

Community REPORTER

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Nov. 21, 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

- Building Community • Pg 2
- Healthline • Pg 5
- Notebook Recollections • Pg 6
- Library Update • Pg 6
- Federation Update • Pg 6
- Highland Update • Pg 6
- Keystone Update • Pg 6
- Bulletin Board • Pg 7

VOL. 54 NO. 11

NOVEMBER 2024

CIRCULATION 13,000

DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE

Improving our infrastructure



SAURA JOST
CITY COUNCIL
MEMBER, WARD 3
columnist

Hello "Community Reporter" readers, I am Saura Jost, your Ward 3 St. Paul City Councilmember. When I last wrote to you in June I asked you for your input on the Riverview Corridor and I asked you to share it with Ramsey County. You

followed through and as readers of the "Community Reporter" you probably already know that Ramsey County ended up canceling the Riverview Corridor Project between that ask and now.

There's been a lot of mixed emotions at the end of the Riverview Project, but no matter how you felt about the project everyone is asking the same question: "What now?" It's a simple answer: Forward. Our office and Mayor Carter's Administration are going to take the consensus built and insights learned from Riverview and we're going to carry them into the next project to improve West 7th. We are already in conversation with Metro Transit, the MetCouncil, and Ramsey County about Bus Rapid Transit.

West 7th has felt stuck in a Riverview Stasis for a long time, a lot of smaller decisions in our community have been waiting for any decision on Riverview. Our community has been extremely patient, we've waited a long time for Riverview. I want to honor that patience by hurrying up; I'll be urging our partners at MNDOT, MetCouncil, Metro Transit and the County to take everything we can from Riverview and use it to expedite what comes next.

I am excited to see that progress. St Paul Regional Water Service's (SPRWS) Lead Free STP program continues. We hope to replace every last remaining Lead Water Service Line in the city at no cost to property owners. SPRWS has identified these service lines, but we need property owners' consent and engagement in order to complete the work. Please take the time to check if your property has a lead service line and then take one step further to see if any friends or family have property with a lead service line and get them signed up. You can sign up and learn more information at stpaul.gov/departments/saint-paul-regional-water-services/customer-resources/lead-free-sprws.

The success of this program will make a happier and healthier future in St. Paul and all we need to do is say "Yes."

Municipal government is not glamorous. It's frequently the opposite. Old pipes in need of replacing, a road in need of repair, where the bus stops will go, but these are the pieces of our everyday lives. Those old pipes fill your water glass. The bus on the bumpy road gets you to work and home again. Help us ensure that infrastructure and our services are the best they can be.

Our office can be reached online at ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us or by telephone at 651-266-8630. Thank you for being a good neighbor.

Breaking Down the 2024 Ballot Measures

BY DAMIAN GOEBEL

The 2024 election is fast approaching, and while the top of the ticket has, justifiably, received most of the attention, there are a number of items on this year's ballot in addition to the numerous federal and state races.



Every voter in Minnesota will be voting on the extension of a constitutional amendment, while St. Paul voters have two ballot measures before them that could dramatically reshape politics and young people in our city for years to come.

The constitutional amendment

On this year's ballot is a renewal of the constitutional amendment for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. Established in 1988 and reauthorized in 1998, both times receiving overwhelming support, the fund calls for a portion of state lottery proceeds to be directed to natural resource projects.

Overseen by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources, they have funded \$1 billion to over 1600 projects since 1991. The amendment is scheduled to sunset in 2025 without reauthorization.

As with any constitutional amendment in the state of Minnesota, failure to fill in an answer has the same effect as a "no" vote.

The full text of the question on the ballot reads: "Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to protect drinking water sources and the water quality of lakes, rivers, and streams; conserve wildlife habitat and natural areas; improve air quality; and expand access to parks and trails by extending the transfer of proceeds from the state-operated lottery to the environment and natural resources trust fund, and to dedicate the proceeds for these purposes?"

Read more about the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund legacy.mn.gov/environment-natural-resources-trust-fund.


Dedicated funding for early learning

The first question on the ballot in St. Paul is a newly proposed tax levy to raise funds dedicated to early learning in the city. This

Sample Ballot

State General Election Ballot
St. Paul W-2 P-04
Ramsey County, Minnesota
November 5, 2024

Judge _____
Judge _____

Instructions to Voters:
To vote, completely fill in the box(es) next to your choice(s) like this: 

Federal Offices	State Offices	City Questions
<p>President and Vice-President Vote for One</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Donald J. Trump and JD Vance Republican</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Kamala D. Harris and Tim Walz Democratic-Farmer-Labor</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chase Oliver and Mike ter Maat Libertarian Party</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Nicole Shanahan We The People</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jill Stein and Samson Kpadenou Green Party</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Claudia De la Cruz and Karina Garcia Socialism and Liberation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Rachele Fruit and Dennis Richter Socialist Workers Party</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cornel West and Malia...</p>	<p>State Representative District 64B Vote for One</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Peter Donahue Republican</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dave Pinto Democratic-Farmer-Labor</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____ write-in, if any</p> <p>Constitutional Amendments</p> <p>Failure to vote on a constitutional amendment will have the same effect as voting no on the amendment.</p> <p>To vote for a proposed constitutional amendment, fill in the box next to the word "Yes" on that question. To vote against a proposed constitutional amendment, fill in the box next to the word "No" on that question.</p>	<p>To vote for a question, fill in the box next to the word "Yes" on that question. To vote against a question, fill in the box next to the word "No" on that question.</p> <p>City of St. Paul City Question 1 Should the City levy taxes to provide early learning subsidies?</p> <p>In order to create a dedicated fund for children's early care and education to be administered by a City department or office that provides subsidies to families and providers so that early care and education is no cost to low-income families and available on a sliding scale to other families, and so as to increase the number of child care slots and support the child care workforce, shall the City of Saint Paul be authorized to levy property taxes in the amount of \$2,000,000 in the first year, to increase by the same amount each year following for the next nine years (\$4,000,000 of property taxes levied in year two, \$6,000,000 in year three, \$8,000,000 in year four and so on until</p>

Sample Election Ballot

would be a proposed property tax increase that would raise as much as \$20 million annually to go toward early learning expenses in the next 10 years.

The proposal would provide low/no-cost childcare in St. Paul ubiquitous, but would come at the cost of potentially significant property tax increases over the next decade, raising about \$2 million in the first year, with an additional \$2 million each subsequent year.

Mayor Carter, for one, has come out against the plan, saying it doesn't go far enough to meet the needs of St. Paul families. The St. Paul Federation of Teachers has expressed concerns that more funding will flow to private day cares in the city.

However, the proposed funding is designed to pay for childcare from birth to five-year-olds for families who make less than \$55,000 per year, which makes up about half of the children

in the city.

The full text of the questions reads: "Should the City Levy Taxes to Provide Early Learning Subsidies?"

In order to create a dedicated fund for children's early care and education to be administered by a City department or office that provides subsidies to families and providers so that early care and education is no cost to low-income families and available on a sliding scale to other families, and so as to increase the number of child care slots and support the child care workforce, shall the City of Saint Paul be authorized to levy property taxes in the amount of \$2,000,000 in the first year, to increase by the same amount each year following for the next nine years (\$4,000,000 of property taxes levied in year two, \$6,000,000 in year three, \$8,000,000 in year four and so on until

ELECTION, PG 2

COMMUNITY HAPPENING

Joseph's Coat Celebrates 35 Years of Helping Those in Need

BY DAMIAN GOEBEL

Joseph's Coat, the St. Paul free store located in the heart of West 7th, celebrated opening its doors for the first time 35 years ago last month.

"In August, we had an open house here for our volunteers to celebrate," said Rebecca Bedner, Joseph's Coat's Executive Director. "Our founder, Pat Fetsch, as well as previous executive director Cheryl Stern, both came and celebrated with us in the fall. And then most recently, we had a fundraiser to celebrate our 35th anniversary and raise funds for our mission."

That mission, to be a free store, where all are welcome to shop for basic needs in an environment of dignity and respect, has grown from their first location on St. Peter St. in downtown to be in their current location at 1107 West 7th for the past 20 years.

"We have clothes for adults and children," said Bedner. We have linens, like sheets and blankets and towels, small household items and hygiene products. And so we try to give away one full size hygiene product every month."

The store itself is open to clients Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. by appointment only.

"On Mondays and Wednesdays we see between 200 to 300 shoppers who come into our store," said Bedner. "Volunteers help with



Some of the over 80 volunteers that help Joseph's Coat provide basic needs in an environment of dignity and respect.

everything from answering the phones, to making appointments, to checking people in, to helping them as they shop."

"We also have volunteer opportunities on Tuesdays and Thursdays when we receive donations from the community," she added.

Bedner said it is those volunteers who are really the lifeblood of making their operation

work. They do everything from sorting clothes as they come in, to making appointments to helping shoppers find sizes or something that they may be looking for that isn't out on the floor.

"We have one full time staff and a few part time staff and about 80 volunteers," she said. "And

JOSEPH'S COAT, PG 2



BUILDING COMMUNITY

Creating A Picture of Hope

BY TIM JOHNSON

The mural on the wall was a fair representation of what the young people who accompanied me to St. Louis observed in the first couple of days that we were there. There was broken glass on the sidewalk. There was barbed wire on the top of some of the bigger homes. There were needles and condoms left strewn in alley ways. Many homes were boarded up and appeared to be abandoned. In addition to all the stark manifestations of urban decay, we were largely a white group amid an almost exclusively black community. Even for city kids from St. Paul, this was a bit of a culture shock. It was for me as well. We were on what church groups often call a "Mission Trip." The intent is for young people to have a community building experience by traveling away from home to a place where they can do some type of service project.

Mission Trips are well intended. But I had for some time been troubled by them and for me this trip was the final one where I would take a group of middle-class young people to do a service project in a community largely comprised of low-income Black, Indigenous or People of Color. As I came to develop a growing awareness of the history and ongoing reality of racism, I realized that I did not have the gifts to help young people escape the feeling of superiority that can come from being the ones who drop into a community of darker skinned people, offer a week's worth of help and then return to our comfort. Nor could I adequately help young people understand the racism that led to this situation. No doubt there are pastors who have the gifts to traverse this difficult terrain without further reinforcing racial bias. I did not consider myself to be among them.



We were invited to this St. Louis Community by one of the historic settlement houses still providing community service to those in need, much like Neighborhood House in St. Paul. We worked on a Habitat for Humanity home. We helped an elderly woman clean and organize her home, which because of her disability had become overwhelming. In addition, our young people were invited to paint a mural in the upper floor of the settlement house; a space used by young people in the neighborhood. Fortunately, we had among us several young artists capable of this task.

The young people were given a free hand to create whatever type of mural they wished. In retrospect, I should have had them submit a design of what they wanted to do. Instead, they just began to paint. What came out was a fairly accurate portrayal of what they had been experiencing, drug paraphernalia, broken glass, barbed wire, and all. It is not the case that what they pictured in their mural was wrong, but is this what would be helpful for the young people

who chose to spend regular time in this space? I made a decision which I do not regret. I asked the young people to do what they could to take what they had done and create a more hopeful image for the community. Initially there was resistance to change the work in which they had invested themselves, but they came to accept the importance of doing so. The needles, broken glass and numerous signs of decay and despair were replaced with flowers, rays of light, and green grass. This new mural represented the goodness in many of the people we met and their undiminished hope for their community.

A question everyone engaged in the life of a community, a country for that matter, must ask is "what do we see"? Is the picture we hold primarily one of deficit or do we have a picture of the assets, the potential that we have together? Often the picture of deficits tells a true story. We have problems that need addressing. But, can those problems, those challenges be addressed unless we have a hopeful picture in our minds and hearts for the type of community, the type of country we hope to see?

As we approach yet another election, I have returned to a book, I found helpful years ago, written by M. Scott Peck called "People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil." Peck underscores the destructive and evil power that lies have when they become central to a person's life or embedded in our common life. But Peck also argues, too strong a concentration on this evil of lies, seeing the darkness, and the deficit, can cause us to miss the hope so necessary if we are to thrive. For any community or nation to thrive, we need to be honest about the challenges, but above all we need a positive vision and picture of the world we hope to see.

ELECTIONS, PG 1

\$20,000,000 of property taxes are levied in year ten)? BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE."

Changing when we elect city officials

The final ballot question in St. Paul proposes to change when we elect our city leaders. This ballot measure, if approved, would amend the city charter from electing the mayor and city council on odd-numbered years to even years aligned with presidential elections - meaning if this measure passes, four years from now you'll be voting for the City Council along with the President.

Supporters of the amendment to the city charter see this as a way to increase citizen participation, citing that only about one-third of voters turn out for local elections compared to presidential elections, and believe there would be a cost savings by reducing the number of lower-turnout elections on off years.

Opponents say that, while turnout may be greater, they fear that local issues will be drowned out in the noise of the presidential election.

Additionally, St. Paul's ranked choice voting for local elections poses an additional challenge, since ranked choice is not allowed for state or federal elections, posing potential logistical and legal hurdles, even if the measure passes.

The full text of the question reads: "Changing City Elections to Presidential Election years.

Shall Chapter 7 (Elections) of the City Charter be amended as follows: Sec. 7.01. - City elections. The election of city officers and such other officers as are required by law to be elected at a city election shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in odd numbered presidential election years. Notwithstanding Section 2.02 of this Charter setting four-year terms, and to transition to presidential election years, councilmembers elected on November 7, 2023, shall serve a five-year term and a mayoral election shall occur on November 4, 2025, for a three-year term. Currently, city elections take place in odd years. A "yes" vote changes City elections to take place in presidential election years, which occur in even years. A "no" vote keeps City elections in odd years."

Learn more

See your sample ballot sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/whats-on-my-ballot

Find your polling place pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us

Find other voting resources ramseycounty.us/residents/elections-voting

COMMUNITY HAPPENING

Plastic Recycling in St. Paul

In part four of her series on plastics, Julie Borgerding July fills us in on where we can recycle different types of plastics in our own backyard.

BY JULIE BORGERDING JULY

Plastic manufacturers have been telling us since the 1970s that plastic is recyclable. They are only telling a tiny bit of truth. Less than 10% of the more than 430 million metric tons of plastic produced every year is recyclable. Many of us try to recycle more but it is often wishful - not the right kind of plastic, or not empty and gets sent to the landfill. Many think that all recycling just gets sent to landfill.

But the City of St. Paul does recycle and most of what is collected is processed and reused in Minnesota. Sarah Haas, of St. Paul's Dept of Public Works, told me that the city pays Eureka \$1 million a month for recycling, and, depending on the market for the various processed recyclables, may get a check back (80% after the cost of recycling - Eureka gets the other 20%). It does not generate a lot of money. The county grants the city \$700,000-900,000 year - not even the cost of one month.

Eureka's non-profit recycling program used by Twin Cities municipalities recycles 400-500 tons of all recyclables a day. Only three of seven types of plastic get recycled - #1, #2 and #5 nonblack plastic, of which bottles, toiletry and



food containers are made, AND they must be empty and rinsed.

PET soda pop bottles (#1 plastics) are easily recycled but just 40% of those produced are. Milk and water jugs (#2) and #5 containers are also easy to clean and recycle. Tops can be left on. Plastic straws cannot be recycled.

The non-recyclable plastics are #3 (pipes and siding), #6 (Styrofoam and thin, clear plastic cookie trays and some clear plastic lids

demand at the moment.

But, she said, their community partners help provide some of the much-needed goods to their clients.

"The Odd Couple realty team, that's housed on Grand Avenue, they do a huge coat drive for us every year," Bedner said. "Their goal is to bring in a thousand coats. There are boxes in the community and they flyer the Macalester-Groveland area."

Those donations, along with items donated during their regular appointments, go a long way to help the over 3,000 people they serve annually.

"The people who shop in our store make an appointment to come here," Bedner said. "We try to reduce barriers for them, so we do not have a referral process, and we don't have any type of verification."

She said that, while that limits the amount of information they can collect on their clients, creating an easy, dignified way for them to shop is their goal.

"When you answer the phone and it's a case manager saying, 'how do I refer my client?' or 'what forms do you need?' or 'how do we prove our income?' or 'how do

that crinkle' #7 (hard clear plastic, like water bottles). Plastic bags (LDPE #4) are recyclable separately at some grocery stores.

The most difficult to recycle plastics are the ubiquitous single use plastic bags and wrap. 12-15 billion pounds of bags are produced every year, with only 5% recycled. Think about those floating around for 400 years if you are offered a bag at a store! My niece found tiny lettering on a plastic bag in WA: please reuse 261 times before discarding!

Merrick, Inc. is a local company that recycles plastic bags from 175 businesses. At Merrick adults with disabilities sort 1 million pounds of plastic a year into bales which are sold to TREX for composite decking. Marissa Jensen, Assistant Production Director at Merrick, advises that plastic bags must be clean, free of debris and dry. See below for Merrick's website.

What We Can Do

- Refuse plastic straws, plasticware and bags when possible. Some people have their own reusable straws, forks, spoons and bags handy for use. I have yet to get that organized!
- Bring reusable bags when you shop, use washable mesh bags or no bags for produce.
- Find out what you can and cannot recycle at eurekarecycling.org/what-can-i-recycle
- For plastic bag recycling see merrickinc.org/plastic-recycling-and-earth911.com
- Look into purchasing products from processed recyclables at webapp.pca.state.mn.us/recycled-products

Support Joseph's Coat

VOLUNTEER. Monday - Thursday. Help sort, stock shelves or people find what they are looking for. Visit josephscoatmn.org/volunteer

DONATE GOODS. Tuesday and Thursday by appointment only. Gently used clothing and household goods. Visit josephscoatmn.org/items-goods

FINANCIAL SUPPORT. Visit josephscoatmn.org/ways-to-donate

we prove who we are?' or 'I'm experiencing homelessness, I don't have an ID,' and to be able to say, you know, we just need your name and a birthday. Come, we'll make it work. We'll figure it out. I think that's so special because that is not very common," Bedner said.

And that has been their mission for 35 years, making it easy for those in need to shop with dignity.

JOSEPH'S COAT, PG 1

those volunteers are here on shopping days, donation days, and they're making sure things run smoothly."

Bedner said that their volunteer base comes from as far away as Wisconsin and that some of their volunteers have been coming for decades.

"Our volunteer program, I think, is special because we have those people with decades of experience, she said. "People volunteer on different days and they have different things they do together. There's some groups that have a happy hour, but also have this."

All of that volunteer time really adds up for the organization, equating to about \$400,000 worth of labor annually to help those in need.

Bedner said that, coming into the organization last year as just its fourth Executive Director, she is very fortunate for having such a robust volunteer infrastructure already in place to serve their clients.

But they can also use more volunteers, especially now that the season is changing.

Bedner said that appointments for donating items and for shopping are backed up a few weeks because there is such

Community REPORTER

265 Oneida St. St Paul, MN 55102

Copy Deadline: Nov 18, 2024

Ad Deadline: Nov 20, 2024

Community Reporter is a nonprofit, and donations are tax-deductible.

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Community News & Events

St. Paul City Council Formally Sets Limit for 2025 Tax Levy

The St. Paul City Council formally set the city's 2025 levy limit at 7.9%. This preliminary action recognizes the proposed amount by Mayor Carter for 2025 while committing to continued review, efforts to look for thoughtful savings without compromising critical services to residents, and adopting a final budget in December.

The City Council is required under state law to set a levy limit each year as part of its budget-setting process. The levy limit is the maximum by which the city can raise property taxes for the following year and determines how much money could be available for the following year's budget. This important step in the process lays out parameters for the Council's final budget adoption in early December.

Over the next three months, the City Council will continue to hold weekly Budget Committee meetings to hear the details of each city department's 2025 budget request. The final vote on the 2025 city budget will be held on December 4, 2024.

To keep up to date on the Council's budget process, go to stpaul.gov/departments/city-council/budgeting-financial-planning.



St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter

ANNUAL B'YACHAD GIFT BAG PROGRAM KICKS OFF

Jewish Family Service of St. Paul (JFS) offers an opportunity for the community to support people who are experiencing financial, social and spiritual needs.

The program will deliver more than 200 gift bags to isolated people in need. Each bag will contain items to engage minds, hands, and hearts, a sweet holiday treat, warm wishes in a holiday card and a gift card for groceries and home essentials to help them celebrate the holiday or purchase groceries.

There are three opportunities to support the program: donate to help cover the cost of a \$36 per gift bag; deliver the bags; or create holiday cards. Please contact Volunteer Coordinator Adel Kuchyk at akuchyk@jfsp.org.

ST. PAUL PROPOSES ADMINISTRATIVE CITATIONS

The City of St. Paul advanced a resolution to amend the city's charter to allow for administrative citations to be levied to address ordinance violations as a tool for code compliance and enforcement.

Currently, the city's enforcement options are limited. Administrative citations for issues like property negligence and wage theft offer a timely, appropriate alternative while reducing negative impacts on residents over the use of criminal citations.

Administrative citations would allow St. Paul to align with comparable cities to meet compliance. City leaders say this mechanism would include a transparent system and allow violators an opportunity for an appeal process.

The City Council, which passed the resolution unanimously, is requesting the Charter Commission make recommendations within 60 days. If advanced to the Council by the Charter Commission, a unanimous vote of the Council is required to establish this change to the charter. The City Council must also establish an appeals hearing procedure and specify which ordinances will use administrative citations.

BIG CHANGES COMING TO MEDICARE CHOICES

With Medicare open enrollment having begun on Oct. 15, participants should be aware of big changes are coming for 2025. Starting in January, some health care providers may no longer be "in-network" for certain Medicare Advantage Plans. New benefits from the Inflation Reduction Act also kick in, such as a new maximum \$2,000 dollar cap on prescription drugs and a new payment plan option to make paying for prescriptions more manageable.

Changes in Medicare Advantage plans mean an estimated 60,000 Minnesotans currently have providers, clinics and hospitals that will no longer be in-network. Some beneficiaries will have to change doctors or change their Medicare Advantage Plan during open enrollment to get their health care coverage back in sync.

Open enrollment, which runs through Dec. 7, is the time each year when beneficiaries can make adjustments to their Medicare plans.

Also coming in 2025 is a new \$2,000 maximum out-of-pocket limit on Medicare Part D prescription drugs. Once beneficiaries reach this amount, they don't have to pay for their covered prescriptions for the rest of

FOR MORE COMMUNITY NEWS, VISIT COMMUNITYREPORTER.ORG/CATEGORY/NEIGHBORHOOD-NEWS

the year. Best of all, enrollment is automatic, so people don't have to do anything to receive this benefit.

Also new in the coming year is the Medicare Prescription Drug Payment Plan, or MPPP. It helps people manage out-of-pocket costs for covered drugs by spreading costs across the calendar year. Instead of paying at the pharmacy, people pay a monthly amount to their health plan or drug plan. The MPPP is optional, so beneficiaries must contact their Medicare health or drug plan to enroll.

If you need help with Medicare, you have options: Online: Visit www.Medicare.gov to create an account, compare plans and enroll.

Phone: Call 1-800-MEDICARE, available 24/7. Senior LinkAge Line: Call 800-333-2433 for free help with Medicare in Minnesota, open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

MDH STUDY FINDS TELEHEALTH CONTINUES TO BENEFIT MINNESOTANS

A new report released by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommends continued support for the broad availability and use of telehealth as a tool to deliver health care services. The recommendation is part of MDH's final report to the Minnesota Legislature on the impact of the 2021 Minnesota Telehealth Act on private sector health insurance. The report builds on a preliminary study of telehealth expansion and payment parity issued in June of 2023.

The report makes nine recommendations to support the availability and use of telehealth. These recommendations include support for reimbursing the same amount (known as payment parity) for audio-visual and audio-only (phone) telehealth services and the continued inclusion of audio-only care in the definition of telehealth. According to the study, audio-only telehealth fills an important gap in health care availability and access, particularly for people seeking behavioral health care, older Minnesotans, those with complex chronic conditions and those residing in areas with low broadband access.

The report summarizes findings from two years of research and stakeholder engagement led by MDH to address questions from the Legislature about the impact of telehealth expansion and payment parity on health care access, quality and outcomes, satisfaction, costs and equity.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, patients and health care providers have increasingly found value in the convenience and flexibility of telehealth. MDH's study of telehealth identified wide agreement among Minnesota providers, patients, health plans and public health professionals that telehealth expands access to care, makes getting care faster and easier and reduces barriers for patients. The final report also concluded

that telehealth expanded access to health care without appearing to compromise quality of care or patient satisfaction or increasing health care spending.

Most Minnesotans who used telehealth were satisfied with their experience and both patients and providers appreciate the option of telehealth. However, preferences for telehealth versus in-person care varied, and the availability of in-person care is needed to ensure telehealth is one choice but not the only choice.

The increased access to health care offered by telehealth also has the potential to strengthen health equity, according to the study's findings. Though it cannot solve systemic issues, telehealth could help to reduce some of the inequities in health care access that exacerbate health disparities. However, the study found that the gateways to telehealth itself are not equitable. This is especially true for people with limited digital access or digital literacy. Further investments in telecommunications technology, including broadband, and actions to help people build their knowledge, skills and comfort to use telehealth effectively are needed. MDH's final report on telehealth is available at health.state.mn.us/data/economics/telehealth/publications.html.

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Heated Patio for Chilly Fall Days

Local Artist Martin Devaney to Release 8th Studio Album

Veteran St. Paul songwriter Martin Devaney returns with his eighth solo album – and 10th overall – *Blueprint for a Ghost*. The first release bearing his name since 2018's *Plaid on Plaid* after a detour with his pandemic project *Folios*, *Blueprint* marks a return to form for Devaney, who worked with some old familiar friends to a craft warm bed of sound on which to lay his lyrical and literate tunes.

Blueprint for a Ghost was recorded primarily in September 2023 with Rich Mattson (Minnesota songwriting legend and producer of Devaney's House of Rust) and finished with Tom Herbers (Cactus Blossoms, Charlie Parr), who also mixed the record. Herbers worked most recently with Devaney on his *Folios* releases, but their collaborations go back to Devaney's *Somebody Somewhere* (2002).

Rounding out the reunions are the band members: Original guitar player Josh Peterson (Heiruspecs) and long-time bass player Matt Palin, along with drummer Ryan Lovan, who Devaney played with in Roma Di Luna. Guests besides Mattson include Germaine Gemberling on vocals, AJ Srubas on fiddle, and Pete Sands.

Blueprint for a Ghost will be available digitally on all streaming services on Dec. 6 and on limited vinyl and CD in early December. Devaney and Friends will celebrate the album release Dec. 19 at the White Squirrel Bar in St. Paul with guests Mike Gunther and the Total Crapshoot. Music at 8 p.m. Learn more and listen to Martin's work at martindevaney.com.



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For nearly 55 years, the "Community Reporter" has brought the news of the West End to your doorstep every month. We work hard to tell the stories of our community that aren't told elsewhere - about the people, places and happenings that make our community absolutely unique from every other part of the city we call home.

Over the past year, your support has allowed us to try some new things - from growing the number of elected officials who are able to share their work each month to partnering with students from Global Arts Plus Upper Campus and starting a monthly email edition of our paper - we've been able to reach new heights.

But we need your support to continue to evolve.

As a community based nonprofit, your donations help us thrive. We are asking you to consider donating to the "Community Reporter" this season. Your gift helps supplement our income to help us offer the best paper we can.

We want to continue to grow, to offer more of what you love from the *Community Reporter* while also staying relevant as our community continues to grow and change.

We want to raise \$30,000 over the next year. By giving as little as \$5 a month, you can help us reach that goal.

With your help, we'll continue telling the story of the West End for the next 50 years.

With much appreciation,
Damian Goebel
Editor, *Community Reporter*

Support us today online
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Cooper's Foods



"Mr. Positive"
Carl Bentson



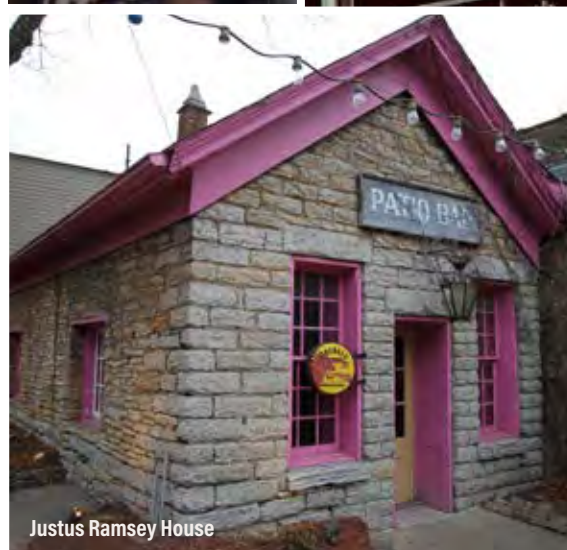
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Community Nourishment

HEALTHLINE

How to avoid getting SAD this year!

BY MAURA BENSON, DO

As winter begins to approach, it brings many joys – the upcoming holidays, hockey season, snow falling on a quiet street –but it also brings some down sides. Days get shorter and the cold can get unbearable. Sometimes these changes with the seasons can cause mood changes. When these moods get more serious or start to affect your daily life, this is called Seasonal Affective Disorder.

What is SAD

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that can happen during the winter months, usually lasting for 4-5 months of the year. There are actually two different types of SAD, a winter and a summer one, which is much less common.

Symptoms of SAD

- Feeling sad, anxious or “empty” most days for at least two weeks
- Being easily frustrated, irritable or restless or feeling hopeless
- Having less interest in things that you usually enjoy doing
- Having less energy than you normally do
- Changes in your sleep and oversleeping
- Changes in your appetite
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or suicidal thoughts

What causes SAD

SAD can be caused by changes in the level of serotonin, which is a chemical in your brain that helps to make you happy. The amount of sunlight that you are exposed to during the day can also contribute to SAD. When you get less sunlight during the day, this can change how much serotonin your body produces. It also can cause you to be deficient in Vitamin D which your body makes from sunlight. Vitamin D works with serotonin to help regulate your mood. Also, the changes in the amount of sunlight also can affect your body’s circadian rhythm – your body’s internal clock. Another chemical in your



body that can be affected by less sunlight is melatonin, which causes sleepiness.

There are other factors that can also contribute to SAD. Sometimes during the winter people can become more isolated, which can affect their mood. Additionally, negative feelings that people have about the time of year can contribute to SAD. Holiday season, though mostly fun, can also cause increased stress, sometimes from financial stress or stress from family obligations.

Help your mood during the winter

Even if you don’t have SAD, there are some things that have been proven to be helpful for people with mood changes in the winter. Light therapy can be helpful when your body is craving more sunlight than you can get. Using a light box, or bright light (more than 10,000 lux) for around 30 minutes a day during the winter months can help trick your body into thinking its getting more sunlight than it is. If you are not able to get a light box, trying to get some light exposure outside during the day can also be helpful. Just be sure to bundle up!

Another thing that can be helpful is taking a vitamin D supplement, which will help your body use its serotonin even if you are not getting enough sunlight. Make sure to

talk to your doctor before starting a new supplement in case it interacts with any other medications that you might be taking.

Exercise is also proven to help boost mood during any time of year. Try to aim for 150 minutes of exercise a week. This can include walks, stretching, yoga or strength training or any type of movement that brings you joy. Also staying in touch with people you care about during the winter months can help boost your mood. A phone call or a friendly hello to your neighbor can go a long way!

When to talk to your doctor

If you are worried that you may have SAD, talk to your primary care doctor. If your feelings are affecting your daily life and you are not able to do what you normally do, you may benefit from taking medication to help with your mood in the winter months or even potentially all year round.

If you feel that your depression is very severe or if you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, talk to a doctor immediately or go to the emergency room. If you or someone you know is in immediate distress or thinking about hurting themselves, call or text 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline or chat 988lifeline.org.

Dr. Benson is a physician at Allina Health United Family Physicians, 233 Grand Ave, Saint Paul, 55102, 651-241-5200.

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BEA'S BOOKS

“Righting the Mother Tongue” is Eye Opening



protested outside national spelling bees to push their agenda on a simplified language. These are just a few of my favorite sections, and, though I wish I could share more, do not wish to spoil any more exciting orthographic factoids.

In short, this book both captivated and overwhelmed me. The amount of information was impressive, but it was difficult to get through (as many non-fiction texts are) and it definitely took me longer than usual to finish. That said, Wolman’s humor brought me to the finish line and I found myself laughing so much more than I would have thought possible. As a lifelong reader and lover of words I found it to be fascinating, but completely understand if a deep dive into the spelling of the English language is not your cup of tea. Although it was an odd read, and certainly an odd book for me to review, I thought it to be worth a mention to all of you aspiring and accomplished spell checkers and grammar fanatics.

BY BEATRICE COSGROVE

Have you ever thought about the English language? The language you speak, read and write? If you haven’t, “Righting the Mother Tongue: From Old English to Email, the Tangled Story of English Spelling” will move you along said thinking journey at an astonishing pace!

I am a spelling fanatic that aspires to be a human spellcheck (I am very serious about this), and have always been curious about the unfortunate state of the English language. I have watched others and personally struggled with the oddities and inconsistencies that populate our language and, in picking up this book, both learned the “why” and was left asking myself “WHY?”

The author, David Wolman, begins with the roots of English and moves through time, connecting the dots and leading us up to modern changes to the language, or, rather, attempts at changes (more on this later). What really struck me about this book was the sheer amount of things I had simply never heard of but felt I should know, such as the major effect the Gutenberg press had on spelling and a look at how early scribes helped shape our language. I was also enlightened to learn of the existence of a group that has

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In the Community

NOTEBOOK RECOLLECTIONS

Lunch with the one and only Mr. Positive

BY TIM RUMSEY

Tuesday, October 22, 2024, 1 p.m.

The fall weather is extra-ordinary today. 80°. Blue sky. Patches of atmosphere with the correct water content and altitude have been tricked into Cumulo-Nimbus white fluffs. Even the street folks look happy for this moment.

I'm walking to the Day By Day Café.

"Sit with me," Carl says from a round metal outdoor table at the café as I approach.

Of course I will.

"The cancer is better," said Carl. "My esophagus is good. I'm going to live another 30 years. 2054."

I ordered a Diet Coke and a chicken-blueberry salad.

I can't imagine Mr. Positive gone from us. The goodness he has dispensed. The cheer, the clear sidewalks and well trimmed lawns.

Carl gone? I have passed his beautiful house every workday for 34 years. 10,200 times!

The can't miss Carl-mobile is perfectly parked between two pickups on West 7th, 10 feet from where we sit.

Carl peels back a sheathed straw and places it in my Diet Coke and moves my silverware atop a napkin.

Carl has lost weight. 195 to 174. He looks hale and hearty.

Best friend Karen has solved all the chemo insurance snafus.

Mr. Positive gets up from the table and goes inside for cream.

Several just-arriving patrons stop in their

tracks to look at Carl's trusty three-wheeler steed. It is majestic. The beige awning, the lights, the reflectors. One takes a picture of three friends gathered around it.

Carl is back with a handful of creamers and empties all six of them into his coffee cup. Then he leans forward, borrows my Diet Coke and pours in some to his coffee.

Our food arrives. A mushroom and tomato hamburger with wild rice soup for Carl and my Chicken blueberry salad.

"When will it snow?" I asked Carl.

"By Thanksgiving," he answers.

Day by Day Hector wheels a big just-emptied trash barrel by our table and is having trouble getting it back into Day By Day. Carl jumps up and helps him make the transfer.

"Karen's birthday was two weeks ago." Carl says as he sits back down and takes a bite of his hamburger.

Carl opens up a 1964 American Motors Rambler Ambassador car manual.

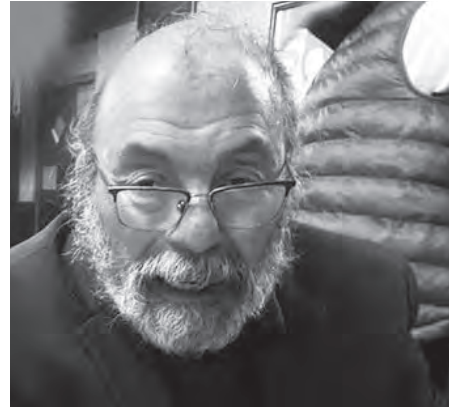
"Grandma Risdall had a new, green 1963 Rambler. With automatic power steering and a handbrake for the handicapped. But she wasn't handicapped."

I asked Carl if he missed work. He was six months retired.

"A little," he said. "I go back every now and then."

West 7th cab driver extraordinaire, William Texan Dubois, knows and appreciates Carl. Tex says Carl "ministers" to West 7th. "A lot of people will grieve him when he's gone..."

On a down day, I am known to walk or



Carl Benston

drive by Carl's house for a wave or howdy. Tex also knows that Carl is a "light-nut." Flashlights, holiday lights, colored lights. Lights on his bike. Golden reflectors sewn into his orange jacket. He's always ready to light up the dark.

Tex says Carl's favorite breakfast is "Beacon and eggs."

Back to Carl's and my lunch.

Carl orders yogurt and strawberries for dessert. "Healthy dessert," I say.

"You got to enjoy life before you go in the box," He says to me.

Stuart Loughridge and his wife Carolyn just then walk by our table on the way to St. Vinnies with 2 heavy duty, two-wheeled dollies. They both say hello to Carl.

A silent, but lit-up ambulance speeds down 7th.

I ask Carl who he's going to vote for.

"The nicer one," said Carl. "This weekend will be Indian Summer."

Carl isn't Mr. Positive for nothing.



HALLOWEEN DECOR CONTEST

Get Spooky, West 7th! Who has the spookiest house on the block? Entries due by 11:59 p.m. on November 4. Winner receives a special prize! Submit your house or a neighbor's house at fortroadfed.org.

INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED?

We are currently recruiting candidates for an Area 1 Coordinator position (homeowner or renter).

UPCOMING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- **Transportation & Land Use**, 11/6, 6:30 p.m.
- **Board Meeting**, 11/17, 7 p.m.
- **Engagement & Fundraising**, 11/21, 6:30 p.m.

STAY IN TOUCH

"Like" us on Facebook. Subscribe to e-newsletter. More information at fortroadfederation.org

CONTACT

Julia McColley, julia@fortroadfederation.org; 651-298-5599; 395 Superior Street, St. Paul, MN 55102.

Free programs celebrate Native American heritage

St. Paul Public Library (SPPL) invites residents of all ages to join in celebrating Native American arts, culture and stories at local libraries all month long. The events, presented in partnership with Choctaw artist Mark Billy and other artists, are free and open to the public – all are welcome to attend. This program series is made possible by the Minnesota Arts and Culture Heritage Fund.

CHOCTAW SINGING WORKSHOPS WITH MARK BILLY. NOV 12 & 14, 6-7 P.M. SUN RAY LIBRARY, 2105 WILSON AVE.

Mark Billy, a classically trained opera singer, clarinetist and educator will guide participants through the pronunciation and musical nuances of the Choctaw language and offers a rare opportunity to explore the intersection of Indigenous culture and classical music. No musical experience is necessary, and all are welcome.



ARTS & CULTURE BEARERS CONCERT & PANEL DISCUSSION. NOV 19, 6-8 P.M. ARLINGTON HILLS LIBRARY, 1200 PAYNE AVE.

A vibrant celebration of Native American Heritage Month, showcasing talented

Native American performers who honor their cultural traditions while expressing their modern identities through art. The event will blend traditional and contemporary forms, reflecting the powerful ways Native American artists incorporate their heritage into their evolving art. After the performance, a panel discussion and audience Q&A, will provide an opportunity to hear directly from the artists about their creative processes and the significance of Native American heritage and culture in their work.

ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 5

West 7th Community Center will serve as a polling place for this election cycle. The all St. Paul Public Libraries have voter registration forms, and that staff can help locate people's polling places.

WEST 7TH PUBLIC LIBRARY, 265 Oneida. Hours: Mon, Thu 12:30-8 pm, Tue 11:30 am-5:30 pm, Wed, Fri 10 am-5:30 pm.



HIGHLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

For information, visit highlanddistrictcouncil.org/events

HIGHLAND PARK TURKEY TROT
The annual Highland Park Turkey Trot is Thanksgiving morning starting at 8 a.m. The 5K route starts and ends at Lumen Christi Catholic Community and Highland Catholic School. Learn more at www.highlandparkturkeytrot.com

UPCOMING COMMITTEES MEETINGS
All HDC meetings are held in-person at the Highland Park Community Center (1978 Ford Parkway) with the option to join online via Zoom, unless noted. Updates about meeting locations, agendas and links to join online are available on our website approximately one week prior to each meeting. Zoom link, meeting agendas at highlanddistrictcouncil.org/calendar.

- **HDC Board** – Thu, 11/7, 7 p.m.
- **Transportation** – Tue, 11/12, 7 p.m.
- **Community Development** – Tue, 11/19, 6:30 p.m.



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Check the website for the latest information or call the Center.

Did you know that Keystone has a Foodmobile program?

Each month, Keystone's two Foodmobiles go to over 30 community sites to bring food shelf services directly to people who have transportation or food support barriers. Rain or shine, this innovative approach relies on staff and volunteers to distribute food at each site. With the arrival of fall and the launch of our third Foodmobile fast approaching, now is the perfect time to get involved!

If you enjoy chatting and meeting new people, volunteering at a shopping site aboard "Smallie" sounds right up your alley. If you prefer to stay busy stocking and multitasking, volunteering at a box site aboard "Biggie" could be just the right fit for you. Get familiar with a new area of the Twin Cities by volunteering at different sites around Ramsey County. Foodmobile shifts are part of the over 200 volunteer shifts Keystone offers each week. There's bound to be one that works with your schedule.

Volunteering at Keystone is a fun and meaningful way to show care to your community and a great way to give back this holiday season. Keystone offers a variety of volunteer opportunities for both individuals and groups, and our staff will work with you to find a role that fits your interest and schedule. Right now, we are especially looking for volunteers on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. To learn more about volunteering at Keystone or fill out a volunteer application, visit keystoneservices.org/volunteer.

Keystone's Fare for All

Fare for All allows you to shop for quality, nutritious foods at a discount and budget-friendly prices. All are welcome! The upcoming Fare for All events at West 7th Community Center: Nov 1, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Make a Difference by Volunteering at Keystone

Volunteering at Keystone is a fun and meaningful way to show care to your community. Keystone offers a variety of volunteer opportunities for both individual and groups, and our staff will work with you to find a role that fits your interest and schedule. Right now, we are especially looking for volunteers on Thursdays and Fridays. To learn more about volunteering at Keystone or fill out a volunteer application, please visit keystoneservices.org/volunteer

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BULLETIN BOARD



FORT BY FIRELIGHT

November 2, 6-8 p.m. Historic Fort Snelling. \$20-\$24. Seize a rare opportunity to experience Historic Fort Snelling at night! Visit the barracks to hear soldiers discuss their day of work at a military post and see an evening of socializing as it might have looked at the Officers' Quarters. What did people do, what did they talk about, and what was it like to spend an evening by firelight? There will be a bonfire and music to enjoy before and after the program. Soda, water and hot cider are available for purchase. Program recommended for ages 10 and up. Tours run between 6-8 p.m. Learn more and get tickets at mnh.org/events/2792.

DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS MEETINGS

Councilmember Rebecca Noecker, Downtown Alliance and the CapitolRiver Council will host four community meetings for downtown residents. These sessions will bring you up to speed on the exciting vision and plans for downtown, with updates on projects underway. Oct. 29, 5-6 p.m. - MetroNOME Brewery - Fingal's Cave (289 5th St. E.); Nov. 4, 9-10 a.m. - Lost Fox (213 4th St.); Nov 11, 5-6:00 p.m. - Barrel Theory Beer Company (248 7th St E); Nov 12, 8:15 - 9:15 a.m. - Lost Fox (213 4th St).

FAMILYJAM

Saturday mornings, 10 & 11:15 a.m. Landmark Center. Free. A short 25-30 minute concerts followed by Music Museum activities, including hands-on instrument playing, instrument demonstrations and musician meet and greets. It's free, and registration is required. Nov 2 will feature The Silver Fox Opera - Family Opera in One Act - based on the bayou legend of a young girl who transforms into a silver fox to use her magical powers! Advance registration required. Visit schubert.org/education/familyjam for details, or call 651-292-3268.

CELEBRATE THE DAY OF THE DEAD WITH CLUES

Nov. 2, 12-3 p.m. Midtown Global Market. Free. CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio) is pleased to present festive and educational celebration commemorating Día de los Muertos. Learn more at clues.org/latino-art-events.

FRANKENSTEIN & OTHER TALES

Nov. 2-3. Fitzgerald Theater. \$33-\$50. Get ready to experience chills and thrills this Halloween with Twin Cities Ballet's spectacular showcase of spooky stories. This show features TCB's acclaimed *Victor Frankenstein*, a thought provoking interpretation of the classic gothic novel. Also featured is Denise Vogt's powerful all-female ensemble work, *Red*, inspired by the compelling narrative of *The Handmaid's Tale*, a short new work based on the timeless *Phantom of the Opera*, and audience favorite, *Grave Matters*, by talented guest choreographer James Sewell. Get tickets and learn more at twincitiesballet.org/ballet/frankenstein-and-other-tales.

THE ADVENTURES OF A TRAVELING MESKWAKI BY OOGIE_PUSH

Nov 6-24. 7:30 or 2 p.m. Park Square Theater. Pay as you are able (\$35 suggested). *The Adventures Of A Traveling Meskwaki* by Oogie_Push, a member of the Meskwaki Nation, is a multimedia, Native storytelling performance piece. Inspired by the actions of the water walkers, Native grandmothers working to protect one of our planet's most precious resources, "Adventures" traces Oogie's travels across North America as she is moved by a vision to cleanse the water after major oil spills. Through her time with myriad tribal nations, she develops simple yet profound healing practices to help heal the water. Using film projection, movement, storytelling and ceremony, she inspires us to take our

own small steps to restore the water and heal the planet. Tickets: fullcircletheatermn.org/adventures.

SWEATER VEST FEST 2024

Nov. 7, 8 a.m. Brake Bread. They'll have: Sweater Vest Cookies, 10% off your order if you're wearing a Sweater Vest; Get your picture taken for the Who Wore It Vest non-contest. Or nontest? From 8-10 a.m. Nate will be hosting coffee on the bus. (Assuming he meets the deadline of finishing the bus by the 7th). Learn more at brakebread.com.

ONCE UPON A TIME GALA

Nov 8, 5:30-9 p.m. Landmark Center. \$150. The celebration in support of Landmark Center and its free and inclusive arts and cultural community programming. As we continue to explore destinations from around the world, we invite guests to "pack their bags" for a trip to the vibrant city of Rio de Janeiro. Performance by Ticket To Brasil. Menu options include: Moqueca (Prawn with Coconut Sauce), Picadinho De Carne (Bone is Short Rib with Squash Puree), OR Vegetariano (Grilled Cauliflower Steak). Tickets at landmarkcenter.org/once-upon-a-time-gala.

BALLET TUESDAYS

Nov 12, 12 p.m. Landmark Center. Free. Landmark Center hosts FREE lunch-hour ballet performances and demonstrations the second Tuesday of the month, from 12-1 p.m., in partnership with Ballet Co.Laboratory. This month, enjoy excerpts from The Waves featuring the Junior Company of Ballet Co. Laboratory. This new work is set to a minimalist score by siblings Genevieve and Chris Waterbury. After the performance, audience members are invited to participate in an optional mini-dance lesson, craft, and photos with the dancers. www.balletcolaboratory.org/

CO-ED DRUM CIRCLE

Nov 15, 6:30-8 p.m. Women's Drum Center. \$15. 2242 University Ave W., St. Paul. Facilitator Sandi Likely will be offering a Taiko drum circle. No experience is necessary, and drums will be provided. Fee: \$15.00. This is a perfect opportunity to explore this intriguing type of drumming in a fun, easy setting. All gender identities are welcome. Class size is limited, so register at womensdrumcenter.org asap.

HOLMES/POIROT

Through Nov. 3. 7 p.m. & 2 p.m. Park Square Theater. \$25-\$65. A star studded cast brings this world premiere mystery by nationally acclaimed Twin Cities playwright Jeff Hatcher and Steve Hendrickson to life. Sherlock Holmes never lost a case. Or did he? In this new mystery Holmes comes up against his most diabolical adversary in a tale of intrigue, international politics, wine and murder. And he's stymied. Enter Hercule Poirot 25 years later to investigate a new crime that rhymes with the first. Learn more: parksquaretheatre.org.

I AM BETTY

Nov 23-Dec 29. History Theatre. \$15-\$82. History Theatre is thrilled to bring back last year's smash-hit musical "I Am Betty," the perfect recipe for holiday fun! You'll catch yourself humming the memorable music from this world-premiere production by Denise Prosek and Cristina Luzárraga and leave inspired to take on the world. This all-female cast celebrates 100 years of women's history and Betty Crocker, blending true stories and original music. *I Am Betty* runs Nov 23-Dec 29. All tickets on sale now! Learn more at historytheatre.com/2024-2025/i-am-betty



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