

Community REPORTER

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

COUNTY PERSPECTIVE Share your ideas of priorities for the new DFL majority



SEN. SANDY PAPPAS
columnist

After years of gridlock and division, Minnesota finally has a unified government. Thanks to voters, we now have a state government that will work for them, and I'm ready to get to work delivering for Minnesotans.

I'm honored to return to the Senate in a new role as the Chair of the Capital Investment Committee, a position that will oversee millions of dollars in job-creating public investment. As Chair of this committee, I'll press for two major projects to revitalize our local economy here in downtown St. Paul and the surrounding neighborhoods. First up is the RiversEdge development, a proposal to transform the old Ramsey County jail site on Kellogg Boulevard into apartments and office space overlooking the bluff onto the Mississippi River featuring a terraced park down to the river's edge. I will also push for the East Kellogg Bridge replacement, a proposal for which I've supported the City of Saint Paul's efforts to secure federal funding to share the cost.

Another top priority for me is affordable housing. Our community understands the importance of tackling homelessness, and I'm looking forward to leading the effort to ensure that all of our neighbors have safe and affordable housing. To make this proposal a reality, I'll collaborate with our partners at Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul to work on housing the homeless and building more affordable housing.

Social Security is critical for many of our neighbors who've entered retirement, but Social Security alone isn't enough. That's why I'll champion a pension plan for low wage workers called Secure Choice. Sixteen other states already have a similar program, and Minnesota should join them to ensure that every Minnesotan is able to retire with dignity.

I'll also dedicate much of my time this next session to improving our juvenile justice system. We're all concerned about the recent increase in crime, and it's especially heartbreaking to see young people committing crimes that could jeopardize their futures. We need to do a better job of taking care of young Minnesotans and providing them with the housing, education and economic opportunities they need to thrive. I'll remain focused on substance abuse treatment, crime prevention, and social services to support our young people.

With an approximate \$10 billion surplus and a DFL trifecta at the state Capitol, there is no shortage of proposals for what our state government should do over the coming two years. But what's most important to me is delivering for the people of St. Paul. What would you like to see the new DFL majority take action on?

Please reach my office at sen.sandy.pappas@senate.mn to share your thoughts with me. I look forward to hearing from you.

St. Paul's new police chief one of Little Bohemia's own

BY CASEY EK

The Little Bohemia neighborhood gained a champion as one of its own, Axel Henry, ascended to the chief of police role for the City of St. Paul.

The St. Paul City Council on Nov. 16 voted unanimously to name Henry as the city's next chief, validating Mayor Melvin Carter's nomination, which came Nov. 1.

To an overflowing crowd at the city council chambers, Henry took his oath of office. He will serve a six-year term.



A warm reception

Henry, who received a standing ovation upon his introduction, earned the praise of the city council members including Rebecca Noecker, who represents the neighborhood.

"To see you and know you are surrounded by and beloved by people who you are going to serve in our community, the women and men in the department and by family—it just makes me so proud to know that you are going to be our chief," Noecker told Henry. "It makes me especially proud that you're a

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WASTEWATER
TREATMENT
FACILITY
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VOL. 52 NO. 12

DECEMBER 2022

CIRCULATION 13,000

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St. Paul Police Chief Axel Henry takes his oath of office from within the St. Paul City Council Chambers Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2022.

resident of the great Ward 2."

Henry was born and raised in St. Paul. Son of a Macalester College professor, Henry was raised in the Macalester-Groveland area. He attended Groveland Park and Webster elementary schools, Murray Junior High and Central Senior High School before earning his bachelor's degree in business administration and accounting from the University of St. Thomas. He returned to UST to earn a master's degree in educational leadership and administration.

Henry became an officer for the Roseville Police Department in 1995. He joined the St. Paul Police Department in 1998 and eventually rose to the rank of commander for the Narcotics, Financial Intelligence and Human Trafficking Division.

Life in the neighborhood

Henry was enjoying a cigar on his porch of

NEW POLICE CHIEF pg 3

Cossetta's on the world stage: A passion for panettone

BY JERRY ROTHSTEIN

Since they arrived in St. Paul in the 1800s and settled on the Levee, started their renowned food business with a tiny food market called Cossetta's, which drew customers from far and wide who appreciated their quality foods and genuine hospitality, the Cossettas believed that "Good food is the quality of life" and this remains Cossetta's motto: "Qualita di Vita. Cibo Buono."

Four years of passion, perseverance

In 2018, Dave Cossetta established a goal for the Cossetta Pastry team:

"To not just make panettone, our goal is to master the art of panettone." The team involved in bakery and pastry production spent the time needed to plan, learn, gather resources and produce Cossetta panettone, the traditional Italian sweet-dough Christmas cake. Its tradition of more than 500 years originated in passion, and continues today with a passion for quality that this team holds close.

The development process involved the entire team, led by Jaime Martinez, Executive Pastry Chef of Bakery and Pastry, now approaching 25 years at Cossetta's. Marco Failla, a Pastry chef from Catagna, Sicily, was brought here for three months as a consultant to assist with the panettone project. He had assisted the world-renowned Iginio Massari at his school, Cast Alimenti in Brescia, when discovered by the Cossetta team, who were there to learn as much as they could about panettone.

The process involved developing techniques, sourcing the best ingredients and a lot of experimentation. Making a yeasted sweet cake involves developing the "mother" dough which they brought over from the old country. It must have the right acidity and moisture content. The first mix develops the structure of the gluten, proofs the yeast, develops flavor. Second and third feedings, restings, risings, occur before the precisely measured dough can go into baking molds. An hour in the oven followed by three to six hours cooling. The entire process takes almost 60 hours with continual inspection. This is not for the faint of heart.



Chefs Andrea Hinds and Jaime Martinez at the Coppa del Mondo del panettone.

On the world stage

It has taken the Cossetta team nearly 10 years of passion and perseverance to create the panettone they hoped for, and this year they were invited to compete at the North American trials with hopes for an invitation to the third Coppa del Mondo del panettone — the World Cup of Panettone — held in Milano this November.

In New York the national selection trials were held at the Institute of Culinary Education, and Team Cossetta was the winner. They would represent the U.S. in Milano, along with runner-up Gary Rulli from California.

The long preparation process for the competition meant starting another set of panettoni in the fall, timed to be ready for the early November Coppa del Mondo.

Team Cossetta brought six panettoni each from three different batches on the journey from St. Paul to Milano. On the morning of day one, pastry chefs Jaime Martinez and Andrea Hinds

reviewed the panettoni from the three batches and evaluated each batch for height, texture, smell, color, crumb profile, structure and taste to determine which best represented their craft. The team unanimously chose batch number two for competition.

Dave Cossetta described the presentation to the judges: "Jaime Martinez took the stage and presented his craft. For more than 10 years, Jaime studied with a multitude of Maestros, worked with many co-workers, experienced many, many failures and experimented with different techniques and ingredients. He has shown an endless indomitable spirit on this quest for the best panettone at Cossetta. This is science at its very finest, but with no formula that fits all. Adjust, adjust, adjust is a must. In 2022, Jaime worked endlessly at all hours and days and has proven to exhibit the true definition of a professional. Champions exist for one primary

COSSETTA'S, PG 2

Community News



St. Nicholas Day at Waldmann

Step aside Santa! In Germany St. Nicholas rules the day, and Sankt Nikolaus Tag is Dec. 6! That's the day kids wake up to find their shoes filled with candy, and St. Nicholas appears at village inns (or more likely, urban shopping centers) with his side-kicks the Krampuses--to make real clear who's fighting for your soul! Waldmann will be selling Gluhwein (hot mulled wine), admission free; dress for the outdoors.

HPC consideration of Justus Ramsey demo permit pushed to Dec. 5

St. Paul's Heritage Preservation Commission on Nov. 7 opted to delay considering a demolition permit for the historic Justus Ramsey House located on the patio of Burger Moe's on West 7th submitted by the eatery's owner, Moe Sharif. Sharif asked for the delay to give him time to engage with the community to find a solution to preserving the structure, according to a written statement read at the meeting. The HPC will pick the issue back up at their Dec. 5 meeting at 3:30 p.m. in city council chambers. There will be a public hearing.

Keg and Case holiday market

Through Dec. 23 do your holiday shopping at Keg and Case, 928 West 7th. Meet Santa and shop for food and artisan crafts. Vendors vary by day. More info: kegandcase.com/events12

St. Paul Ice Fishing Show

Stop by the St. Paul RiverCentre Dec. 2-4 to see more than 190 exhibits with products and services dedicated to diehard ice fishing and winter sports enthusiasts. Tickets: bit.ly/3EiFMLa

Best of the Nutcracker 2022

St. Paul Ballet has created a special edition for their return to the stage last year, the Best of The Nutcracker. Experience seasonal magic and joy that will bring cheer to the whole family. Best of The Nutcracker will feature crowd favorites by Lirana Branitski, including the Kingdom of the Snow from Act 1, as well as Spanish, Russian and Waltz of Flowers from the Kingdom of Sweets along with excerpts from the Party Scene, guest appearances by CAAM Chinese Dance Theater and talented musicians from St. Paul Ballet who perform regularly in Minnesota. Children 4 and under are free. Tickets: bit.ly/3TJloqY

Summit Avenue Artisan Festival

Stop by the United Church of Christ, 900

Summit Ave., Dec. 3 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the Summit Avenue Artisan Festival. Browse handcrafted food and goods from over 40 local artists and artisans. Bid on silent auction items and say hi to Santa Clause. Free admission.

Minnesota Roller Derby

Watch the Minnesota Roller Derby team close out the year Dec. 10 at Roy Wilkins Auditorium. Tickets available at bit.ly/3XosJRd. Trackside seating for those 18 and older only.

Christmas In Germany

Germanic-American Institute's(301 Summit Ave.) annual open haus returns with a new name: Christmas in Germany. Experience German traditions and enjoy German cooking and mulled wine for a seasonal celebration you won't want to miss Dec. 3-4. More info: gaimn.org/christmas.

Canadian Pacific Holiday Train

The Holiday Train will stop at Union Depot on Monday, December 12 for a free musical performance. Canadian Pacific is committed to raising awareness about filling community food shelves with heart-healthy foods. Cash or non-perishable food donations are highly encouraged. VIP tickets: CPtrainUD.eventbrite.com.

New Year's Eve at MetroNOME Brewery

Celebrate the night before NYE with different kind of bubbly--craft brew from MetroNOME and Elevator Pop with RetroFizz. Dec. 30, Tickets: bit.ly/3ECBq1u.

Final River Balcony Plans available

The Great River Passage Conservancy recently released their final design for the River Balcony project, which would span a considerable portion of St. Paul's stretch of the Mississippi River. View the Plans: bit.ly/3VwYmWV. The next step will consist of a six-month transition period to create a governance structure, define partner roles and responsibilities, develop a finance strategy and evaluate potential project phases.



Panettone on racks in the Cossetta "laboratory."

COSSETTA'S, PG 1

reason. They practice, practice, practice. It is that simple. Jaime's presentation was exactly what he is. Sincere. Jaime presented his panettone to the audience, they handed out samples for tasting, and he told his story to the audience from his heart, same as he did in the production of his panettone.

After presenting to the judges, Team Cossetta proceeded to make their presentation to the audience, consisting of personal and development history, a video (bit.ly/3U241Da) showing them at work in their laboratorio (kitchen), a chance for the audience to taste the same panettone the judges were testing in their room and a question-and-answer session.

In the traditional panettone division (chocolate was the other) 24 teams from Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the U.S. had won the right to compete.

The elaborate event, which included workshops for practitioners, public presentations and the judging itself, spanned three days. Panels of judges, many of whom were themselves master pastry chefs, conducted blind testing of all the samples, while the public was also offered samples with no other responsibilities than to enjoy.

Dave Cossetta, with his team, clarified the historic and practical context of this world cup competition: "It has become evident to me to make this thing called

panettone is incredibly complicated, not only because of the difference in technique for the competitors from different countries, but the ability of competitors to source the ingredients. Panettone was born in Italy over 500 years ago, so the expectations for taste, look and style have been set for a long time. The challenge for many competitors is to make something with such strict guidelines and be able to source ingredients. It can be difficult in many countries to find ingredients of the same standards of the Italians who have the ingredients available."

"Your panettone is molto bene."

This unsolicited compliment from an audience member confirmed to the Cossetta Team that it was where it belonged. During the tense moments while the judges completed their work and prepared to announce the winners, Dave Cossetta again offered insight into the process: "As we were waiting, we struck up a conversation with one of the competitors from Napoli, Italy. He was openly sharing his ingredients of choice and techniques used to make his panettone."

As the presentations by the final competitors came to an end, there was only one thing left to attend, the presentation of winners. All of the audience and competition's presenters proceeded to the auditorium for the much-anticipated announcement.

COSSETTA'S, PG 3

* FROM THE DARKNESS TO THE LIGHT *

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If you would like your loved one's name and picture displayed during the event, please email to address below.

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Community REPORTER

265 Oneida St. St Paul, MN 55102
Copy Deadline: Dec 12
Ad Deadline: Dec 14
Community Reporter is a nonprofit, and donations are tax-deductible.

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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 Barbershops and Stories



TIM JOHNSON
columnist

When barbers first started cutting hair at 925 West 7th St, the internet and search engines were decades away from being imagined, much less existing. But, Google is what brought me to my first haircut at the 7th Street Barbers where, among other things, I learned that hair had been cut in this spot since 1893. Looking at the wall with its many history-laden pictures, it was clear that this barber shop was full of stories. Among the more contemporary stories that I learned was that one of the co-owners, Pete Klein, and his son Wyatt went to the same barber school and had the same woman as their instructor. I left with an overdue and, given the limitations of what Wyatt had to work with, a fine haircut. No less important, thanks to the stories shared, I had a new sense of connection to this history laden spot on West 7th St.
Every season is a good season for sharing stories, but this time of the year when days are short and nights are long is a particularly inviting time for story. A challenge for Christian clergy at this time of the year is how to give a barbershop connection to a story told and retold so often that even those who never come close to a church likely know something about the birth of Jesus. For many years our neighbor had a plastic baby Jesus that he put on top of his porch, sometime in early December. It sat there all by itself, through the coldest of nights, with only a small light to keep the plastic Jesus warm. I sometimes thought of that plastic Jesus when I had to prepare a sermon for Christmas Eve. That Jesus looked so alone and isolated,

which is how I imagine too many people end up feeling during the holidays. But, the actual birth story is anything but one of isolation, but rather of expanding relationships. My challenge as a preacher was inviting folks into the story so they felt like they were sitting in a barber's chair on West 7th St, discovering again or for the first time a relational connection to the birth of this child.
At their best, stories can help bridge divides and make connections, even with people with whom it would seem we have little in common. When my wife and I were returning this summer from a trip out West, we ventured off of the interstate, taking instead two-lane roads through parts of rural Nebraska. At one particularly lonely looking intersection we came across a mixed restaurant and convenience store. The sign by the entrance said, "bathroom for patrons only", which was our primary need. I opted to purchase one of the "best malts in Nebraska". It was when the clerk or possibly owner went into the backroom to make the malt that I noticed what could only be described as a shrine to none other than Trump. There were a half dozen pictures, small flags and a bill stating

"In Trump We Trust" all neatly displayed in homage to the former president. I have thought of that woman and her shrine many times since. The only thing that might bridge the divide between her worldview and mine is a story in which we discover some common links in our lives.
At the Overcoming Racism Conference held at Metropolitan State University this past November, Kao Kalia Yang told a story about her immigrant father who found work in a manufacturing plant in Minnesota. The plant exploited new immigrants. Many of them, like Kalia's dad, had made major sacrifices in their lives in order for their children to have a better life. When the employees protested the working conditions, the plant manager threatened to fire them and then added, "think of your children". As Kalia's dad noted that is the only thing they had been thinking about, and it was why they protested. If the plant manager had taken an interest in her father's story and that of other immigrants working for him, it is likely he would have come away with a new outlook and new appreciation for his employees.
Barbershops are great places for stories, but they can happen anywhere that hearts and spirits are open to discovering the deeper connections we all share.
Tim Johnson is a retired pastor for United Church of Christ.

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WEST END HEALTHLINE How Stress Impacts Our Health

BY DR. JUSTINE CHATTERTON, PHD, LP

We have all heard that we should manage our stress in order to stay healthy. Many people, however, do not realize how connected their mental health can be to their medical diagnoses. Stress heightens common physical ailments such as colds, high blood pressure and irritable bowel syndrome and can also contribute to serious medical concerns such as chronic pain, Alzheimer's Disease, Diabetes and cancer. This is why your doctor may ask about your stress level and emotional well-being even when you only may have had concerns about a medical condition. This can be confusing, and we may think to ourselves, "She doesn't seem to be taking me seriously!" Or "Is he saying it's all in my head?" Once you have a better understanding of how connected your mind and body truly are it will make more sense to have conversations with your physician about your mental health. The holidays can be a uniquely stressful time, so let's explore the implications of that stress and how to manage it.
Our bodies and our brains are in constant communication through an interconnected network of neurons called the autonomic nervous system. Those phrases we use like, "gut feeling," "made my skin crawl" and "butterflies in my stomach" demonstrate the ways in which our bodies give us information about our emotions and feelings. In addition to this communication, the nervous system is responsible for all of the body's automatic functions like heart rate, breathing, temperature control and survival when we detect danger. In fact, our nervous system is constantly scanning our environment for signs of threat and is making this assessment four times every second. If we are in a state of chronic stress, the nervous system will detect threat and danger whenever it scans the body for the information. We are then stuck with constant tension, irritability and a feeling of being on edge.
Think of a time when you were stressed about something. Can you remember how your body felt at that time? Were your muscles tensed? Heart racing? Jaw clenched? Couldn't sit still? All of that is because the body was preparing to help you survive a threat. Chronic stress shows up in the body as a sign of danger, and our bodies spring into action. This is a brilliant strategy that your body engages in automatically to help you survive something painful or overwhelming.



The problem is that if you are in this state consistently, the body gets overloaded with stress hormones such as cortisol, adrenaline, and norepinephrine. This can cause inflammation, tension and pain in the nervous system and can disrupt all those automatic functions that keep us healthy. This is why chronic stress is so bad for our health. Not to mention it doesn't feel good and prevents us from staying connected to our loved ones and doing things we enjoy. You may find yourself saying "don't get so worked up, this isn't even a big deal" or "just relax, there's nothing to worry about." No matter what we tell ourselves, however, it is our body and nervous system that hold the key to relaxing, remaining calm, and feeling safe and healthy. So, next time you are in this situation, try to do something healthy for your body like take deep breaths, stretch those tight muscles, take a short walk, or talk to someone you trust about how you feel.
Remember to talk to your doctor about finding ways to better manage your stress and mental health. There may not be any easy answers, but even small improvements can make big impacts on your health. Oftentimes people find that therapy and medications for mental health can also improve their other medical problems. With these potential benefits, there is never a bad time to explore ways to improve your stress. Perhaps talking to your doctor about improving your stress and mental health can be a gift you give yourself this holiday season!
Dr. Chatterton works at Allina Health United Family Physicians, 233 Grand Ave, St Paul, MN; 651-241-5200

The Community Reporter launches GoFundMe campaign

For more than 50 years the *Community Reporter* has brought local news to your doorstep. Now we ask that you help us make all these valuable works of journalism available to everyone. Working with The Minnesota Historical Society, we want to make all previous *Community Reporter* editions available online free to everyone. This will allow everyone to reminisce about and review the history of the West End over the

past half century. To complete this, we need to raise only \$1 per page of our archives that still needs to be published online. Please help us accomplish this goal by going to our GoFundMe campaign at gofund.me/3eb3fca0
Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to The Community Reporter by mailing a check to: *Community Reporter*, 265 Oneida St, Saint Paul, MN 55102.



NEW POLICE CHIEF, PG 1

his Banfil Street home the evening of Nov. 1 with his partner Mikeya Griffin, the executive director of the Rondo Community Land Trust, when he began hearing people who he didn't know driving down the street offering their congratulations. This was just one reminder that the neighborhood is his rightful home.
Since he built his unique home around 2012, Henry has grown to appreciate the Little Bohemia neighborhood. Describing it as a "funky little neighborhood," Henry says there is a lot to love there.
"If I'm out there [cutting grass or shoveling] for more than 15 minutes, somebody stops and says hello or talks to you," Henry said. "It's a real neighborhood."
Henry settled in Little Bohemia after a months-long search for the right property on which to build an industrial-style home. He was eyeing an abandoned fire hall on the East Side, but when that fell through, he kept on the prowl. At one time, he knew where all the vacant

lots in the city were, he said, until eventually he stumbled on what today is the site of the home he designed, and the rest, as they say, is history.
Since moving to the neighborhood, Henry has done what he can to stay plugged into local goings on. He tries to stay on top of what takes place at the Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association meetings, but between his police work and his time spent with the men's group at The Way Church, 550 West 7th, Henry has kept himself more than occupied.
The men's group, in fact, served as an early catalyst for Henry putting his name in the running for the vacant police chief role left by Todd Axtell, who retired in June. Henry said it was hard to convince some of the group's members that he was a cop. His tattoos and Air Jordans weren't the typical markers of a police officer, but now the group, who furnished a letter of support for Henry in the chief application process, is a staple of Henry's local life.
"It's been one of the most rewarding parts of being in the neighborhood," Henry said.

COSSETTA'S, PG 2

As Switzerland's Maestro Giuseppe Piffaretti read the results of the winners, 3rd place, 2nd place and grand champion, the audience went wild. The new grand champion was the same pastry chef we were talking to earlier from Napoli who shared all his techniques with us. His passion talking to us and accepting his award was very inspirational to all at the presentation.
The grand champion and runner-up were Italian, and the third-place Maestro was

Swiss. But all the competitors received a medal for being there, for having reached this pinnacle of the panettone world. As Jaime Martinez says in the Coppa del Mondo Cossetta video, "We all work together. We may not be able to master panettone, but this will never stop us from trying."
This year's Cossetta panettone — traditional, chocolate and pistachio — will be available early in December.
"Qualita di Vita. Cibo Buono."

In the Community

Met Council eyes wastewater facility expansion

BY CASEY EK

The Metropolitan Council of Environmental Services is proposing an expansion of the Metropolitan Wastewater Plant.

The largest facility of its kind in the Twin Cities, the Metro Plant services 1.8 million Twin Cities area residents over 66 communities and takes in over 180 million gallons of wastewater per day. Metropolitan Council of Environmental Services, which has been operating three wastewater incinerators at the facility, which sits along the Mississippi River in St. Paul near Pig's Eye Lake, is proposing the fourth incinerator to meet the metro area's growing population needs.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is currently reviewing an amendment to the facility's current air pollution permit as well as an environmental assessment worksheet, the process that evaluates the environmental impacts of the proposed expansion. The amendment, according to multiple sources at the Met Council, comes after they scrapped facility plans within their initial permit that called for land application, which involves the spreading of biosolids on the soil surface or incorporating or injecting biosolids into the soil. Instead of land application, MCES is opting instead to pursue a fourth incinerator.

According to Principle Engineer and Project Manager for the fourth incinerator, Stephen Norton, going the route of the incinerator over the land application will be more efficient, and the plant would stand to reduce its potential emissions by 2.5 tons per year versus the initial scope of the facility.

"All (Environmental Protection Agency) standards still apply regardless of what you do," Norton said.

Some in the community, including members of the West Side Community Organization have voiced concern about the public getting a chance to have their voices heard.

"At WSCO we are especially interested in pushing the state to regulate cumulative impacts, and to increase the amount of



Project manager for the proposed fourth incinerator at the Metropolitan Council of Environmental Services' Metro Wastewater Plant near Pig's Eye Lake, Stephen Norton, describes the workings of one of the three incinerators at the facility, which has been shut down for maintenance.

monitoring sites so that we can adequately understand how this project is impacting the West Side," said Elizabeth Leonardsmith, Health & Environmental Justice Organizer with the organization.

"Often with these kinds of projects, there is a lack of participation in the decision-making process, so WSCO will be working to make sure community members are informed and able to strategize on a shared analysis, especially making sure any public meetings are at a time and location that is accessible to the community who will be directly impacted."

The organization, which has not publicly opposed the project, has been working alongside the Sierra Club to help prepare

Notebook Recollections: The Mary Pesek House Pt. 2

Local icon 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. He continues writing about his observations to this day. Here is just one tale.

BY TIM RUMSEY, MD

We learned in last month's Recollections that the 1917-built Pesek house on Michigan at Erie breathed old world elegance, some mystery and St. Stan's Czech royalty. Uncle Cy Pesek was the chief architect for the new St. Stan's after the 1934 church burned to the ground. The Pesek family sponsored two stained glass windows, one for Mary and one for her beloved younger brother Tommy. They also purchased a family pew. Joseph Kovarek, Mary's maternal uncle, was the traveling secretary for composer Anton (Symphony of the New World) Dvorak. A framed, giant lithograph of Dvorak was proudly displayed in the Pesek home. in pencil by the Master, himself.

Recall, also, 59-year old Paul Johnson was in home hospice in the Pesek home with his foster-father, Dennis Morgan and three other adult foster men who Dennis still calls boys.

Winter 1997

Dennis Morgan's call came late at night. Landline. Mary was fading. Could I come down? Of course.

Ninety-five year old Mary Pesek was ready to

go. Home Hospice was easing her along.

I told Dennis, 20 minutes, walking time. The Winter night was exquisite. Dark and clear, 30 degrees. Quiet, big, soft snow fell. The whole scene candle-lit.

Summer-Fall 1989

Mary had been alone since her mother's death in 1972. The home is considered the jewel of West 7th. From then on, her only companions were cats. Mary had two or three cats for a number of years. Later, eight. Then 15. And the ferals! Eventually, Mary spent all her money on cat food, which she ate.

Neighbors tried to help with lawn care or hellos until they couldn't. Mary wouldn't answer her door. Of course they wondered about the cats. Someone must have called the city. Mary's mind and house seemed to deteriorate together.

Mary stopped paying bills. Her heat was shut off. She let the phone go. She opened the door for a guy once, who she thought was an angel, coming to take her away. He took away some jewelry and an ivory statue.

Eventually 529 Michigan was so overgrown with scrub trees, truant perennials and pesky, annexing flora that her home was no longer visible from the street.

The city finally sent a housing inspector over in early 1988. He walked in to see Mary garden-hosing the Dvorak litho. She thought the house was on fire. He recorded what he thought were at least 100 inside cats; with basement cats and outside cats totaling 150. The smell was the

the public for a to-be-announced public comment period. More information: wscsco.org/incineratorupdate. The public can also email Leonardsmith at elliel@wscsco.org to get involved in WSCO or join their Health and Environmental Justice Circle.

Since 1938, the Metro Plant has been a hub for regional wastewater treatment. In 2005, MCES added the three incinerators present at the facility today. Since then, the incinerators have been firing virtually nonstop to reduce solid materials in the area's wastewater.

When area residents flush toilets, use sinks, showers or washing machines, that water gets piped to the Metro Plant where workers

MET COUNCIL, PG 9

worst he ever experienced in 25 years of garbage house inspection. His old trick of Mentholatum in each nostril and two handkerchiefs over the face were useless. He saw cat feces, cat hair, cat bones. He saw live cats eating dead cats. The walls were clawed and denuded. The wiring was exposed and ratty. Books had turned to confetti. Fifty years of neatly arranged Prague newspapers were goners. The Persian rugs were urine soaked and disintegrating. Furniture springs simply fell out of their frames and sat beneath the skeletons of chairs and couches, like their own excrement.

The Pesek house was condemned. A public health nurse brought Mary to United Hospital

RECOLLECTIONS, PG 10

What's cooking at your library

By Terry Giinther
Library Manager

Saint Paul Public Library is planning for big fun and big learning for kids ages 7-12 during winter break! From cooking classes to dance workshops to hands-on art sessions, free programs will be happening at all library locations Dec. 19 through Dec. 31. Learn more at sppl.org/winter-break.

Speaking of cooking and dancing, Saint Paul Public Library has a diverse collection of cookbooks and music on CD and vinyl to check out. Try a new recipe or explore new music this season. Search the library catalog by keyword at sppl.org.

December is also the perfect time to get



SAINT PAUL
PUBLIC LIBRARY
WEST 7TH

shelf, the library will have something to interest everyone in the family.

You can stay warm inside and visit sppl.org/libby to download e-books, audiobooks, and magazines.

West 7th Public Library Hours

The library at 265 Oneida St. is open Mondays, Thursdays 12:30-8pm, Tuesdays 11:30am-5:30pm and Wednesdays, Fridays 10am-5:30pm; closed Saturdays and Sundays.

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St. Paul holiday season kicks off with tree lightings

A child anticipates the lighting of the Rice Park holiday tree Nov. 12, 2022. A couple hundred or so gathered to watch the annual kickoff to the holiday season.



Union Depot Tree Lighting Ceremony

Join the Union Depot for their 10th annual tree lighting ceremony and movie night Dec. 3. Schedule of Events: 3-5 pm: 10th Anniversary Celebration; 5 pm: St. Paul Winter Carnival 2023 Button Reveal; 5:30 pm Holiday performance; 7 pm Tree lighting ceremony; 7:30 pm Movie night featuring *Elf*



St. Stan's Turns 150

St. Stanislaus churchgoers enjoy a luncheon after the Nov. 13 service. Congregants got a chance to mix and mingle and look through artifacts spanning the church's history..

Local girls compete at annual 5k

Girls on the Run, an organization that aims to inspire young girls of all ability levels through physical activity, on Nov. 13 held their annual St. Paul 5k at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds where local girls got a chance to showcase their skills. Shown, competitors at the Girls on the Run Twin Cities 5k cross the finish line.





in Full Swing



Glow Holiday Festival comes to Lowertown

The Glow Holiday Festival departed the Minnesota State Fairgrounds for CHS Field in St. Paul's Lowertown. The festival invites guests to take in riveting displays of holiday lights like they've never seen. The event runs through Jan. 1, 2023. Tickets: bit.ly/3AOKioy Shown, a GLOW visitor records herself descending a slide set up at the festival on Nov. 25, 2022.

CASEYEK



Local artist featured in Disney's Best in Snow

Heather Friedli, who operates the Friedli Gallery and Studio, 943 West 7th, has brought her talents to Disney+'s *Best in Snow*, a snow sculpting competition reality show. Friedli, who has had success competing at international level, was among the experts enlisted to help guide the show's contestants as they battle for snow sculpting supremacy. Friedli will continue her busy streak on the competition circuit. She, along with her Team Kwe, will be competing at the Minnesota State Snow Sculpting Competition in January. Next, the team will be competing at nationals in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, in early February. Shown, the family of Justin Ek queues up *Best in Snow*.

JUSTINEK



St. Paul Czech and Slovak Dancers celebrate 60 years

A community member in full regalia was among the many who enjoyed the St. Paul Czech and Slovak Dancers' 60-year anniversary party that featured two live bands and authentic food. The event took place Nov. 12, 2022 at CSPS Hall.

CASEYEK

Arts & Culture

New West St. Paul bookstore dwells on the weird

BY CASEY EK

In 2007, an adolescent boy walked into Midway Book Store and spotted a first edition copy of Robert W. Chambers' *The King In Yellow*. Bookstore owner Tom Stranksy placed the book in the boy's hand, allowing him to brand its shape and weight and the cover's emblematic snakelike figure into his memory forever. Its price: \$150, well out of reach for the boy, but just a fraction of its actual value. So the boy, named Josh Hames, went on a quest to raise the funds to purchase the book. But when he returned the book had vanished.

Until one day—perhaps as a result of some unknown cosmic force—the book entered his life once again.

On a day this November, Hames was contacted by one of his neighbors in West St. Paul who learned that the boy, now a man, is in the business of buying and selling books. That neighbor sent a snapshot of the potential sale items in question when Hames spotted the book whose characteristics he'd learned well.

When Hames finally had a chance to meet with the seller, there was no mistaking it—he'd found the copy Stranksy placed in his hands 15 years ago. When he opened the front cover, there was "\$150" in Stranksy's handwriting. A label inside the book told of its time in the library of a Detroit sanitarium. On its front cover was what Hames determined was tuberculoid blood. Such imperfections typically reduce books' value, but to Hames, the book is priceless—though he is yet to pull the trigger on buying it.

Mysterious forces like the one that may have reconnected Hames with that grim pocketbook are the subject of most of the books that fill the shelves of *Other Skies Weird Fiction*, a bookstore that Hames and his fiancée Becca Olene opened on Oct. 28. It is located at 803 Dodd Rd.

Both are artists and contributed to the design and feel of the store. The pair have been collecting weird fiction since well before the idea of opening a store came to mind, and both their influences can be felt. Where Hames might have tracked down a Stephen King book, Olene might have procured antiquarian books featuring the art work of NC Wyeth and Arthur Rackham. Their combined tastes culminate in a cohesive blend of magnificent macabre.

To describe *weird fiction*, Hames used phrases like "magical realism" or "any fiction that is darkly dreaming" and "fiction that dwells on the unknown," but he was quick to note that he'd rather not linger on the textbook definition of the genre as one is likely to know weird fiction when they see it. Authors like Edgar Allen Poe, H.P. Lovecraft and Margaret St. Clair are emblematic of the genre.



Josh Hames photographed among heaps of books for sale at Other Skies Weird Fiction, 803 Dodd Rd.

Walking into Other Skies, one would immediately see a display of VHS tapes of movies like '80s horror classic *House*. A central table holds a copy of William Hope Hodgson's *The House on the Borderland*, and a near-scale bust of H.R. Giger's alien. Sub-enclaves in the store hold works on the occult, Japanese animation and concept art.

Reflecting on his first ever book signing event for his latest book *Beneath the Jack-O-Lantern Sky*, which took place at Other Skies on Nov. 6, Wisconsin-based horror writer Tylor James described the store as of a different world and of a different time.

"...Look at all these rare, wonderful books lining the walls! And the tall, stately clock standing sentinel in the corner, with skeletal black hands whirling about the clockface! And the cozy couch beneath the window! And the . . . casket?" James writes in a recent blog post.

At the back of the store rests an open (unused) casket Hames was drawn to when preparing to open the store. Olene, according to Hames, was skeptical of the purchase—in fact, Hames bought two caskets—but once the artifact was placed in the store all seemed to fall into place. The sleepy neighborhood off Dodd Road and the dark brick building only add to the store's allure.

"It's out of a weird tale," Hames said of the store and its surroundings.

Within the casket are some of the store's rarest and most valuable volumes, including a rare edition of *Compendium Maleficarum*, Brother Francesco Maria Guazzo's 17th century account of his investigations into and handbook on witchcraft. Alongside the book

is a collection of works by Polish surrealist *Zdzisław Beksiński*, who famously depicted macabre scenes.

"Every book in the casket is some form of meditation on mortality," Hames said.

One flipping through the titles on the Other Skies shelves might assume Hames relishes in reading hopeless literature, but in fact, he feels that weird fiction has the power to liberate and uplift the reader. Weird fiction, Hames says forces the reader to grapple with a fear of the unknown, and in doing so becomes more robust against their daily struggles. Hames noted that at least part of the reason for the casket is that it reminds him not to take life too seriously.

This lighthearted mentality carries over into how Hames and Olene present their merchandise. You won't find even the most

BOOKSTORE, PG 9

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Community Nourishment

BEA'S BOOKS/ABBY'S ANGLE Gifts ideas for any literature lover (big and small)

Happy holidays, readers! This article is brought to you by Beatrice Cosgrove and Abby Horton, your local bookworms! We thought it would be a good idea to give some recommendations for gifts you can give any literature lover (big and small) you know this holiday season. The recommendations are split into genres, so you can easily find the perfect match. Enjoy!

Murder Mystery

Do you love reading bone chilling murder? Or know someone else who does? Then this section is for you! These books are great for curling up on a dark and stormy night and make great gifts.

One of Us is Lying trilogy, Karen M. McManus. Ages 13-14+

Any Agatha Christie novel (*Ex. Death on the Nile, Murder on the Orient Express, Cards on the Table and The Mystery of the Blue Train*). Ages 12+

Sadie, Courtney Summers. Ages 14+

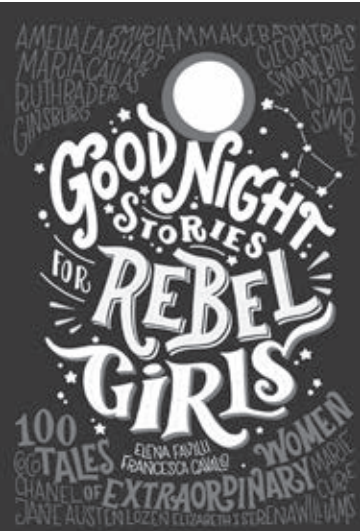
A Good Girl's Guide to Murder trilogy, Holly Jackson. Ages 13+

Realistic Fiction

Realistic fiction is a wonderful way to connect stories to real life, so that's probably why we love it so much! Here are some good books for any young soul you know.

Blended, Sharon M. Draper. Ages 11+

Absolutely Truly, Heather Vogel Frederick. Ages 11+



Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World, Ashley

Herring Blake. Ages 11+

Ava and Pip, Carol Weston. Ages 9+

Becoming Naomi Leon, Pam Muñoz Ryan.

Ages 10+

Fantasy

If magic, adventure and risky business is up your alley, come on over to the fantasy section!

Eragon, Christopher Paolini. Ages 12+

Cinderella is Dead, Kalyan Baron. Ages 12-13+

The Troubled Girls of Dragomir Academy,

Anne Ursu. Ages 11+

Classics/Historical Fiction/Non-fiction

These books are great for a sophisticated gift!

Little Women and Little Men, Louisa May



Alcott. Ages 11+.

We Are Not Free, Traci Chee. Ages 12-13+.

The Book Thief, Markus Zusak. Ages 12-13+.

Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls, Elena

Favili. Ages 8+

Shakespeare for Kids series, Familius. Ages 7+

Graphic Novels

Who doesn't love an illustrated story?

These books have great stories that easily connect with the illustrations.

The Magic Fish, Trung Le Nguyen. Ages 11+

Heartstopper series, Alice Oseman. Ages 12+

Smile, Sisters and Guts, Raina Telgemeier.

Ages 9+

Rollergirl, Victoria Jamieson. Ages 9+

FEDERATION UPDATE



fortroadfederation.org



Communications and Outreach Coordinator

The federation is pleased to welcome our new Communications and Outreach Coordinator, Julia McColley!



Upcoming Meetings, via Zoom

Info: fortroadfederation.org/calendar

• **Transportation & Land Use**

Committee, Thu 12/7, 6:30 pm

• **Board Meeting** - no meeting in December

• **Community Engagement and Outreach** Th, 12/15 6:30pm

• **Hygiene Drive** benefitting

Joseph's Coat - 12/14-12/18 - visit fortroadfederation.org for details.

Stay in touch

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

Contact

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



CASEY EK

Josh Hames reads from a rare edition of *Compendium Maleficarum*, Brother Francesco Maria Guazzo's 17th century account of his investigations into and handbook on witchcraft. The book is on display at Other Skies within a casket at the back of the store. Asked what book with which he might be buried, Hames, an atheist-turned-Christian, said it might be C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*.

BOOKSTORE, PG 8

valuable volumes at Other Skies behind display cases. That's because the owners want the books to be read and felt by patrons. Hames hopes this attitude will allow readers new to the weird fiction genre to gain a love for it like he has.

Asked why the couple decided to open an independent bookstore in a world of big box sellers, Hames said he "never believed the whole 'bookstores are dead' thing. It never made sense to me." He added that he believed it was his time to take up the mantle held by sellers like Stransky, who all those years ago lit a flame in him and that it is now his and Olene's turn to join what he called "an order of weird monks" and light that flame in young readers.

"I can't just expect (independent bookstores) to always be here." Hames said of the responsibly he felt to open a store.

Asked to describe the feeling of getting someone to love weird fiction, Hames called it "the best feeling in the world."

As for the name of the store—that comes from a line H.P. Lovecraft's poem *To a Dreamer*.

The store is open Friday and Saturday noon to 10 p.m. and Sunday from Noon to 7p.m.

"A bookstore just feels different at night," Hames said.

MET COUNCIL, PG 4

remove large and small contaminants through physical and chemical processes.

The incineration process comes near the end of the line, just before processed wastewater is piped back into the Mississippi River.

One walking near the entrance of the facility would notice a strong odor, but nearer the incinerator, that odor dissipates. That's largely because the incineration process is self-contained and heavily filtered.

The plant collects solids collected from the bottom of 18 acres worth of settling tanks and pipes them to thickening mechanisms that remove a substantial portion of the water content. Once the water content is brought down to about 70 percent via centrifuge, the mixture, called "cake" is then ready to be incinerated. The incinerator superheats the solids to about 1400 degrees to remove contaminants. The vapors, solids and water left over then go through a multi-stage pollution control process. Emission from the incinerator are odorless. The leftover ash(made up primarily of phosphorus, silica, calcium, potassium, magnesium, iron and aluminum) then gets transported to a landfill. Daily, the incinerator reduces about 850 tons of solids to about 40, or about a 95% reduction.

Now, engineers say, the facility is reaching its ceiling with three incinerators. Presently, the facility is only able to shut down a single incinerator for short bursts before it is



The location of the Metropolitan Wastewater Plant

again needed to clear solid waste. A fourth incinerator, Norton says, would allow workers to shut down the units not in use for up to six months, which would allow crews to do comprehensive maintenance on them.

According to Met Council spokesman John

Schadl, the region's wastewater network would cost roughly \$7 billion to replace. The Metro Plant alone would cost roughly \$3 billion. The estimated cost for the fourth incinerator is \$150 million. Its construction is being targeted to begin in 2024 and end 2026.



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Ask a Lawyer

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Get Ready for Desserts & Dancing in December

Kick off the holiday season with dancing, desserts and the Golden Tones band. Bring your dancing shoes, and we'll provide the rest. Wednesday, Dec. 7, 1-3 p.m. at the West 7th Community Center. \$5 per person, and you can pay at the door. Call to RSVP to Keystone at 651-298-5493 by Nov. 30 so we can have enough refreshments for everyone.

Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels is for everyone and offers great food and flexibility. The cost is based on a sliding fee scale. If you want a break from cooking or are recovering from an injury or illness, give Meals on Wheels a try! To sign up to receive meals, please call Metro Meals on Wheels at 612-623-3363 and they will connect you to the provider in your neighborhood. Keystone delivers for the West 7th area and other neighborhoods in St. Paul.

Fare for All at West 7th

Dec 2, 10am-12 pm West 7th Community Center gym. The event will be held in the gym at the community center. Stop by to purchase low-cost and delicious food packages. All are welcome.

Happy Holidays



European Christmas Market at Union Depot

After a brief stint in November, the annual European Christmas Market is set to return to Union Depot Dec.2-4, 9-11 and 16-18. Hours: Friday 4 p.m.-9 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m.-8 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Located at Union Depot, 240 E. Kellogg Blvd., the market gives St. Paulites a window into the open-air markets from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Shown, a vendor sells Polish and German meats on Nov. 25, 2022.



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