

Community REPORTER

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CITY PERSPECTIVES Forging ahead in 2022



ST. PAUL CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
CHRIS TOLBERT
columnist

Hello Saint Paul friends and neighbors, On Feb. 23, my colleagues at the St. Paul City Council discussed ongoing and successful internal efforts with city and Ramsey County leaders to prevent crime using data-driven solutions

through relationships that crisscross governmental agencies and jurisdictions. All people should feel and be safe in the City of St. Paul. We cannot accept any violence in our community and must work to stop it.

Last year, St. Paul unfortunately saw an increase in auto thefts and violent carjackings. Recognizing the need to have city and county leaders proactively combat these issues, County Attorney John Choi and my colleagues convened a table of violence reduction stakeholders to cut across bureaucracy and red tape, making sure we were directing our resources effectively to prevent crime in St. Paul. While crime is not unique to our city, our nimble method to meet these challenges head-on is the right approach.

The violence reduction table of stakeholders is breaking down silos through data-driven solutions to prevent, stop and solve crimes in St. Paul. Dedicated community leaders including Mayor Melvin Carter, city councilmembers, Police Chief Todd Axtell, City Attorney Lyndsay Olson, County Attorney John Choi, Ramsey County commissioners, Ramsey County Sheriff's Office, Ramsey County Manager Ryan O'Connor, county social services and others are tirelessly working to address these challenges - together.

Thanks to coordinated efforts, carjackings have decreased over recent months. Solutions have included focused deterrence efforts, funding of a dedicated prosecutor, investigators and community partners. Efforts also include a 'front door' for social services, outreach and support through community

FORGING AHEAD, PG 6

Mariah Theatre Company takes centerstage

The Big Blue River premieres March 4 at North Garden Theater

BY CASEY EK

Tucked away in a warehouse across the river from downtown St. Paul, the cast of Patrick Coyle's upcoming production of *The Big Blue River*

was hard at work on Saturday, Feb. 19. Up several stories and obscured by antiques, the group's practice space is filled with an energy only found among performers with just over two weeks before showtime. Coyle gives directions to the actors from a desk, but he'll occasionally stand during more intimate moments like when one character confronted another during a therapy session.

Set to run from March 4-27 at North Garden Theater, 929 West 7th St., St. Paul, *The Big Blue River* represents Coyle and Mariah Theatre Company co-founder and lead actress Gini Adams' inaugural attempt to candidly depict issues of mental health, suicide awareness and addiction. The play follows disenchanted therapist Laura Grace (and her alter-ego Lindy) as she delves into her own psyche through a writing project derived from her clients' confidential disclosures.

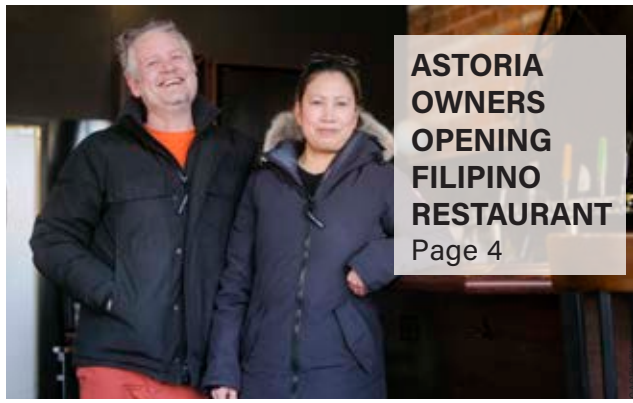
For Coyle and Adams, mental health awareness is intrinsic to their company. Mariah Theatre Company, in fact, took its name from a synthesis of the names Mary and Aria. Mary was a close friend to Coyle while Aria was Adams' 13-year-old granddaughter. Both Mary and Aria died by suicide.

"It's a story that needs to be told," Adams said of the *The Big Blue River*. "I hope that people get out of this[play] that you can survive and there is hope."

Coyle described *The Big Blue River* as a "twisting" and "genre-bending" play that could be considered either a darkly funny drama or a comedy about grieving.

"Comedy has been my saving grace as far as my approach to mental illness. But what underpins comedy is tragedy," Coyle said.

Adams will be joined onstage by lifelong St. Paulite Jim Cunningham (Frank), who has been a Twin Cities actor for 35 years and has earned acclaim for his role in a dramatic reading of *It's a Wonderful Life* at the St. Paul Hotel and his roles with Illusion Theatre; Sulia Rose Altenberg (Teagan) who has earned her stripes with Six Points Theater and several



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OPENING
FILIPINO
RESTAURANT
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CIRCULATION 13,000



At a rehearsal Feb. 19: (clockwise, standing left-right) Matt Wall, Daniel Stock, Derek Long, Patrick Coyle, Lin Mathison, Sulia Altenberg. (seated) Jim Cunningham and Gini Adams



The Big Blue River playwright, director and producer Patrick Coyle, background, oversees a scene.

other companies; Matt Wall (Tanner/waiter), who worked with Coyle in his production of *Death of a Salesman* and *Miracle Worker* and

has numerous other local theater credits and Derek Long (Donald), who worked with Coyle in the film *Into Temptation* and boasts numerous TV, film and theater credits as well.

To guide the actors, Coyle fosters a kind and compassionate space, Altenberg said. She said that kindness has thus far been crucial considering the sensitive subject matter of the play and has helped her bring her character to life.

Altenberg's character, Teagan, is a young woman who has assumed a dysfunctional parental role over her parents. The actress said she believes audiences are sure to see themselves in Teagan and hopes that in doing so they might feel a sense of connectedness with the play.

"It's almost always emotional for the audience to see themselves mirrored in family relationships [on stage]," Altenberg said. "That's amazing to know there's other people who are wrestling with that spot."

THE BIG BLUE RIVER, PG 4



Freedom House

Judge hears Freedom House restraining order arguments

BY DIANE GERTH

The legal fight continues in the lawsuit brought by several West 7th businesses against the City of St. Paul and Freedom House, the daytime homeless shelter opened last winter to provide a place for unsheltered people to spend time while COVID has shut public spaces.

The businesses (Tom Reid's Hockey Pub, Art Farm, 262 Fort Road, LLC, TD Wright and others) sued in November 2021. In the complaint, they claim that the city ordinance that allowed Freedom House to operate is invalid and that the city breached its duties as owner of the property to keep the activities of its tenant in line. The plaintiffs also claim that Freedom House has negligently operated the facility, listing over a hundred the shelter.

After filing the lawsuit, the businesses immediately sought a temporary restraining order (TRO) from the court, asking that the court stop the city and Freedom House from operating the facility. Affidavits and statements from over a dozen businesses and residents describe incidents caused by the visitors to Freedom House, including public urination and defecation; intoxicated people on private property; harassment of business customers, vomit and syringes left on the sidewalks, trash and shopping carts surrounding the building; fights between Freedom House clients and

threats to business owners.

Freedom House argued that the TRO would harm its unsheltered clients should the facility be closed, claiming that the plaintiffs "simply do not wish to see the poor."

The City of St. Paul argued that they have the power under state law to enact ordinances that allow the facility and that the businesses cannot force the city to enforce its pre-COVID zoning code. Both Freedom House and the city meanwhile stress that they have been working on solutions to the problems raised by the businesses.

The city has also asked Judge Patrick Diamond to dismiss the claims against it, claiming statutory and official immunity against the claims. The city also claims that it has no duty to control the actions of its tenant, Freedom House. The plaintiffs have opposed dismissal, arguing that it's too early in the case and that the facts must be fully determined before a dismissal can be considered.

A hearing on the temporary restraining order was held on Dec. 28, and a hearing on the motion to dismiss was held on Feb. 17. Diamond took both matters under advisement and had not issued a decision by the time of this issue's publication. Federal law allows up to 90 days for deliberation.

Diane Gerth is a board member of the Community Reporter.

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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.

-- Casey Ek, Editor, *Community Reporter*

BUILDING AN ANTIRACIST COMMUNITY

The U.S. Origin Myth and Critical Race Theory



TIM JOHNSON
columnist

According to the transcribed message on my phone, I had just missed a call from a mythology consultant who wanted me to return the call. Had I still been active as a pastor with the responsibility of delivering a sermon every Sunday, the idea of speaking with a mythology consultant would have strong appeal. I would have immediately called back with some questions.

"What is that Jonah and the whale story all about?" Sadly, there was no mythology consultant. The transcription on my phone had misheard the speaker who was actually a dermatology consultant returning my call to address an unpleasant rash I had developed.

One of the liberating things I discovered as a student in the seminary was that scripture is laden with myth. I grew up in a faith context that would be outraged by speaking about stories like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as myth. Myth, we thought, was merely a made-up story and therefore absent of any truth essential for faith. What I learned as a seminarian, and which is something one might also learn in a good philosophy class, is that myth is all about discovering truth found in the meaning of a story rather than the facts of a story. Myth commonly focuses on origin and identity, who we are as a people. This understanding of myth was underscored by the philosopher Joseph Campbell in his highly influential work *The Power of Myth*. A good mythology consultant would take the story of Adam and Eve and look for the truth in

what it means to be human. Myth can be challenging because it refuses to offer easy answers and demands our engagement. There were plenty of times as I struggled preparing a Sunday sermon that I would have loved to have dialed up a mythology consultant.

A mythology consultant would be particularly helpful when it comes to addressing the current controversy over what gets tossed under the broad umbrella of critical race theory. In the first place, a mythology consultant would make it clear that the fundamental issue has to do with the myth we tell about how this country was founded. What we include and what we exclude or who we include and who we exclude will have a huge influence on the meaning we draw from the story we tell about our nation's origin and who we are as a people.

Critical race theory is a 40-plus-year-old academic study unpacking the ways in which racism is more than individual prejudice but has been embedded in our nation's policies and practices from the beginning, including the clause in the constitution that defines blacks as 3/5 human. One would be hard pressed to find a public school system

that teaches critical race theory. What one can find are schools that are telling an origin story which now includes people and history previously excluded, like the genocide of Indigenous people or ownership of enslaved people by our nation's founders.

An origin story that includes women, Blacks and Indigenous people is a direct challenge to an origin story whose primary actors are white males living out a "Manifest Destiny" to conquer an unspoiled West and whose exceptionalism brings light to the world. The myth we tell ourselves and our children about our origins as a nation is about our identity today, who we are and who we seek to be. For my part, I prefer a story that enables us to grapple honestly with the challenges we face so that the nation's founding myth of freedom and liberation is one in which we might all share, including Latinos who have their own unique claim on our nation's history and many other immigrant populations often excluded. It would be nice if there were mythology consultants we could dial up. My guess is they would be in high demand.

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

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WEST END HEALTHLINE

Get your rear in gear this March

BY CATHERINE BLEDSOE, MD

As you prepare to pack up the snowblower and tune up the mower in anticipation of spring, consider adding checking in on your health maintenance to your to-do list. March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, and, in the words of the Colon Cancer Coalition, is the perfect time to get your rear in gear.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer and cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S. This year over 151,000 Americans will be diagnosed and about 52,000 will die of colorectal cancer. While the death rate is decreasing, thanks to better treatments and earlier detection, the number of adults younger than 55 years old being diagnosed with colon cancer has been increasing for the last decade. In fact, one in five patients with colon cancer are between 20 and 54, and some research suggests people born in the 1990s actually have twice the risk of colon cancer than people born in the 1950s.

Family history of colon cancer or personally having inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis increase the risk of developing colon cancer. When looking at what we can control, stopping smoking, limiting your alcohol intake, maintaining a healthy weight and reducing the amount of red or processed meat you eat can all help reduce your risk. You can also take charge by getting screened for colon cancer.

The United States Preventative Services Task Force recommends anyone 45 years or older get screened for colon cancer. Most people have heard about colonoscopies, where doctors use a camera to examine the inside of the colon. While this method of screening requires the full bowel prep and cleanout, it's the only one that allows doctors to see the whole colon and remove any suspicious tissue or polyps at the same time. Don't worry, you don't have to be awake



for the procedure! Plus, if your colonoscopy is normal, you may not need another for 10 years. There are ways to get screened even if you don't have insurance. Doctors can also use a camera to view the lowest part of your colon with a sigmoidoscopy. They'll be able to collect samples from any polyps they find, but they might not be able to remove

them like they could in a colonoscopy. If the samples come back positive for signs of colon cancer, you may need a colonoscopy. However, if your screening is normal, you might not need another for five years.

Even though these are good tests, the inconvenience of the prep and intimate nature of the exams prevents a lot of people from being screened. Thankfully, there are other stool-based tests we can use. These tests can be done at home with kits from your health care provider. Both the fecal occult blood test (FOBT) and fecal immunochemical test (FIT) sense microscopic amounts of blood in your stool, which can be a sign of colon cancer. These are done each year and are usually inexpensive and covered by insurance. Other tests, like ColoGuard, are done every three years and can also identify abnormal DNA in your stool. These are usually covered by insurance but can be more expensive than FOBT or FIT if you're uninsured. If any of these stool tests yield abnormal results, you likely would be recommended to have a colonoscopy.

Your primary care provider is a great resource for learning more about screening options, understanding next steps and deciding which screening is right for you. Ultimately, the best test is the one that gets it done. If you don't have a provider yet, the team at Allina Health United Family Physicians would be happy to partner with you to get your rear, and the rest of your health, in gear.

Catherine is a family medicine physician at United Family Physicians, 233 Grand Ave, St. Paul. 651-241-5200

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Ford CP Spur: Opportunity slipping away

BY GREGORY STRUVE, PE

In 2017, the City of St. Paul performed a study on the disused Canadian Pacific (CP) Spur from the previous Ford Plant Site, now Highland Bridge, roughly paralleling 7th Street to almost Emma Street where it joins another underused track. The city identified it as a community asset with opportunities in transportation, recreation, and economic development.

Since then, Ramsey County has kept some portions of this Spur as an alternative to Riverview Corridor, which currently is pursuing a rail alignment on 7th St. Since Ramsey County is determined to mix rail and existing traffic on 7th St, it is actively avoiding acquisition of this valuable community asset in fear of finally recognizing parts of it as feasible alternatives to mixed rail and vehicle traffic on 7th St.

Immediate acquisition of this Spur is critical. The federal government is now considering approval of the Canadian Pacific Railroad acquisition of the Kansas City

Southern Railroad. This will result in the loss of jobs and related negative economic impacts to the Twin Cities. Compensation for these negative impacts can be made by requiring Canadian Pacific to make available unused rail property to the public at low or no cost. The Ford CP Rail Spur is ripe for acquisition currently, along with other underused rail properties in the Twin Cities.

On Jan. 18th a Highland District Council Resolution recommended that the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority acquire the Spur for Public Benefit. The Fort Road (7th St) Federation is currently considering a similar resolution.

Public pressure toward Ramsey County is needed to make this timely opportunity a reality.

Jerome Johnson, James Schoettler, Jay Severance, Mat Hollinshead, Greg Struve, PE, and Brennan Malanaphy represent Citizen Advocates for Regional Transit (C-A-R-T), an informal association of Twin Cities executives focusing on the need for a balanced regional approach to transportation planning and development.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

It's time to act on climate change

BY TOM LUCY

In Jan. 2022, the Saint Paul City Council declared that we are in the midst of a climate emergency. Within this declaration, the city points out how we are already feeling the effects of our delayed and timid response to climate change.

The declaration notes that we have seen signs across the world, for some time, that a changing climate is dangerous for all. We also now see the impacts of climate change impacting us close to home. We have and will continue to see more extreme weather such as drought conditions, heat waves, flooding and more violent storms. If this wasn't bad enough, we also see that as the temperature increases the other problems we face are only exacerbated (poverty, public health, violence in the community, disruptions to student learning).

As we face a situation which is worsening daily, it is obvious that now is the time to act. Action, in this situation, means we must reduce our carbon emissions quickly and dramatically. So where do we start? The good news is that starting with any source of emissions is good. But if we look at what sources of emissions are growing and which will be the hardest to reduce we don't have to look far to

see the transportation sector. Some sources of emissions, locally and nationwide, have started to decrease but transportation has stubbornly been increasing. As the transportation sector is an area which touches us all, we all will need to be part of the solution in making that sector cleaner. We will all need to examine how transportation impacts our lives, how the daily choices we make impact the planet and how we can make change.

On April 13, the Saint Paul Federation of Educators will be hosting a virtual town hall focused on climate, transportation and SPPS. All are welcome to attend this event to hear more about how we can make our community and our school district a leader in creating a cleaner, more sustainable transportation system for future generations. If interested in hearing more about this event you can register to attend at <https://forms.gle/fXweqWL4UwK488UC9> or contact SPFE Climate Action Team member, Tom Lucy at telucy73@gmail.com.

A St. Paul resident, Tom Lucy is a member of the Saint Paul Federation of Educators. Within that group, he is working with colleagues to address action on climate change within SPPS.



Community News & Events



U of M wrestling standout Fells Neiman Gracie in Bellator MMA

Logan Storley, a U of M All-American wrestling standout defeated decorated Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belt Neiman Gracie at Bellator 274 on Feb. 19 in what was the organization's first five-round non-title main event. Storley's unanimous decision win over Gracie puts him on the fast track to a title shot in Bellator's 170 lb. division. Storley was a four-time All-American for the U of M, where he wrestled from 2011-15.

Journalists awarded \$825,000 for treatment from law enforcement amid 2020 unrest

A federal judge has approved a permanent injunction that will prohibit Minnesota State Patrol from attacking or arresting journalists, as part of a settlement agreement between journalists and the Minnesota State Patrol.

As a result of the settlement, journalists attacked and injured by MSP while covering the unrest following the police killings of George Floyd and Duante Wright have been awarded \$825,000.

The settlement also includes several other rulings affecting how law enforcement may interact with journalists during protests. For the next six years, MSP and law enforcement acting in concert with MSP are prohibited from attacking journalists who are reporting on and recording protests. Under the court order, MSP

is prohibited from:

- Arresting, threatening to arrest, and/or using physical force or chemical agents against journalists.
- Ordering journalists to stop photographing, recording or observing a protest.
- Making journalists disperse.
- Seizing or intentionally damaging equipment such as photo, audio or video gear.

Allina's United Family Physicians Clinic hits one year landmark

Allina Health's United Family Physicians Clinic reached the one-year mark in the West 7th neighborhood.

"The opening of our new United Family Physicians' clinic in the heart of the West Seventh neighborhood allowed our team to continue their commitment to care for the community we are so privileged to serve," said Gerald Montie, MD, per a release. "We are grateful for our patients who have been with us on this journey to provide accessible, equitable care."

The United Family Physicians clinic at 233 Grand Ave. provides holistic primary care for all ages, as well as mental health and addiction services and obstetrics. The clinic is also a training site for Allina's residency program, which trains 21 family medicine residents a year.

"Our physicians and residents are deeply

Andrew Young is named 21-22 CARE Artist-in-Residence

St. Paul's Landmark Center named puppeteer Andrew Young as the Artist-in-Residence of the 2021-2022 Community Artist Resident Engagement (CARE) Program. Young's "Beyond the Five Senses" inspires guests to ponder traditional and unconventional senses from March to August 2022.

The first engagement of Young's artistic series, *Letters to Your Neighbor*, will be in Landmark Center's Cortile on March 26 from 1-3 p.m. The piece explores the sense of connection and utilizes a mail chute to write and receive letters from your neighbors, according to the Landmark Center. Additional senses explored throughout the series include justice, imagination, taste, sight, sound, rhythm, and exploration. Each engagement incorporates the unique architecture of the Landmark Center for an interactive art experience. "I am excited at the possibility of getting to know the space in a different way and encouraging more people to engage with the space."

Other dates: *Reimagining Justice* (5/7, 10:30am-12:30pm); *Exquisite Crankies* (5/22, 1-3pm); *Greenhouse Gallery* (6/12, 1-3pm); *Building Rhythms* (6/30, 5-7pm); *Falls at Landmark* (7/21, 7pm); *Light Up Landmark* (8/18, 7pm).

connected to the West Seventh neighborhood," said Dr. Stephanie Rosener, director of Allina Health's United Family Medicine Residency Program per a release. "Many of our physicians have served this community for decades and in many cases generations within the same family. We are grateful for the continued support of the community as we continue providing our resident physicians high-quality healthcare experiences that are anchored in the community and built on a foundation of community engagement."

Lunch with Leaders: March Mavericks - Celebrating Women's History Month

Join the St. Paul Area Chamber for a lunch with leaders, featuring Kenya McKnight Ahad, chief executive officer and founder of Black Women's Wealth Alliance; Major General Johanna P. Clyborne, assistant adjutant general of the Minnesota National Guard & deputy commanding general - Cyber Center of Excellence; and Lara Juras, executive vice president and chief people and culture officer for the Minnesota Vikings.

The event is March 9, 11:30am-1pm at Metropolitan State University's New Main Great Hall, 700 7th St. East.

St. Paul, teachers union prepares to strike

The St. Paul Federation of Educators, the collective bargaining unit for St. Paul teachers and educators, is prepared to go on strike March 8 if doesn't reach a resolution with St. Paul Public Schools for a new two-year contract.

The parties have been in regular negotiations and of the Feb. 25 mediation session, SPFE said talks were "fairly productive" with "frustrating moments." Around 4,000 teachers, educators and community service professionals are union members.

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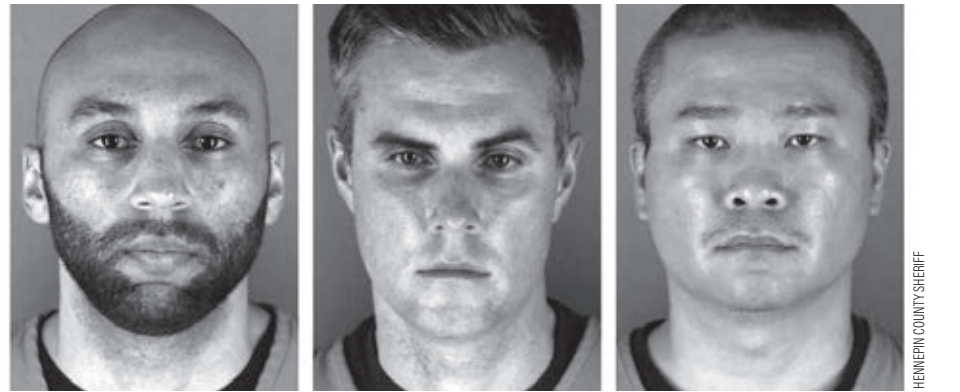
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(l-r) Alexander Kueng, Thomas Lane and Tou Thao

Ex-Minneapolis cops found guilty of violating George Floyd's civil rights

A federal jury found Thomas Lane, J. Alexander Kueng and Tou Thao, the former Minneapolis police officers who helped Derek Chauvin restrain George Floyd in the leadup to his death, guilty of depriving Floyd of his civil rights when they deprived him of his right to medical care.

"Today's verdict recognizes that two police officers violated the Constitution by failing to intervene to stop another officer from killing George Floyd, and three officers violated the Constitution by failing to provide aid to Mr. Floyd in time to prevent his death," said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland per a U.S. Justice Department release. "The Justice Department will continue to seek accountability for law enforcement officers whose actions, or failure to act, violate their constitutional duty to protect the civil rights of our citizens. George Floyd should be alive today."

Thao and Kueng were found to have deprived Floyd of his constitutional right to be free from an officer's unreasonable force when each willfully failed to intervene to stop former MPD Officer Derek Chauvin's use of unreasonable force, resulting in bodily injury to and the death of Floyd, the release further states.

A sentencing date was not scheduled as of this issue's publishing.



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Community Nourishment

Cafe Astoria owners to open modern Filipino restaurant

BY CASEY EK

Leah Raymundo and John Occhiato, the proprietors of Cafe Astoria, are spreading their wings and are set to open Kalsada at 1668 Selby Ave.

Kalsada, which means street in Filipino, will inhabit the former home of Augustine's and will boast a modern Filipino menu.

The pair is eyeing a mid-April opening with reservations potentially opening as soon as April 1.

The menu is not yet locked, but the pair, with the help of Executive Chef Joe Harter, hopes to present traditional dishes like lumbiang shanghai (eggrolls) in ways that St. Paul audiences might be more accustomed to.

Raymundo, who hails from Bulakan, about an hour north of Manila, Philippines, said that while she enjoys traditional Filipino food, modernizing the dishes will bring a new level of fulfillment to her.

"It's more exciting for us to do that. It's more creative," Raymundo said, adding that the dishes the restaurant cooks up will stay true to their roots.

The pair expanded Cafe Astoria, which opened in 2017, last June with the addition of health-inspired Mediterranean dishes and their bakery Stella Belle. The expansion came after over four years of inadequate storage. Occhiato recalls having to pick up milk every Saturday because most companies don't deliver on Sundays, and the cafe didn't have space to store extra products. Now, they aim to bring the gains made at Cafe Astoria to Kalsada.

The latter establishment will be open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, during which time guests can expect Cafe Astoria's coffee, dishes and



John Occhiato, left, and Leah Raymundo inside the future home of Kalsada, 1668 Selby Ave.

service. Students would be free to work on laptops during this time, Occhiato said.

The restaurant will then close for an hour and reopen at 4 p.m. when it will switch to dinner and full bar service. Kalsada will close at 9 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 8 p.m. Sunday.

Occhiato noted that despite Filipinos having representation in terms of numbers in the United States, their food is often hard to find.

"We're doing this because we want to bring Filipino food to the people, and we like serving people," Occhiato said.

When asked about the timing of opening a restaurant in uncertain COVID-marked times, the pair felt confident the community they've built at Cafe Astoria would help carry Kalsada. The pair is typically working by 5 a.m. to prep and bake at the cafe, so they'll rely heavily on the staff they hire and the relationships they have built with customers to put Kalsada on the map.

"If you have a very good community, you have nothing to be scared of," Raymundo said.

Raymundo and Occhiato plan to add a fair bit of color to the building that will house Kalsada and will incorporate at least one mural into their design.

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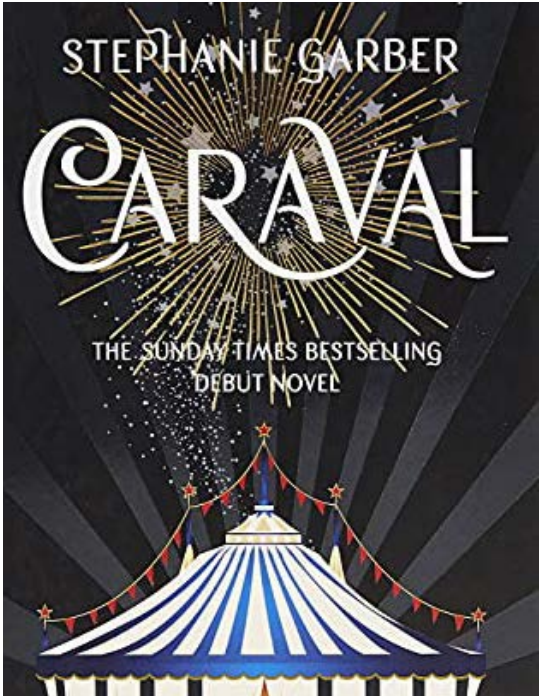
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ABBY'S ANGLE *Caraval*, Garber's debut novel is amazing

Editor's Note: You might have noticed that Beatrice Cosgrove is missing from this book review column. That's because she decided to let her friend Abby Horton rotate into the paper. Now, the two of them will both be contributing to the *Community Reporter*. Let us welcome Abby to the neighborhood.

REVIEW BY ABBY HORTON

In *Caraval* by Stephanie Garber, we follow Scarlet as she writes to 'Legend', the head of the caravel, a fast sailing ship. At the beginning of the book, Scarlet is shown writing to Legend for many years as it is the dream of her sister Donatella—or Tella for short—to go to the carnival on the mysterious island of la Isla de los Sueños or "The Island of Dreams." Seven years after the first letter is sent to Legend, he replies with three tickets to carnival just as Scarlet is to be married to a man she has never met.

Because of their abusive father, the sisters are unable to escape their home until Julian, a local

sailor offers to take them to la Isla de los Sueños in exchange for one of their tickets. As soon as they arrive on the island, they find themselves almost locked out of the caravel. Shortly after their arrival Tella disappears, and wild game starts. Much to Scarlet's surprise, the game is to find her sister, and everyone on the island searches for her in hopes to win a wish from Legend himself. As the games go on, we see Scarlet and Julian form a romantic relationship, and Scarlet starts to fall for him but is scared that Julian might be Legend. As the games continue, Julian and Scarlet find that their tasks are the easiest of all because of Scarlet's relationship with her sister, and they end up finding Tella earlier than the rest, but to their surprise Tella is cursed and is made to think that she has met Legend. This book has taught me to not always believe everything. I think this book is amazing, and I recommend it to readers who love mystery and suspense. This book is for readers 12 and up.

THE BIG BLUE RIVER, PG 1

Long said his playing his character Donald scared him at first, namely because the character performs a parody of Madonna's *Like a Virgin* in drag. But on Feb. 19, Long could be seen in the wings of the rehearsal space repping the piece quietly to himself while the other actors worked with Coyle. He'd sometimes strike a seductive pose despite having no audience in order to refine his delivery.

When Coyle learned of Long's enthusiasm for the role despite his fear, he knew he made the right casting call. In fact, Coyle said the cast at large is unique in that they resemble the vision he had for the characters almost perfectly.

"It's pretty rare when the look and sound and feel of these character that I have in my head walk in the room, and it happened this time," Coyle said.

Coyle said there are no guarantees that audiences will appreciate the company's efforts to toe the line of multiple genres, but he is eager to find out.

"It's going to be fascinating to see how people respond," Coyle said.

Mariah Theatre Company "The Big Blue River" March 4-27 at North Garden Theater. Most Thursday and one Friday performances will include a talk back with the cast, director and a surprise special guest. Tickets are available online at bit.ly/bigblue2022 or by calling 651-805-3710. For more information, please visit mariahtheatre.com.



Gini Adams, facing, who plays the lead character Laura Grace runs a scene with Jim Cunningham who plays Frank in Mariah Theatre Company's *The Big Blue River*.



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In the Community

West 7th students can earn free college credit, personalize their education

BY JOE NATHAN

West 7th students and families have terrific opportunities to earn free college credit and/or personalize their education in the next few months, thanks to many free public school options. These options can help youngsters identify and develop their gifts, talents and interests. Options also can help students develop vital basic and applied life skills.

In the next month, St Paul families and students can select their school and high school classes for the 2022-23 school year.

One of the most valuable options for high school students, starting for some in ninth grade, is earning free college credit via courses taught in high school, online or on college campuses.

Free Minnesota Post-Secondary Enrollment Option courses are available in “hands on” vocational and academic subjects. Though not as well known, starting in 10th grade, students can take free vocational courses at two-year public colleges such as St. Paul College and the Finishing Trade Institute. Eleventh and 12th graders can take free academic courses at many colleges and universities. Admission requirements vary.

Students can take PSEO courses on college campuses, or online. State law requires that high schools let students use school computers to take PSEO courses. Students must register for PSEO classes by May 30. Information here: <https://education.mn.gov/mde/fam/dual/pseo/>.

In addition, 10-12th graders who are proficient in any of 27 world languages can earn free credit at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities by passing tests (course-taking isn’t required). Languages include ASL, Arabic, Chinese, Dakota, German, Hmong, Karen, Ojibwe, Somali and Spanish. Information here: education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/stds/world/seals/.

Virtually every St. Paul district and charter high school offers some college-level courses – called Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or Concurrent Enrollment/College in Schools. College credit for AP and IB is based mostly or entirely on a student’s final exam score. College credit for other courses depends on a student’s work throughout the term. Minnesota’s Office of Higher Education explains dual credit college/university acceptance policies here: bit.ly/3sfZ1cT.

Minnesota requires every student, working with their family and educators, to develop a post high school plan: bit.ly/3sobis5P. More personalized education builds on students’ interests and talents. That helps increase



The Finishing Trades of the Upper Midwest provides a unique opportunity for students to learn about the different crafts and professions found in our trade. <https://www.ftum.edu>



Saint Paul College's Culinary Department has partnered with Minnesota Central Kitchen to prepare more than 25,000 family-sized meals since the COVID pandemic began in March 2020. See how our inspired students use food to uplift communities in need: <https://bit.ly/3f7HdQZ>

student motivation to learn, as St Paul author Ted Kolderie, explains: bit.ly/3hc7lKR.

Minnesota has developed numerous opportunities for personalized learning over the last 30+ years. These opportunities are found within school districts as well as chartered, private, home and online schools.

Their availability gives options for thousands of students to learn to their potential while also being a resource for traditional learning. Expansion of personalized learning will benefit our increasingly diverse student population while also improving traditional learning for all. School leaders and policy makers should make its growth a priority.

St Paul Public Schools (spps.org/choosespps) offers many valuable options such as language immersion, Montessori, online, project-based learning and others, with a current magnet/alternative enrollment of more than 10,000 students of the 34,000+ enrolled.

West 7th families also have free charter public school options, including Cyber Village Academy, Nova, St. Paul School of Northern Lights, Upper Mississippi Academy, Urban Academy and others. A map showing charters is here: bit.ly/3BPAzca.

Fortunately, West 7th area families have more and more opportunities for a free, public, personalized education.

Joe Nathan has been a St Paul Public School educator, parent and PTA president. He directs the Center for School Change, based in St Paul. Questions/reactions welcome: joe@centerforschoolchange.org

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Birds through Dakota Eyes

Did you ever wonder how the wood duck got its red eyes? Cañte Máza (Neil McKay), University of Minnesota senior Dakota language specialist, will explain this and more in a talk about birds in Dakota language and culture on March 2, 7-8 p.m. Registration is requested through Eventbrite to receive a secure Zoom Webinar link. Recommended for adults and children ages 8+. Register online at: bit.ly/3t7z3y1.

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In the Community

Notebook Recollections

Local staple Tim Rumsey walked to work most days from 1987 to 2000. He began as a form of exercise but kept at it for his love of local lore harvested through his interactions with people on the street. He began documenting his musings and eventually filled 53 pocketbooks with his observations. Here is just one tale.

BY TIM RUMSEY, MD

March 1998:

I heard loud noises from the clinic lab. Furniture tipping over, glass shattering. People shouting and crying.

Dr. Ravi and I ran down the hall to the lab waiting room.

A large print of Monet’s Water Lilies hung crazily from the wall. Triangles of glass stuck straight out from the frame. A wild looking young man hoisted a chair over his head and flung it into a corner. Then he bent over and started sailing glass shards into the lab where three techs crouched behind a corner. The remaining patients scattered out of the area.

We didn’t recognize the fellow.

Ravi talked calmly and quietly. He asked the guy to sit down for a second.

He sat down.

We sat on either side of him. He rubbed an index card-sized piece of glass back and forth

against his neck. He laughed. Then, he yelled!

Ravi and I put a hand on each of his arms. He seemed to calm down. I motioned for the lab people to ease away.

Dr. Macken rounded the corner and stopped suddenly when she saw us.

The guy jumped up and side-armed his piece of glass at her as hard as he could. It just missed her face, shattering on the wall behind her.

Dr. Macken froze in place. Ravi and I stood up alongside the poor guy. He gave Dr. Macken a Charles Manson stare. He gasped deep, heaving breaths. Dr. Macken started to back up and he lunged toward her. I tackled low and Ravi tackled high. The guy spat and bit and flailed about. We finally pinned him down. He bellowed and shouted as he kept spitting and snapping.

Dr. Macken called 911 from a wall phone, but help was already on the way. Four paramedics charged into the lab waiting from one entrance point, and three police officers from another. Ravi and I held our human straight jacket positions. Dr. Macken told as much of the story as she knew.

As two cops readied to exchange spots with Ravi and me, the guy took a sudden roundhouse swing at one of them and missed.

Together, police and paramedics got him

up and buckled onto a stretcher. Off they went to United Hospital Emergency. One of our residents met them at the door.

Ravi and I washed off the spittle. I tried to straighten the bent frame of my glasses. Ravi pinched his ripped shirt. Dr. Macken asked if we knew what was up?

Ravi remarked that basically it was not your ideal doctor-patient encounter.

We found out the young man was a new patient scheduled with one of our nurse practitioners for a mental health visit. When his name was called from the front waiting room, he pushed past the nurse and ran down the hall ending up in the lab.

As it turned out, Tex - one of the best cab drivers in West 7th history and a beloved patient - had walked up to the clinic while the melee was happening. He threaded around a paramedic van and a fire engine, two cop cars, an unmarked squad and a horse patrol mount. And he was particularly keen to mention a Cossetta Pizza delivery vehicle.

“I heard the pizza guy talk your fellow down,” Tex said to me.

True. We hired him on the spot!”

“By the way,” Tex asked, “What kind of pizza was it?”

FEDERATION UPDATE

fortroadfederation.org



Come join our Board

The Fort Road Federation Board will elect a new president, first vice president, second vice president and treasurer at its annual meeting April 26. These are at-large positions.

In addition, one area coordinator position for each of the Federation’s three geographical areas is open. These must be filled by renters at this time, although a homeowner/ business owner position may open in Area 1. Area coordinators are board members. Contact fortroadfed@fortroadfederation.org for more info.

Interested? Complete a self-nomination form at fortroadfederation.org. You must be 18 or older and live, own property or own a business in the area served by the Fort Road Federation.

Upcoming Meetings, via Zoom

Info: fortroadfederation.org/calendar

- **Transportation & Land Use Committee**, Wed, 3/2, 6:30 pm
- **Board Meeting** Mon, 3/14, 7 pm
- **Community Engagement and Outreach Committee** - Thu, 3/17, 6:30 pm

Stay in touch

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

Contact

Mary Cutrufello, executive director, 651-298-5599; mary@fortroadfederation.org; 882 West 7th, Suite 6, Rathskeller Building.



Brooke Blakey, new director of the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS)

FORGING AHEAD, PG 1

ambassadors and technical assistance through Group Violence Intervention. But we know that one carjacking is too many, so we still have work to do.

City leaders are also continuing to address catalytic converter thefts in coordination with the St. Paul Police Department. This is not just a St. Paul problem, but a regional, state and national issue. In January, the city council voted unanimously to pass an ordinance that makes sales or purchases of detached catalytic converters by unlicensed dealers a misdemeanor level offense. I will be continuing my discussion with our delegation in the Minnesota legislature about a statewide approach to catalytic converter thefts.

As the city further works to prevent crime and enhance community-first public safety efforts, I supported the creation of the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS). Recently, Mayor Carter appointed Brooke

Blakey as the director of ONS. This office will continue the data-driven framework to prevent and address crime in St. Paul works with various city departments, first responders, residents and system stakeholders to further identify and expand neighborhood safety strategies. In the coming months, ONS will hire additional staff, create a Neighborhood Safety Community Council and work with Healing Streets to advance the White House Community Violence Intervention Collaborative.

Additionally, St. Paul just graduated its newest class of police recruits. Join me in congratulating the newest 55 officers to join our great police department.

Our community still has work to do, but I believe that together we can ensure a safe St. Paul.

Chris Tolbert
Ward 3 Councilmember, City of Saint Paul
Phone: 651-266-8630; Fax: 651-266-8574
Email: Ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Exciting times for Saint Paul Public Library

By Terry Giinther, Library Manager

It’s an exciting time for Saint Paul Public Library (SPPL). We are kicking off the next phase of community engagement to co-create a vision to transform library spaces in Saint Paul.

SPPL has a big goal for library buildings in Saint Paul: to invest in spaces that are safe, inviting, affirming and comfortable for people of all cultures, abilities and communities. SPPL created that goal with input from the community and it is part of the 2022 Strategic Direction. Read more at: sppl.org/strategic-direction/.

Using that goal as a springboard, SPPL further engaged with the community to create a facilities direction that presents a vision and set of recommendations for library buildings.

It includes the transformation of three libraries in Saint Paul that have not been renovated in more than 30 years, Hamline Midway, Hayden Heights and Riverview, as well as improvements to technology and play and learning spaces in all library buildings in Saint Paul.

SPPL recently announced that LSE Architects was selected as the design and engagement partner for the three library buildings. They are leading community engagement to inform schematic designs as we transform Hamline Midway Library and seek funding to transform Hayden Heights and Riverview libraries.

To learn about SPPL’s vision to transform libraries and/or join the email list to learn about



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community engagement opportunities, visit sppl.org/transforming-libraries.

Library Hours

The West 7th Public Library, 265 Oneida Street is open Mondays, Thursdays 12:30-8pm, Tuesdays 11:30am-5:30pm and Wednesdays, Fridays 10am-5:30pm. The library is closed Saturdays and Sundays.

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Make Friends at Keystone's Senior Centers

As the seasons begin to change, Keystone is here for seniors ages 50+. At both our West 7th Community Center and Merriam Park Community Center locations, Keystone is here helping with taxes, doing our exercises, playing BINGO and dreaming of warmer summer weather. And if you're not ready to leave the house, we offer Zoom programs. For more information, call 651-645-7424. Come join us because everything is better with a friend.

March is MN Foodshare month

Celebrate Minnesota Foodshare Month by supporting Keystone Community Services' food programs. You can help by hosting a donation drive, donating food or funds, or volunteering. To learn more and get involved, visit keystoneservices.org/donate.

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WOMEN'S DRUM CENTER CLASSES

The Women's Drum Center is offering a beginning hand drum class on Wednesday, March 16, 3:30pm to 4:30pm: Djembe Joy. Class members play djembes to explore pulse and rhythms. Easy, energizing exercises will be utilized to build skills. Join us for the opportunity to explore an enriching musical experience. The focus will be on having fun! Instructor: Jo Klein. Drums are provided. Masks are required. \$10.00 per participant. Register at www.womensdrumcenter.org.

JAZZ NIGHT AT KEG AND CASE

Enjoy some jazz at the Keg and Case market on Thursday, March 3, 6-8 p.m. Keg and Case is located at 928 West 7th.

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JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

Jewish Family Service of St. Paul is seeking volunteers for Passover for All, an annual community outreach effort. In partnership with the Minnesota JCC, kosher-for-Passover food and supplies are provided to families to help them celebrate the holiday. Three opportunities to help with this outreach effort: a gift of \$36 will provide one Passover for All bag that contains an array of traditional kosher-for-Passover food and holiday greetings. Donate at <https://give.classy.org/JFSCCommunity>; Volunteers are also being recruited to safely deliver the gift bags. Contact JFS Community Engagement Manager Jodi Saltzman 651-983-0965, jsaltzman@jfsp.org for more information about volunteer opportunities.

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A Portrait of a Young Artist

PARKS

By Harrison David Rivers
in collaboration with Robin P.
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Directed by Talvin Wilks

March 19 thru
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Parks: A Portrait of a Young Artist

Join History Theatre as they bring to life the story of renown photographer Gordon Parks in *Parks: A Portrait of a Young Artist*. The play opens March 19 and runs through April 10. Inspired by Parks's book, *A Choice of Weapons*, playwright Harrison David Rivers takes us into the world of young Gordon, who would choose a camera to fight back hatred and discrimination. His passion as an artist would lead him to become a major figure in the American cultural landscape. Ticket information at historytheatre.com/2021-2022/parks

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