

Community REPORTER

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IN THIS ISSUE

Healthline • Pg 2
Federation Update • Pg 2
In the Community • Pg 4
Building an Antiracist Community • Pg 5
Birds, Books & Garden • Pg 6
Keystone & Library • Pg 6
Bulletin Board • Pg 7

SENATE PERSPECTIVES Urgent Need for Paid Medical Leave Program in Minnesota



SEN. SANDY PAPPAS
(DISTRICT 65)
columnist

Throughout the past year, all of us have faced daunting challenges that have pulled us away from our jobs and traditional routines. Whether you're raising a newborn baby, caring for a sick child, looking after an elderly family member, or simply recovering due to an illness, all of us face difficult challenges that require us to take time off from work. Unfortunately, not all Minnesotans have the luxury to take time off without sacrificing their paychecks.

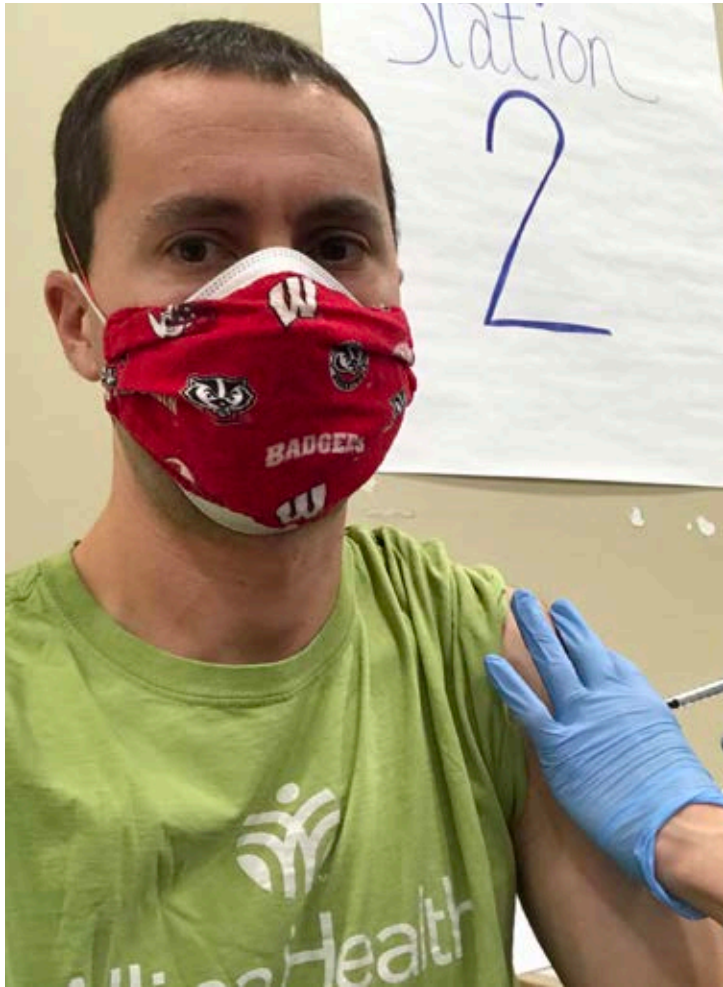
For many Minnesotans who do not have access to paid family and medical leave (PFML), an unforeseen family or medical emergency can force them to choose between risking financial instability or going to work while sick. It can also force young parents to choose between earning two incomes or having one parent stay at home to look after a newborn baby.

I understand this choice because I experienced this challenge firsthand. As a young working mother, paid family leave would have made an enormous difference for my family. Instead, my husband and I struggled financially while we sacrificed our work in order to raise our three children. To this day, thousands of young mothers in Minnesota and across the US are faced with the same situation. Paid family and medical leave is a simple and cost-effective strategy to make sure that those who must take time off for medical and family needs can do so without going bankrupt or risking their jobs. But don't just take my word for it; take a look at the benefits offered by family and medical leave policies around the world.

In Israel, where my daughters live, mothers are allowed 15 weeks of maternity leave while earning 80% of their wages during the time that they spend raising their newborn baby. They are also allowed an additional 11 weeks of unpaid maternity leave should they choose to stay at home to spend more time with their child. This generous policy allows for mothers to spend more time with their babies during their first weeks of life, solidifying the bond between a mother and her child that is so important in the early stages of a child's growth and development.

But one need not look abroad to find an example of the benefits brought to society by PFML. Right here in the US, ten states have already authorized PFML programs on a statewide basis. In the state of Washington, new parents are eligible to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave and mothers with newborn children are eligible to take up to 16 weeks of paid leave while still earning up to 90% of their weekly wages. Washington also provides a layer of flexibility in their PFML program by allowing new parents to take the 12-16 weeks of paid leave whenever they'd like over the course of a year.

As Minnesotans, we look after one another. Over the past year, our state has endured widespread trauma as a result of the pandemic, police violence, and subsequent civil unrest. But with each struggle, our communities have come together around our shared values to support one another. When times get tough, we understand that it is our duty to lend a helping hand to each other. Our state's family and medical leave policy should reflect these same values that have shone so bright during the darkest days of the past year.



(left) Jonathan Dickman, MD, a faculty member at Allina Health's United Family Physicians Clinic (223 Grand Ave), receives an inoculation. (right) Colin Rizo, MD, a resident at the clinic gets his vaccine.

Vaccination Programs Ramp Up

BY DAVID LAMB

Across the city and the state, COVID-19 vaccinations rates are exceeding expectations, with more than 43% of Minnesotans having received at least one dose when this newspaper went to press. The competition for appointments remains fierce, however—and the results inequitable, with vaccinations of Black residents lagging the population across the state by 35%.

GET YOUR APPOINTMENT

Vaccines are available for all people 16+ years of age through several sources: primary care providers such as the Allina Health and Fairview clinics as well as the United Family Medicine Clinic (1026 W. 7th); drugstore chains; and the Minnesota Department of Health's large-scale sites at the Mall of America and the State Fairgrounds.

A few key resources can help you find an appointment. Registering on vaccineconnector.mn.gov puts your name on the state's waiting list for a vaccine, allowing you to be notified as soon as an appointment becomes available at one of the Department

of Health's sites. For those willing to invest time to more quickly find a vaccine, a private Twitter account, @MNVaccineAlerts, sends out automated tweets whenever a new appointment becomes available at a pharmacy in the state. Another website, vaccinespotter.org/MN/, offers a map of all available drug store appointments.

VACCINATION OPTIONS

The FDA lifted its temporary suspension on the use of Johnson & Johnson's single-shot vaccine on April 23, making three vaccines once again available: Johnson & Johnson's, Pfizer-BioNTech's and Moderna's. They have each proved effective in helping to prevent contraction of COVID-19, particularly in avoiding severe cases of the disease, which are extremely rare for those who have been fully vaccinated. "[N]o one dies of it," said Dr. Leo Yee Sin, a government COVID expert in Singapore. "Almost everyone is asymptomatic...[so] we have converted the disease from a bad critical illness to that of a mild cold."

Scientists generally recommend taking whichever vaccine is available to you and fits

in your schedule.

Although Minnesota has one of the lowest rates of vaccine hesitancy in the US—and Ramsey County, in turn, one of the lowest hesitancy rates in the state at 11%, according to the CDC—misinformation continues to suppress vaccine adoption.

In particular, many believed the recent pause in the use of Johnson & Johnson's vaccine suggested it was unsafe. It is true that the pause was related to a finding that six women out of the nearly seven million people who had received the vaccine across the nation experienced dangerous blood clots. But blood clots remain far more common among those who go unvaccinated and contract the disease, appearing in as much as 20% of infected patients according to a study last year conducted by researchers at the University of California, San Diego. Federal regulators opted to pause the Johnson & Johnson vaccinations not because it was inherently dangerous but rather in order to allow health-care workers several weeks to share best practices for responding to the rare blood-clotting condition, which can be

BEING WELL

I Don't Want to Go Back to Normal



ERIN BRANDEL
DYKHUIZEN
columnist

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, or at least on the horizon.

But with this impending return to how things were in the pre-pandemic times, we may be feeling other emotions along with the joy and relief: namely anxiety and hesitation 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.

I am an introvert and a Highly Sensitive Person (HSP). Introverts recharge by spending

time by ourselves, and we tend to spend a lot of time focused on our internal worlds. HSPs, who make up 15-20% of the population, are strongly affected by our environments, easily overwhelmed in chaotic or loud situations and especially attuned to the emotions of others, among other characteristics. (You can learn more about HSPs from the writings of Dr. Elaine Aron, who first identified the trait of high sensitivity and discusses it on her website, <https://hsperson.com/>.)

As an introvert and HSP, the pre-pandemic world often exhausted me. As disturbing as this pandemic has been—and the human toll has been tragic—one silver lining for me was that our society's rhythms changed in ways that better matched my temperament. 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

"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."



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.

FEDERATION UPDATE

fortroadfederation.org

Board Election Results
Thank you to everyone who voted in the Board election. The elected Board members are:



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1st Vice President



TONY MOLARO
Secretary



CASEY CARMODY
Area 1 Coordinator



ELYSE JENSEN
Area 1 Coordinator



EMMA PEARL
Area 2 Coordinator



STEVEN TACHENY
Area 2 Coordinator



SARA FLEETHAM
Area 3 Coordinator



JULIA MCCOLLEY
Area 3 Coordinator

"Me and White Supremacy" book Discussion Circle
Read *Me and White Supremacy* and participate in a book group to take the first steps toward recognizing unconscious racial bias and addressing systemic racism in our personal and professional lives. Meets Wednesdays in June, 6:30-8pm via Zoom. Register online by May 26. More information at fortroadfederation.org

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

- **Transportation & Land Use Committee**, Wed, May 5, 6:30 pm
- **Board, Update on Riverview Corridor from Ramsey County** - Mon, May 10, 7 pm
- **Community Engagement and Outreach Committee** - Thu, May 20, 6:30 pm

Recycle
Recycling is an easy way to contribute to a healthy and safe environment. Make a lasting commitment to recycle more at st.paul.gov/recyclesmart

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

Editorials & Opinions

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

Life After the Vaccine

BY JONATHAN DICKMAN
Now that COVID-19 vaccination of adults is in full force, people are daring to dream of a life that resembles something closer to what we had before the pandemic. But as we get our shots and return to once-familiar behaviors, confusion remains as to what is prudent. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) provides valuable guidance with which we can address these questions, though they remain subject to change as we continue to learn more about the viral disease and its variants. You can review the most up to date guidelines on the agency's website, <https://bit.ly/3dLeUqV>.

First, to understand the behaviors we can safely engage in post-vaccine, we must define what it means to be "fully vaccinated." We only achieve that status for COVID-19 once 14 days have passed since the final vaccine dose. In other words, two full weeks must have passed since receiving the second dose of either the Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna vaccines, or since the single dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. Until this time comes, the CDC recommends continuing to practice social distancing by wearing a mask, staying 6 feet apart, spending time outside when you want to hang out with others and avoiding all unnecessary travel and crowds. In fact, it is safest to continue these social distancing practices even after you have been fully vaccinated. This is because these vaccines are not perfect and infection

remains possible. The hope will be that these social-distancing recommendations will no longer be needed when our population reaches "herd immunity" or when a significant number (many estimate somewhere between 60-80%) of people in the community are fully vaccinated.

For those who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and are seeking freedom from social restrictions, the CDC considers certain activities an acceptable risk. Those who are fully vaccinated may spend time indoors—without a mask or social distancing—with others who are fully vaccinated. In addition, the CDC condones doing the same with up to one other household in which the only people who are unvaccinated are not members of a population at risk for severe COVID-19 (see the CDC website for a full list, but risk factors include chronic medical conditions, pregnancy, obesity and older age). Fully vaccinated individuals who were exposed to a person with COVID-19 do not need to be tested for the virus unless they have symptoms or live in a nursing home, group home or other group setting. Those who are fully vaccinated can also travel without needing a COVID-19 test before or quarantining after the trip. (Of note, however, COVID-19 testing may still be needed before international travel if the country you are visiting requires the test.) In addition, during international travel, you still need to get tested for COVID-19—both

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 who are unvaccinated and at high risk for illness the disease.

In the end, regardless of vaccination status, it is always 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 if, 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. Incorporating more products and materials made from renewable, plant-based inputs into our lives can help address our environmental challenges head on. Using more plant-based products – including everything from 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 grow, they remove 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 more renewable products and materials. This Earth Day let's commit to using more renewable resources to create the products we use every day as an important step towards restoring our earth.

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

NORMAL, PG 1

For one, it has been a relief to not have to go to so many social gatherings, especially ones with people I do not feel close to. I actually want to sit here in my yoga pants doing my jigsaw puzzle and listening to my audio book, thank you very much. Get me a cup of tea and a cat, and I will have a perfect day. I was living the pandemic lifestyle before the pandemic, and sometimes I felt ashamed of not spending more time in social settings. Over the past fourteen months, I learned how much of that unnecessary pressure I was choosing to put on myself without even realizing it. While I am willing and eager to get together with friends and go out once it's safe, I have come to terms with the fact that it is perfectly fine to be more selective about where I spend my energy.

It has also been helpful to have an excuse to order groceries online instead

of going into an overcrowded, brightly lit, overstimulating store. In the past I would go to the store instead of ordering online because I couldn't justify to myself the cost of the tip or increased online prices. Having now gotten the chance to experience the joy of having my favorite Costco products delivered to my door, I do not want to go back, even if it is cheaper to shop myself. By seeing the value of protecting my energy and time, I can now better analyze the costs and benefits before I decide to drive to the store.

Wearing a mask in public has offered the excellent advantage that, when I feel the need to avoid an acquaintance I happen to run into—because fumbling through small talk makes me anxious and sucks the life out of me—I have plausible deniability. I have not had to unexpectedly make small talk when in public for over a year. I really don't want this part of things to end, and, frankly, I would wear a mask in public even

when it's no longer required if it didn't have the effect of making me more identifiable.

Of course, you don't have to be an introvert and/or HSP to identify things about the pre-pandemic world that stressed you out. Many people are noticing that they are reconsidering aspects of their lives that they felt were non-negotiable before the pandemic upended them. As you consider the things you are looking forward to in the post-pandemic world, be sure to consider the parts of your life now that are working better for you than "normal" life was. Know that while most of us are thrilled to turn the corner and restore some of the human interactions we lost, you don't have to go back to normal in every way if you don't want to.

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.erinbdlcsw.com.

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Ad Deadline: May 19

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Community News & Events

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 12 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



individual path but can create positive social change for an entire generation."

Since 2016, the award-winning Positive Presence team has worked with hundred of teens around the world, empowering them

through over 10,000 hours of coaching and programming uniquely designed to create a healthier and happier path forward in their family, school, and social lives.

MN Artist Association's Spring Exhibition
The "best of their best" work of 40 artists will be featured in a free exhibition at Landmark Center, May 16-June 27, Wed-Fri & Sun, 12-4pm. The exhibit will then be judged for awards by Dan Wiemer and guests can vote for the "Visitors' 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 Saint 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 the Southbound lanes of Mississippi River Boulevard from Ford Parkway to Pelham Boulevard as well as Cherokee Heights Boulevard from Baker/Chippewa to Annapolis.

Building Resilience in Youth After Trauma
From 10am-12pm on May 25, Minnesota's Camp Noah 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. Each Camp is customized to the cultural needs of the local community and offers children a safe, fun way to face their fears, grieve their losses and plan for an amazing future. Join us: bit.ly/3tRDnjX.

Calls for Deputy's Resignation After Violent Police Confrontation
On March 23, an 11-year-old child with his hands up was choked by a Ramsey County Sheriff deputy during the execution of an arrest warrant for his older brother, who was shown in video as already being in custody before the choking, leaving the child traumatized and bruised. The

family along with Black Lives Matter Minnesota, the Racial Justice Network, and BLM Twin Cities Metro and the Black Coalition have called for the immediate termination of the deputy involved.

City of Saint Paul Announces Four New City Parks at Highland Bridge
Join Councilmember Chris Tolbert and Saint Paul Parks and Recreation staff for a virtual open house May 12, 6:30pm to learn more about the future parks. Link: <https://bit.ly/3sJ4JHC>. Four future parks include *Gateway Park* (A reference to the location of the park as an important entry point to the city and the Highland Bridge development); *Assembly Union Park* (In recognition of the site's industrial history and those who worked at Ford Motor Company, and specifically the importance of the workforce within the union labor movement); *Uŋčī Makŋa Park* ("Mother Earth" in Dakota) Pronounced oon-CHEE Ma-KAH; and *Miča Park* (abbreviation for "coyote" in Dakota) Pronounced MEE-cha. Construction is slated to begin later this year.

Senator 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 \$500 million in federal housing assistance to help renters and homeowners in Minnesota who are enduring financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response, Senator Sandra Pappas, DFL-Saint 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."

Virtual Mothers Day Concert
Landmark Center will be hosting a free virtual concert for Mothers Day at 1pm on May 9. Register to join it here: bit.ly/3aHfEeZ



Career Counseling Program Responds to Health Care Worker Shortage
Jobs in the health care field are among those in highest demand in the Twin Cities. Individuals wanting to begin or further their career in health care can receive support from Lutheran Social Services (LSS) Financial Counseling's Health Care Careers Program in St. Paul's Frogtown neighborhood. The service (Hmong, Somali and Spanish) offers career counseling, access to resources that mitigate barriers to employment and financial coaching. Call 651-529-8851 to schedule a phone appointment and learn more. Learn more at bit.ly/33VwB1Q



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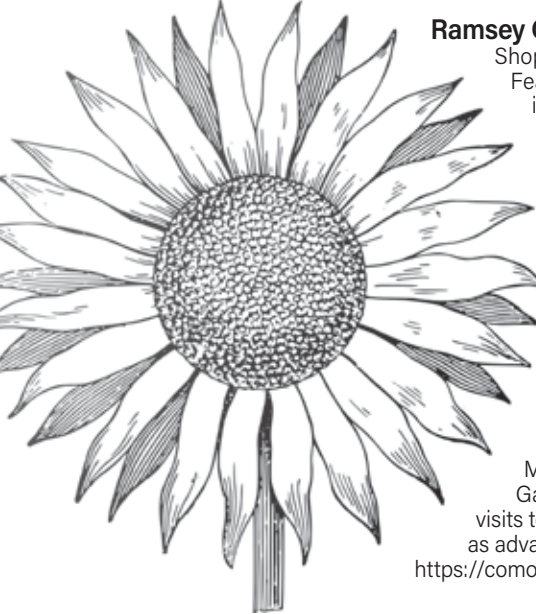
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Spring Flower Show in full bloom through May 2
Marjorie McNeely Conservatory Sunken Garden. Face coverings are required for all visits to the Como Park Zoo & Conservatory as well as advanced reservations, which can be made at <https://comozooconservatory.org/reservations/>



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ONEIDA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN

Scholarships are available to adult learners, age 18+, in the West Seventh neighborhood. You must be enrolled in a certificate or degree granting post-secondary training or educational program. Funds must be used for education or training expenses only and grant amounts range from \$1,000-3,500.

Visit keystoneservices.org, email info@keystoneservices.org, or call 651-645-0349 for more information.



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In the Community

Thomas

BY TIM RUMSEY

Dr. Ravi said we needed an eyeball. A big one—softball big—to dissect with our family practice residents.

“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 at the clinic front desk. 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 basketballer, 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 boxcar wheels. It was good money, 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 bottling.

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

Thomas took meticulous care of his health. “Whenever something 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 surgeries, including emergency brain aneurysm repair.

Thomas has had 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 2019 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.”



Armenian Genocide Then, Nagorno-Karabakh/ Artsakh Conflict Today

This virtual program, hosted by Mitchell Hamline’s World Without Genocide, examines the genocide of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1923, and the recent conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region between Armenia and Azerbaijan, again involving racial, ethnic, national, and religious identities. May 11, 7-9pm. \$5-10. Free to Mitchell Hamline students. Certificates made available to teachers, social workers, and nurses. worldwithoutgenocide.org/programs/upcoming-events

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 themselves and their loved ones. COVID-19 has shown how necessary access to paid time to care is and highlights the racial disparities to access we face across the state.

“As caregiving becomes the new normal, most of us will likely be caregivers during our lifetimes,” said Toni Kay Mangskau, resident of Rochester, Minnesota and member of AARP MN. “No one should ever have to live with making a choice between paying their bills or taking time off to care for a loved one. It’s time for Minnesota lawmakers to pass a paid family and medical leave program.”

Small business owners, union members, family caregivers, and faith leaders celebrated the Minnesota House’s leadership, but noted the companion bill’s lack of progress in the Senate. Now 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 heal 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.

“As a small business owner, I am constantly working to do what is best for my employees and my business,” said Julie No-

BILL, PG 6

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REAL ESTATE EXPERT!

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Community Nourishment

BUILDING AN ANTIRACIST COMMUNITY

Policing, Racism and the Problem of Escalation



TIM JOHNSON
columnist

I would like to say my wife and I never argue or get angry with each other. That, of course, would be neither honest nor believable. No one expects a couple that has been together for 38 years to have sailed through without a heated exchange or two. Fortunately, they have been rare, but one thing I have learned is that escalating a conflict never, ever leads to good results. Raising our voices, mutual accusations and all the other dimensions of escalation often only leads to greater distance and need for repair. What works better is going back to the basics, listening and treating one another the way we wish to be treated.

The failure of escalation in solving conflicts has also been my experience as a pastor working with my former congregation, engaging with the community, and with virtually any group with which I have been involved. Unless one is prepared to totally force the opposing party out of the picture, which sadly is sometimes the case, then finding ways to de-escalate, listen and show respect is the only viable option. This is no easy proposition, because when you are angry or fearful, showing dominance by escalating often feels like the natural thing to do.

The consequences of relying on escalation as a tool for confronting difficult situations are particularly problematic when it comes to policing.

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 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 fair,’ 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 protestors 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.

POLICING, PG 6

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.

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 vows 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?

Right after George Floyd’s death, 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 cou-



rageous step with a public safety omnibus bill that builds on last year’s Minnesota Police Accountability Act. This slate of common-sense measures holds officers accountable for harmful actions and unties 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.

- HF640: Establish civilian oversight. Remove the current state law prohibiting citizen-led councils from imposing discipline on law enforcement officers.

GEORGE FLOYD, PG 6

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Community Nourishment



KENT PETTERSON columnist

GARDEN VIEWS It's Spring!

How are you doing with planting in your vegetable garden? The weather has rolled out as expected for planting. Cold-tolerant plant seeding and started plants can be in the ground now. The good news is that the Pleasant Area (870 Pleasant Ave.) compost site is open, and the good black stuff is available in any quantity you can haul while supply lasts. It is good idea for vegetable gardens, which

use up a lot of soil nutrients every year. Two to three inches of top-dressing every other year or so will keep your soil productive. From May 1 through the middle of the month, most of the garden should or can be planted. But for some of the planting, it is time to pause and wait for the soil to warm thoroughly. Frost-sensitive plants may not grow in soil that remains too cold, and seed may rot before germinating. Plants can be killed or set back for the entirety of the season if they manage to recover.

The warmer season vegetables are beans, squashes, corn, okra, peppers and tomatoes. The temperature of the soil in the root and seed growing zone (the top couple 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 and want to be the first on your block to have ripe tomatoes, there are strategies to manage the cold. Plastic tunnels, cloches and wall-o-water are all ways to warm the soil and allow finicky plants to grow a bit faster. Good luck in the vegetable patch!



HALLE O'FALVEY columnist
halleofalvey@gmail.com

BIRDS IN PARTICULAR Warblers and Tree Leaves

Just because you show up doesn't mean the birds are going to show up, too. Visiting the Joel Marsh Wildlife Area was that kind of day. We did see puddle ducks, several chickadees, a few red-winged blackbirds and a swamp sparrow, plus a solitary sandhill crane, that was camouflaged as a long reed until someone saw its red crown. The highlight of this birding trip was the raptors we saw in the first parking lot off the dirt road. A platform was about 50 feet away with two ospreys standing still on its nest. Identification was tricky. It wasn't until the copulation began and the female's scapulars arched that we knew who was who. We also saw her brown-speckled necklace as she leaned forward. The male flew off but returned several times. When they both flew away, we walked down the narrow trail out to the marsh. We saw a dead beaver that

had its leg stuck in a trap. We were all very disheartened by this illegal drowning. In the marsh there wasn't much activity. The puddle ducks we saw were American widgeons, blue-winged teals and scaups, which were life birds for my friends. I could not distinguish between the greater and lesser scaup. They were too far out, mostly showing off their black butts as they looked for food. Another jokester in the family of jokers shared this one with me: How did the gardener whistle? With tulips! May is the greenest month in Minnesota. So, the warblers are on their way. They love budding tree leaves, which are awaiting their arrival too. The yellow-rump's have arrived. I heard a tale of a yellow warbler in a neighbors backyard!!! Tender tree leaves grow swiftly as they are sun catchers, gathering energy. Watching the wind whistle through the leaves, you can imagine them breathing in carbon dioxide gasses and exhaling oxygen. And these leaves are water conservators, too. As we know

rainfall is unpredictable, leaves are set up for saturation and drought conditions, their veins are like the circulatory system in our bodies. The stomata in the epidermis of the leaves regulates these processes in the same way the epidermis under our skin protects and regulates our bodies. This month's activity: identify tree leaves. There are three kinds of tree leaves: needlelike, scalelike and broadleaf. I encourage you to search for the latter, as there is a lot to consider in the identification of broadleaves. Are the leaves simple, lobed or compound? Are their shapes: lance-, heart-, or fan-like, circular, triangular, ovate, obovate, or elliptic? Are the toothed edges single or double, fine or coarse? What kind of veins are in the leaf itself? Are the tips pointed, blunt, rounded, or notched? What's going on at the base of the leaf near the stem? Are the leaves opposite each other or do they alternate on the stem? This is new territory for me. As a birder, I often find birds in the trees. So, I am challenging myself this spring to learn with you. I used to ask my son, Myles, the upper North woodsman about trees. Now, he says I need to use my own brain to figure it out. So, bark identification is for another day!

BEA'S BOOKS Lumberjanes ★★★★★ (5 out of 5 stars)



BEATRICE COSGROVE reviewer

Lumberjanes by Noelle Stevenson, Shannon Watters, Brooke Allen, Grace Ellis, Kat Leyh and Faith Erin Hicks is a series of graphic novels about five girls: Jo, April, Mal, Ripley and Molly, who all go to the same summer camp, "Miss Quinzella Thiskwin Penniquiquil Thistle Crumpet Camp for Hardcore Lady Types," and become best friends when they are all put into the same cabin (Roanoke), with a girl named Jen as their scout-leader. Peculiar things start to happen at the camp, but the camp director, Rosie, doesn't seem to think they're that unusual (much to Jen's

annoyance). The five *Lumberjanes* go on many adventures throughout the books and meet many creatures and beings (human or not human). There's a woman who lives in the woods with a mysterious past, who can turn into a bear. When Rosie's away, dinosaurs attack the camp, and the girls meet merpeople, odd robots and much more. I really enjoyed reading *Lumberjanes* because of its great characters, intriguing plot, diversity and adventure. I did not read the books in order, but that may be helpful. I recommend it to ages 8+.



BILL, PG 4
ren, owner of Light Dark Landscape, member of Main Street Alliance. "One thing I know that would help is the state passing the paid family and medical leave bill." The statewide, multi-racial Minnesotans for Paid Family & Medical Leave coalition will continue to advocate for the Minnesota Senate to be open to including this popular,

commonsense bill when the two chambers go into conference committee. "As a minister and as a person of faith, I believe every person deserves the dignity of paid family and medical leave," said Reverend Corinne Freedman Ellis, leader of ISAIAH. "I hope the Senate will listen to the overwhelming majority of Minnesotans – across race, geography and political parties – 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 nonprofit organizations and labor unions 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.*

POLICING, PG 5
None of this comes as a surprise for those who know something about the history of policing. According to Alex Vitale, author of *The End of Policing*, the origins of policing are tied to protecting the interests of the governing class by sustaining eighteenth century inequality, maintaining slavery and colonialism, and controlling the new industrial working class. He goes onto say, "basic functions of managing the poor, foreign and nonwhite on behalf of a system of economic and political inequality remains." Vitale states U.S. models for policing were developed

from British colonial occupation of Ireland and U.S. occupation of the Philippines, both grounded in a drive for domination. If domination is the goal, then escalation is a logical tool. When one adds racism to this mix, something that policing as an institution shares with the rest of our culture, it comes as little surprise that black men die with such tragic frequency at the hands of police. Unless we are unambiguously committed to maintaining policing as a vehicle of control and domination, particularly for low-income people and communities of color, it is time to rethink our approach to law enforcement.

Escalation in times of conflict is an utter failure when it comes to a marriage or partnership. Escalation in times of conflict only leads to greater division when used as a tool in a church, the community or any group that finds itself at odds. Why, then, do we continue to operate as if escalation will somehow prove effective for police? It is past time that we support our police officers with alternatives that begin with listening and treating those they encounter the way they wish to be treated, even in the most difficult situations. *Tim Johnson is a retired pastor of the United Church of Christ.*

GEORGE FLOYD, PG 5
• HF593: Exclude white supremacists from police ranks. Change the Peace Officer Code of Conduct to prohibit anyone on the force from affiliating with, supporting, or advocating for white supremacist or other extremist groups.
• HF1374: Track misconduct. Require police chiefs to report officer misconduct and help to identify officers with harmful

patterns of behavior.
• HF-TBD: Limit Traffic Stops. Limit authority for police officers to stop or detain drivers for certain vehicle equipment violations. We encourage you to reach out to lawmakers to express your support for these important acts of legislation:
• Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka: sen.paul.gazelka@senate.mn

• Senate President Jeremy Miller: sen.jeremy.miller@senate.mn
• Senator Warren Limmer: sen.warren.limmer@senate.mn
We see the light of change peeking through. With your vocal support, Minnesota can throw the window wide open. *Adair Mosely President and CEO Pillsbury United Communities*



WHOLE WIDE WORLD WEST 7TH PUBLIC LIBRARY

A Letter to the patrons of the West 7th Library from Cate Sering – Branch Manager
This will be my last time contributing to the *Community Reporter* as I am transferring to the Saint Anthony Park Library as the new branch manager. Over the last year and a half, I have gotten to know so many of the amazing people that make this neighborhood special. Countless times a day, people tell me how wonderful our little library is. This is because the library is a direct reflection of the neighborhood. The library is filled with your stories, your smiles, and your warmth. Thank you for welcoming me, sharing your lives with me and making my job feel like my second home.

And now a hello from your new West 7th Library Branch Manager, Terry Giinther:
I have worked for the Saint Paul Public Library for close to 20 years. I recently was the branch manager at the Saint Anthony Park Library and have served as the branch manager for the Dayton's Bluff Library. I enjoy travel and can't wait to jump on a plane to visit another country. My passport is full of stamps as I have been to over 44 countries, and I enjoy meeting people and exploring their culture. I look forward to serving the West 7th community as the West 7th branch manager and hope to meet all of you soon.



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Oneida Scholarship

Applications for Keystone's Oneida Scholarship are now open! Scholarships are available to adult learners, age 18+, who live in the West 7th neighborhood. You must be enrolled in a certificate or degree granting post-secondary training or educational program to be eligible. Funds must be used for education or training expenses only, and grant amounts range from \$1000 - \$3000. Applications are due by June 15. For more information, visit www.keystoneservices.org, email info@keystoneservices.org, or call (651) 645-0349.

Summer Day Camp

Registration is open for Keystone's Community Kids Summer Day Camp at the West 7th Community Center! For youth entering grades 1-10, and participation is 100% free! Youth will enjoy a wide variety of enrichment and learning activities. The program runs from June 21–August 20, M–F 12–6pm. For info or to get an application, visit www.keystoneservices.org or call (651) 645-0349.

Fare for All

May 14, 10am-12pm, Fare for All will be back at the West 7th Community Center with their drive-through model, offering low-cost, delicious packages of fresh food! Featured packages: hot food, produce packs, and meat packs. \$10 to \$30. Visit www.fareforall.thefoodgroupmn.org for more information.

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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/

Grants for Minnesota Artists

The Minnesota State Arts Board has launched a program offering creative support for individuals. Creative Support grants can be used by artists and culture bearers to adapt to their changing environment; continue to make work or try new ways to make and share their work; stay connected to audiences, participants, students, or communities that participate in their arts programming; and ensure that Minnesota residents and communities will continue to have access and connection to the arts. Two application deadlines—June 4, August 6. Apply here: bit.ly/3ewCcA7

Register for your vaccine

Register on vaccineconnector.mn.gov puts your name on the state's waiting list for a vaccine, allowing you to be notified as soon as an appointment becomes available at one of the Department of Health's sites. For those willing to invest time to more quickly find a vaccine, a private Twitter account, @MNVaccineAlerts, sends out automated tweets whenever a new appointment becomes available.

Beginner Hand Drum Class

The Women's Drum Center (2242 University Ave.) hand drums for beginners May 11, 5-6pm. The class uses djembes to explore pulse and rhythm and to learn the foundation for playing African songs. Proper playing technique will be taught along with fun exercises that build skills and energy. \$10. Drums provided. Standard COVID-19 protocol is practiced. To register, email info@womensdrumcenter.net.

Met Council Climate Action Plan

An initiative to create an internal, agency-wide Climate Action Plan is under way. The plan will unify efforts across all Council divisions to further reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to climate impacts, and help us build resilience to unexpected changes. It will include our wastewater treatment and transit systems, local planning assistance work, internal support services. Find out more at bit.ly/32P2Ezq

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Call for Art at Watermark Art Center

Watermark Art Center in Bemidji, Minnesota, is proud to announce that it has been selected as the 2021 venue for the Surface Design Association Juried Member Show "Earth Matters" scheduled for September 3–October 30, 2021 in the Kaul Gallery. The Call for Art is currently open to SDA members now through June 15. Find out more at watermarkcenter.org.

Mall of America Prioritizing High Schoolers for Vaccines

Minnesotans ages 16+ are eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine, and high schoolers ages 16 and 17 are now being prioritized in appointments at the Mall. Schedule your appointment here: primarybio.com/r/vaxmn16

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