family and medical leave policy. Scholarships are now open! Scholarships are for post-secondary training or educational programs to be eligible. Funds must be used for tuition and direct costs associated with the program. For more information, visit www.keystone4scholarships.org or call (651) 645-0349.

POLICING, PG 5

None of this comes as a surprise for those who know something about the history of policing. According to the late Richard Vilate, author of The End of Policing, the origins of policing are tied to protecting the interests of the upper classes, sustaining eighteen century inequality, maintaining slavery and colonialism, and sustaining eighteenth century inequality, and still on its nest. Identification was tricky. The highlight of this birding trip was the camp director, Rosie, doesn’t seem to into the same cabin (Roanoke), with a girl named Jocelyn. Ellis. Kat Leyh and Faith Erin Hicks is a fan of Main Street Alliance. “One thing I would like to see change, is the way they wish to be treated, even in the most difficult situations. It is past time that we support our police and communities of color, it is time to rethink our approach to law enforcement.”

The temperature of the soil in the root zone is growing and reaching the top crust inches of garden soil) should ideally reach a temperature of 65-85 degrees F for these plants. We usually reach those temps after the middle of May.

If you just can’t wait to be the first on your block to have ripe tomatoes, there are strategies to manage the cold. Cold-tolerant plants, cloches and cold weather kill are all ways to warm the soil and allow finicky plants to grow a bit faster. Good luck in the vegetable patch!

The warmer season vegetables are beans, squashes, corn, okra, peppers and tomatoes.

BIRDS IN PARTICULAR

Warblers and Tree Leaves

Just because you show up doesn’t mean the birds are going to show up, too. April, Mai, Ripley and Molly were water conservators, too. As we know who was, who. We also saw her brown speck look back toward the marsh. We saw a dead beaver that was released for a long reed until someone saw its red crown.

The highlight of this birding trip was the ravens we saw in the first parking lot off the dirt road. A platform was about 50 feet away with two expressionless faces still on its nest. Identification was tricky. It is past time that we support our police and communities of color, it is time to rethink our approach to law enforcement. The male flew off but returned forward. The male flew off but returned

The female's scapulars arched that we still on its nest. Identification was tricky.

50 feet away with two ospreys standing in the marsh. We saw a dead beaver that was released for a long reed until someone saw its red crown.

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Children’s Theatre’s Something Happened in Our Town

The animated digital reading of a story for children ages 4+ was created to help parents answer questions from their children about the murder of George Floyd. To watch, go to childrenstheatre.org/home/something-happened-in-our-town/.

NEW! ADULT SUMMER SOFTBALL REGISTRATION OPEN

Municipal Athletics offers slow pitch softball leagues for men, women and co-rec teams, as well as fast pitch softball leagues for men. League games take place on weekday evenings. New and returning teams in St. Paul can register at bit.ly/adultsoftball.
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Wishes the community a safe and healthy engagement with the challenges of 2021.

Honoring 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

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