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Second Sammy’s Avenue Eatery location planned for 2017

Avenue Eatery plans to open a second location at the Northwest corner of Penn Ave. and Golden Valley Road, says owner Sammy McDowell. It is slated to be in the commercial space on the ground floor of Devean George’s upcoming residential building – phase two of his Commons at Penn project. McDowell says that George approached him about the possibility of growing his business into the space. George and his nonprofit Building Blocks Inc. were not able to be reached for comment prior to the publication of this piece.

The new Avenue Eatery will be open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and it will have 70-100 tables. Similar to the current Avenue Eatery, the restaurant will seek to be a provider of healthy meals on the Northside. Nothing on the menu will be fried; McDowell says he wants to push the community, and himself, to eat healthier. The original Avenue Eatery at Broadway and Emerson will not close. It will be converted into an express location that will offer pre-made items and fast café service.

If all goes according to plan, it’ll open in summer 2017, which will also be Avenue Eatery’s fifth anniversary on the Northside. After the restaurant is up and running, McDowell dreams of opening a late night Northside spot that serves wine and tapas on Broadway Ave.

By Kenzie O’Keefe

Study shows higher rates of cancer deaths in areas near Lowry Bridge

“North and Northeast Minneapolis have an industrial air pollution problem, and a new study indicates that residents near the Lowry Ave. Bridge may be paying with their lives,” says the Bottineau Neighborhood Association (BNA) in Northeast.

Phase One of a study – funded by and coordinated by the BNA, researched by Tonye Sylvanus and Stephanie Yuen (pictured above), and organized by East Side Environmental Quality of Life (EEQL) – compared four census tracts surrounding the Lowry Bridge on both sides of the river to data from a same-sized control area in Mound, Minnesota over a period of 19 years. They say the results show a correlation between living in the Lowry area and higher cancer and asthma death rates. Air pollution-related death rates are 330% higher in the Lowry area than in Mound. Cancer death rates are 310% higher and asthma death rates are 844% higher in Lowry.

The study does not determine the source of the pollution, but EEQL suspects the GAF Shingle Plant.

The next phase in the study will involve interviewing residents and former residents in the affected areas to “determine the extent of cancer illnesses among the living,” says the BNA. North News will be exploring this study in more depth our next issue – out August 25.

Story & photo by Kenzie O’Keefe

Webber Pool sees successes and small hiccups in its first year

The first “natural” public pool in North America was hailed on July 23, the anniversary of its opening. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), local dignitaries, and the community at large celebrated a re-opening of the Webber Park Natural Swimming pool, a landmark in water-recycling design that uses chemical-free filtration to keep itself clean.

Saturday’s event, dampened somewhat by a morning shower, featured speakers from MPRB, North United Methodist Church, and the state legislature. Superintendent Jayne Miller introduced 2nd District Park Commissioner Jon Olson, who said of the project, “We decided that we could do something really special for Webber Park. We ran into roadblock after roadblock, but we found a way to get the job done.”

State Representative Joe Mullery praised the new facility, telling the audience, “Every time I went to the old pool as a child, I managed to come home bleeding because of the pool’s sharp edges.”

The pool has had four closures since it began operations last year. Three were due to already-sick children, and the pool was reopened within hours. The fourth closing came after a heavy storm that sent runoff and debris from higher residential areas into the pool. Dawn Sommers, MPRB’s Communications and Marketing Manager, said that in all cases the pool’s regeneration system did exactly what it was designed to do, and no extra cleanup measures were required.

Park Aquatics director Sarah Chillo described the storm runoff as a “complete surge of water that drained quickly.” She noted that weekly water samples are lab-tested, and the pool’s water quality is consistently high.

The pool water passes through cloth screens into a regeneration pond whose rock base and thousands of aquatic plants complete the cleansing process. The pool’s entire water volume (500,000 gallons) is filtered every twelve hours.

By Mark Peterson

Transit-minded affordable housing breaks ground on Lowry Ave.

Ground was officially broken for the Hawthorne EcoVillage Apartments, a new $18 million dollar housing development, on July 13. The energy-efficient project is being developed by Project for Pride in Living (PPL).

The building, located at 617 Lowry Ave. N, will create 75 highly affordable rental homes, designed to be in close proximity to transit routes. The apartment building consists of one, two, and three bedroom units, and four townhouse units. Four additional studio units have been reserved for individuals who have experienced long-term homelessness. Rent for the one and two-bedroom apartment units will be less than $1,000 per month, says Joanne Koscielik, PPL’s Vice President of Development and External Affairs.

The project is being called “workforce housing” and units will be available to those earning no more than 50% median income. “Transit-oriented, workforce housing is a critical need on the city’s Northside. We’re thrilled to get started on this unique project that will help stabilize the Hawthorne Neighborhood,” said Paul Williams, President and CEO of PPL.

The building will be the first major redevelopment along Lowry Avenue since the street was renovated in 2007-2008. “There’s a lot of hope here in Hawthorne. This building is going to change the face of Lowry Ave,” said Dave Ellis (pictured above) of the Hawthorne Neighborhood Association, one of the speakers at the groundbreaking event.

“This expansion of the Hawthorne EcoVillage is another great investment in North Minneapolis and will help reinvigorate the Lowry corridor,” said Council Member Blong Yang, who also said that the new housing will replace rampant drug dealing, dozens of foreclosures and crumbling houses that have previously existed at the site.

The project will feature a number of green elements including a state-of-the-art system to treat and infiltrate rainwater. It will have onsite property management, a playground for children, a patio with grills, underground parking, and a fitness room. Construction is expected to be completed in September 2017 with the first residents moving in later that same year. At this time PPL is not yet keeping a list of prospective tenants.

By Kenzie O’Keefe

Inside our “O”

There’s a new outdoor mural at Juxtaposition Arts! The Emory Douglas-inspired piece will be officially unveiled at FLOW. It honors black motherhood, self-determination, and everyday black excellence.

By Mark Peterson

Photo courtesy of MPRB
Your guide to FLOW 2016

The 11th annual FLOW Northside Arts Crawl runs Thursday, July 28 to Saturday, August 30. If you are wondering how to navigate the jam-packed weekend of North-focused arts programming, look no further. North News has you covered!

The first night of FLOW kicks off with a block party on Plymouth Ave, led by Homewood Studios, Asian Media Access, and the Plymouth Ave. Art Studios. The second night of FLOW – Friday – is a destination night on West Broadway. Pop-up galleries will have preview events and receptions, and a $50 ticketed pop-up dinner, featuring local chef Erick Harcey of Victory 44 restaurant, is being held at Broadway Flats. It is likely to sell out. The third and final day of FLOW is a "roam around day on West Broadway Ave." said founder and director Dudley Voigt. 300 artists of all ages and experience levels will be showcased at 25 locations from the Mississippi river to Penn Ave N.

Below you'll find six of North News’ can’t-miss spots for FLOW 2016. Pick up a FLOW program out in the community for even more information on all this year’s celebration has to offer.

Last but not least: do you need transport to the events? Metro Transit is offering free rides to attendees. Visit www.flownorthside.org to download your free pass.

Plymouth Ave. Block Party

The first night of FLOW (Thursday) focuses on Plymouth Ave, featuring performances by Asian Media Access, and a community conversation asking, “What do we ask of children when we invite them to make art?” at Homewood Studios asking, “What do we ask of children when we invite them to make art?” at Homewood Studios.

Breaking Bread beer garden

Breaking Bread Cafe is teaming up with Boom Island Brewing Company for a beer garden at the cafe on Saturday. It will also be the first weekend of the cafe’s new permanent weekend hours. 1210 W Broadway Ave., Saturday 12-7pm

Healing arts at Northside Healing Space

Tamiko French of SoulSpeak Expressions has organized healing arts led by community healers and artists inside the Kwanzaa Church building. Crystals, reiki, handmade jewelry, vibration creations, yoga, energy work, and more will be offered. 2100 Emerson Ave N. Saturday 12-5pm

WBC’s new public plaza on Broadway

FLOW will celebrate the debut of a new temporary public plaza “Freedom Square” on West Broadway Ave that will be actively programmed in the second half of 2016. 2034 W Broadway Ave. Friday 1:30-3pm (unveiling), Saturday 11am-5pm.

Youth film fest at the Capri Theater

You will find a student art exhibit on display in the lobby and free, fun, family-oriented short films running on the hour inside the theater. The Summer Shorts! will be selected by a jury of young scholars who are enrolled in the Capri’s Summer Camp Capri arts program. You can stop by to watch all of the short films or catch just one or two in the air-conditioned comfort of the theater. 2027 West Broadway Ave., Saturday 12-5pm.

Youth work at Juxtaposition Arts

A new mural (inside our “o” this issue) and a temporary bike carousel will be unveiled. Sculptures will be on display in the pop-up park. Puppet-making workshops will be offered. A special series of buttons, shirts, earrings that honor Prince as the Patron Saint of North Minneapolis will be for sale. “This is a really wonderful opportunity to come out and see what these young people are contributing to the community,” said Juxtaposition’s Communications Manager Davu Seru. Corner of W Broadway Ave. & Emerson Ave. N

Why should the community be excited about this year’s FLOW?

We’re talking about our second decade and thinking about what it means to be an enduring event in this community. Our big focus is to think about how art-making becomes fundamental to how we are as a community in North Minneapolis – that it is not relegated to the world of the artists but it’s a practice towards being healthy and creative individuals and communities. That feels like a huge focus for the next decade – coming together to create together. In addition I feel like we spent the first decade of FLOW getting people to think of themselves as artists and to think of what they do as art. Now the other side of that equation is we need to encourage everyone in the community to see that art as something that should be in their lives and in their homes. How radical would it be if we had a goal to have every house in North Minneapolis to have a piece of art in it?

A lot of people have their favorite places that they go – like Juxtaposition’s campus, or the KMOJ stage, or the Capri. I think we do a good job of surprising them with what’s in between those spaces, and I hope that people stop and walk and look for things that are new and unexpected in between the things that they return for every year.

Compiled by Kenzie O’Keefe

Letter from the Editor

After wishing you a safe July at the end of my letter in the last issue of the paper, I am devastated to be writing again in the aftermath of so many untimely deaths this month. The murders of La’Vonte King Jason Jones, Crystal Collins, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, and police officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge weigh heavily on our hearts and consciences. At times like these, I think about how important it is to have community media – like Unicorn Riot, citizens with smartphones, and North News – to produce stories that probe beneath the status quo and give firsthand, often live, looks at systematic injustice.

Justice must be served, but first (and perhaps simultaneously) space to grieve must continue to be created. We want you to know that this paper is your paper; if you have created something that you would like considered for publication, please reach out. As you can see from our feature with photographer Nikkii McComb this month (page 16), we want to give you a platform to process all that has happened.

Fortunately, the news this month is not all negative and heart-wrenching. Two big community celebrations are upon us. Northside artists are hard at work, brightening our streets, shops, and art spaces with their work for FLOW (July 29-30). See our guide to the left and our interview with the Cottmans (page 18), a multi-generational family who will be participating in their 11th FLOW this year. The second celebration is Harvest Fest, a day-long streetfair on Lowry Avenue on August 20. See our guide on page 9.

Our summer interns, all Minneapolis Public School students, scored an exclusive interview with the new MPS superintendent, Ed Graff, during his first week on the job. They spent over an hour talking to him about the most pressing issues they see facing their schools and peers right now – the achievement gap, racial disparities, security, mental health issues, drug abuse, and much more. Read their Q&A on page 4.

In other exciting youth news, North News will officially be housed at North Community High School beginning at the start of the school year. I will be co-teaching an elective journalism class for juniors and seniors. This is a great opportunity for teens in the community to tell their stories and learn about careers in journalism. If you would like to support this work, consider purchasing a subscription to the paper (details page 20) – for yourself ($30) or your whole block ($300).

Last but not least, we love hearing what you think about us, the stories we publish, and the stories you’d like to see addressed. Write to us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/mynorthnews) or send a letter to the editor: okeefek@puc-mn.org. All signed letters will be considered for publication. Our next paper is out August 25.

Until next time,

Kenzie O’Keefe
Editor/Publisher, North News
okeefek@puc-mn.org
Congratulations on becoming our new superintendent! What are you most looking forward to in your new role? I’m looking forward to the start of school – seeing students passionate about learning, teachers passionate about teaching, and parents excited to have their students in an engaging environment where they’re safe, respectful, and responsible. I still have a lot of learning to take in and conversations to have. I want to be mindful of gathering that information as much as possible before I come in and say “we’re doing this, this, and this.”

You were previously the superintendent in Anchorage, Alaska. Why did you want to come to Minneapolis? I was born in Bemidji, Minnesota and went to high school in Northern Minnesota in a small rural town about 60 miles west of Duluth. When I was finishing up as superintendent in Anchorage, I saw that there was a vacancy in Minneapolis, and I started to look at some of the background on the district and what the needs were and what my skills were as a superintendent as well as the personal connection I had here in Minnesota. I felt like I had a really good alignment and an opportunity to come to a district and make a positive difference for students.

We have heard that relationships are important to you. How do you see yourself having a relationship with us – the students in the district – moving forward? Because we’re such a large district, it’s going to be important to be present for the different schools and be out at community events. …I think in education and in our society, relationships are a foundation for making progress and making things happen in the community. In my mind, students are the most important part of that process. I always try to think about the decisions I make and how they are going to affect the students. It’s something that I say a lot, and it’s something I believe in, and hopefully it’s something I demonstrate and the people in the district demonstrate. We’re not always going to make decisions that are popular, but we want to start by asking “how is this going to affect our students?”

Tell us about your social-emotional learning ideas. How do you plan to implement them across our district? Social-emotional learning is just part of who I am, and I believe that it is what is most needed in the development of a student. At the end of the day, when you look at people who are successful, responsible, productive members of our community, our state, our nation, they’re pretty self-aware. They understand how they’re doing and responding to things. They manage their emotions pretty well. They’ve also become involved and are aware of what’s going on in our society. They’ve figured out how they’re going to help manage that. They’re good communicators and responsible relationship builders. Those are attributes I absolutely believe we should be providing for our students. I’d like to see us actually putting together materials and instruction where we help teach people, students, teachers, how to navigate social-emotional practices.

You come from a district that is predominantly Asian and White and only 6% African American. We know that the achievement gap disproportionally affects African Americans. Do you feel equipped to address this given your experience? How will you ensure that ALL students have a well-rounded education and are equipped to be successful in the future? Both this district and my district in Alaska have large diverse populations, but you are right that Anchorage doesn’t have a population of students that identify as African American. I have spent time looking at the students in Anchorage and seeing what we can do to improve the situation. It’s something I take very seriously and I want to make sure we’re providing an environment where all students feel supported and valued.
American that is as large as what we have here in Minneapolis. What I push back on is that yes, there may be cultural similarities people experience, but identifying the same way as someone else doesn’t necessarily mean that you know them better than someone who identifies differently. We have to look at it as less about the group that you’ve identified yourself with and more about who you are as a person. I think that that’s a part of the challenge that we have right now. Race matters because that’s what people use to identify people with. It should matter to a degree because that’s how some of us identify as well, but we still have to get to know the individual student. Making sure everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, grade level, and interests, gets exposure to high quality instruction [is important to me, and I believe that starts with] understanding the individual student. Unfortunately there are many districts across the nation where we have those gaps, where some are typically performing higher than others. That doesn’t mean we’re not working hard, that we don’t have great success, it just means that we need to do things perhaps differently. My goal is to make sure I meet the needs of every individual student. I want you [all] to be successful. At the same time, we have close to 37,000 students we’re talking about. So it’s a huge challenge that we have in front of us, but it’s also a great opportunity. What better investment do we have than supporting every individual student?

Throughout our years at MPS, we have noticed that very few of our teachers look like us. Do you think it is important to have a diverse population of educators? If so, how will you increase the numbers of diverse educators in our schools? Unfortunately this is a common occurrence in many districts across the nation. Absolutely I think it’s important. So many of us identify with race and ethnicity, and that’s how we start to make those first impression connections. When I see someone who is my height, I bet they’ve experienced some of the same things I have. That happens with race sometimes; so having a teacher who has that potential connection with you or at least gives you a visual representation of things is very important. How do we make that happen? I think it starts with our students once again. I would encourage all of you, when you finish your career, to think about going into education.

I think in education and in our society, relationships are a foundation for making progress and making things happen in the community. In my mind, students are the most important part of that process.

- Superintendent Graff

Many students, including some of us, do not like the way security is set up in our schools – our movement around our building is very restricted, and we often feel like prisoners. We’re also intimidated by the police officers in our building. How do you plan to make students feel safe and secure during school? Do you see yourself making any changes to how things are currently done?

It’s a great question, and it’s one that I’ve given a lot of thought to recently. Anchorage has school resource officers in our schools, and how they were viewed seemed very different. We saw what you just described. I have to give more thought to this, and I want to have more information presented to me by students. Schools are a direct reflection of our community, so we’ve got some social-emotional work to do, obviously. You have to have a sense of order and structure in large schools, and that can feel constraining to students sometimes. In order to get to a place where people feel comfortable, we need to have conversations about what we’re trying to accomplish. I think too often we fail to communicate why we’re doing something and involve people on all levels in the process. If there was a way that you could share what you just told me with people at your school, I think that would help a dialogue around how we could make that feel differently. [That said], students need opportunities to demonstrate that they can be responsible, respectful, and safe. If we never give you an opportunity to practice being respectful, responsible, and safe, we don’t really teach you.

Making sure everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, grade level, and interests, gets exposure to high quality instruction [is important to me, and I believe that starts with] understanding the individual student.

- Superintendent Graff

There are a lot of kids in our schools who are using drugs that we’re not talking about in our classrooms – like Xanax and Lean. Do you think the district’s drug awareness education needs updating? What role do you see the district playing in helping students avoid addiction and seeking treatment if they need it? Once again, our schools are a reflection of our community, so we have to look at where some of this stuff is coming from if it is in our schools. Again, I go back to giving students the opportunity to be safe, respectful, and responsible. Many of these incidents occur with others knowing that they are going on. If you have a classmate doing something that you think is unsafe or harmful, and you have a relationship with them, how can you help get them the support they need? [Also] they’re doing that for a reason. What’s the reason? Are they having some other problem that they’re trying to deal with that they’re not able to deal with? Or are they doing this because they don’t know about the harmful effects associated with it? We want our schools to be safe places of learning, and I think education is important, like you said. We want to start early on, working with parents and students and then providing them with intervention if we see those things happening. We really want to make sure that we’re supporting one another. That’s what this is all about. We care about all of our students. We care about our classmates. When that’s happening, people are going to make a difference to intervene and say, we’re going to get you some help. A lot of it has to do with – how do we provide that support? Working closely with community agencies, making sure that our teachers understand that when they have an incident that comes forward how they can offer assistance or find assistance.

Many MPS students and family members who care for them experience mental health issues. What do you think MPS’ role should be in supporting those students and their families? Especially given that many students who want to do well are barred from doing so by mental health issues that are out of their control? This is unfortunate. I believe that there’s a connection between our students who are unsuccessful and barriers that happen through social issues, mental health issues, and trauma. Trauma can have a huge impact on the brain. If it is not addressed through some kind of intervention, it does not leave. It continues to be a barrier to someone’s ability to learn or function. Trying to identify signs and behaviors early on is important. There are many, many times when diagnosis or disability is not identified, and then we do not know how to respond to support it. We just think ‘that’s not typical behavior’ and ‘they need to stop that.’ We have to spend more time in education talking about that. We need to educate people that it’s not about making a choice, you know? We need to work with the supports that we have in the mental health area in the community and bring awareness to it. We need to try to provide the interventions we can offer in the schools. We should make sure that our teachers and educators understand the best ways to support these behaviors when they see them.

You’ve talked a lot about your desire and the importance of connecting to people on an individual level, but you’re one person and you serve thousands. How do you see yourself carrying forth that spirit of individual connection district-wide? I’ll [encourage] relationships. I tell people, when you have a concern, go to the individual who can address the concern. Too often we don’t do that in our society. We have a bad experience, and we tell as many people as we can. Are we going to the person who can fix it? No. Sometimes, we don’t know who can fix it, other times we just choose not to. It’s a behavior we’ve learned. I tell people to go to the person who can fix it. Give them an opportunity to do their job. Then, when you have positive experiences, share those with the at least three other people. That changes a whole dynamic. Then when that person uses that same kind of practice, you know with their interaction with you which was positive because you’re sharing a positive thing, they’re going on and telling someone else a positive thing. So pretty soon you’ve started to create this wave of conversation about what is good and working. You’ve also taken control and empowered yourself to say when something’s not working. That’s a formula I follow in my leadership. We treat people with respect, and our goal is to have safe, respectful, responsible students who are strong academically. MPS strong — that’s what we want to build.

Many students, including some of us, do not like the way security is set up in our schools – our movement around our building is very restricted, and we often feel like prisoners. We’re also intimidated by the police officers in our building. How do you plan to make students feel safe and secure during school? Do you see yourself making any changes to how things are currently done?

Beyond producing a monthly paper, North News seeks to build pathways into journalism careers for Northside youth. This summer we have five Step-Up interns working part-time for the paper, and this fall, we will be housed at North High, teaching a journalism class and engaging youth in the production of the paper.
Jordan Week of Kindness creates community and updated homes

Brenda Walker (pictured above) has lived in her Knox Ave. N home for 22 years. In mid-July, the outside of it was dramatically updated for free. Her favorite detail? The trim, which was painted, in her words, “Northside Blue.”

These repairs were part of the first annual “Jordan Week of Kindness,” led by the Jordan Area Community Council (JACC), Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity (TCHFH), and Thrivent Financial. Jordan was hit hard by the foreclosure crisis and the 2011 tornado.

The organizations teamed up with Jordan residents and volunteers between July 9 and 16 to do home repair on four homes, including Walker’s and Lois Tangen’s (pictured below, bottom left with her daughter Lisa Clater). Tangen has lived in her home since 1967.

“This was a godsend. I had been trying to get some help,” said Walker, who says she’ll never leave the Northside. “It makes me really want to keep my neighborhood and my home looking good,” she added.

The week also involved boulevard painting, a block cleanup, a resource fair, and a community celebration in the neighborhood on Saturday, July 16.

Mayor Betsy Hodges (pictured below, top right) and 5th Ward Council Member Blong Yang, who is a Jordan resident, spoke at the celebration. Sammy McDowell from Sammy’s Avenue Eatery provided lunch. Attendees danced, hula hooped, jumped in a bouncy house, and perused the tables at the resource fair. JACC Executive Director Cathy Spann presented an award to Polina Montes de Oca, Neighborhood Revitalization Program Manager at TCHFH for her tireless work throughout the week (pictured below, top right).

“We are taking back our community block by block, and we are making a difference with the Jordan Week of Kindness,” said Spann, who hopes that this is the beginning of an annual tradition.

Story & photos by Kenzie O'Keefe
North Minneapolis Greenway: “toxic” contention persists

It’s been a little over a month since the North Minneapolis Greenway demonstration route officially opened, and responses to it range from deeply angry to pleasantly inspired.

These polarizing reactions are illustrated by the pro- and anti-Greenway signs that have popped up on many lawns along the route. Acrimony among neighbors is palpable. Accusations of stolen lawn signs have been hurled. Facebook groups for and against the route are filled with fervent organizing, outcry, and insults. The stacks of comment cards on the route have been routinely stuffed into the lockbox – blank. It’s difficult to walk on the route without getting into an impassioned discussion about it.

Alexis Pennie, Chair of the Northside Greenway Council, which was engaged by the City of Minneapolis Health Department as an advisory committee earlier on in the project, described the current situation as “nastier and more toxic than it needs to be.” Pennie supports the Greenway, and says he is not giving up on the eventual creation of better bike access on the route in some form. “I will not let this project be steamrolled by citizens who are literally against virtually everything,” he said.

Lara Pratt, Manager of the City’s Healthy Living Initiative, stressed that the Health Department is neutral in this process and operates separately from the Greenway Council, which she suspects are in an “advocacy mode.” She emphasized that “the Greenway Council did not put this in. The City put this in, and it’s the City’s job to collect the feedback.”

That feedback has already been transformed into real-time adjustments to the route. These are detailed in a July 11 newsletter released by the City online and delivered to every home on the route. “Litter receptacles” have been installed. Hammocks have been removed. Crosswalks have been adjusted and signs have been added.

But to those who don’t want to see the route come to fruition, small route tweaks seem to miss the point.

Taulisha Epps lives on the 3300 block of Irving and sees the route as a visual eyesore. She described it as “useless” to her and her family. She’s concerned about having to park in her alley, given that her car has been broken into back there before, and she’s concerned about the cars that she says “swerve” down the block to avoid the painted sections of the pavement. “It’s not about the Greenway; it’s about how it’s affecting the families along the block. What is it providing the neighborhood?” she said.

William Rees has been a homeowner on the 3500 block of Irving for over ten years. He’s frustrated by what he says has seemed like a biased community engagement process that stressed the positives and downplayed the negatives from the beginning.

Since the temporary route was installed, he says that he sees very few people actually biking on the greenway. Those that are enjoying it as a recreational greenspace could just as easily utilize Folwell Park, mere steps away from the route, he explained.

He says that when the demonstration route went up last month, he felt resigned to endure it for year. That was until he saw the “Say NO to the Greenway!” signs pop up on lawns and realized that many others agreed with him. Now he’s begun to take a more intentional approach to his opposition.

Conscious of the vitriolic language that has come from many opposed to the Greenway, Rees has urged those opposed to be respectful in their dissent and to use email to put pressure on those with decision making power at the City level.

Council Member Blong Yang, who has been skeptical of the project since coming into his council position, seems to agree with this communication tactic. Yang suggests that residents with feedback or concerns email their city council member directly.

Yang is empathetic to those opposed to the project, but sees a silver lining in the unrest. “The sort of bickering and nastiness that’s gone on is positive in the sense that democracy is at work,” Yang said. “This greenway is just a concept; it’s not a reality,” he added.

What will happen next is yet to be determined. Though some have called for the demonstration route to be dismantled early, Pennie stressed the importance of keeping the pilot route in place through the winter, saying that it would be “a shame” not to see how the route operates during the winter months.

Rees is curious about the criteria organizers will use to determine whether or not the demonstration route is a success. “What is the amount of feedback they would need to take it down or keep it up?” he asked.

Yang suggested that at least a 2/3 majority should be achieved for the project to move forward. Pennie suggested 50%. Pratt says that there is currently no designated threshold.

Pratt says that she is not aware of plans to end the pilot route early. “Everything that I have seen from council members and health department leadership is a commitment to what we set out to do – to test this concept.”

By Kenzie O’Keefe
Photos by Kenzie O’Keefe and Amaya Pettis

[Editor’s Note: North News and its parent organization, Pillsbury United Communities, have recently received grant funding from the Minneapolis Health Department for an unrelated project.]
To reconnect North to the Mississippi, old wounds must be healed

As more North Minneapolis riverfront is converted into public land, care is being taken to ensure that new parks and trails are truly accessible to residents. Community members gathered downtown Minneapolis at the McKnight Foundation on July 13 to discuss the topic. The nearly two-hour event was organized by Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) and the bulk of it was spent listening to Eric King, a Northside resident and CURA researcher, share findings from a multi-year study he has undertaken with FMR to identify barriers and opportunities to reconnect North Minneapolis residents to the Mississippi River.

King’s presentation focused mostly on current and potential infrastructure connections between North Minneapolis and the river – such as the Broadway bridge over I-94. He spoke of the desire to create safer bike lanes, more pedestrian friendly pathways, and additional signage near the river. He also shared many images of innovative bridge projects that have been built to address similar connectivity issues worldwide.

Though his presentation was met with applause at the end, not all in attendance were satisfied with his work. Several North Minneapolis community members spoke up in the subsequent Q&A session to criticize the project’s lack of emphasis on what they say are underlying issues facing community members in the area, such as pollution and the possibility of gentrification. Audience member Roxanne O’Brien said that the conversation made her feel furious and “sick to her stomach.” “Don’t paste a bike lane over pollution,” she said. “Do something about our root problems, and then make it all pretty and colorful.”

Community member Amoke Kubat stressed the importance of being mindful of North Minneapolis’ history – in particular the community displacement that occurred with the construction of 94 – when reimagining new infrastructure meant to connect community to the river. “We cannot build on the back of shaky foundations,” she said.

Lifelong Northside resident Jessie McDaniels spoke up in support of King’s suggestions. He said that while he wanted to see issues like pollution addressed, he also thinks that the Northside deserves bike infrastructure and other river connecting amenities now.

In response to the threat of gentrification, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB) President Liz Wielinski brought up potential public resources to might help ensure that new city amenities don’t displace the very people they’re intended to benefit. FMR says that they appreciate the “complexities in such an undertaking.” They say the will aim to address equity by bringing different people and agencies together to address concerns.

King’s project will continue through August, and community members interested in contributing their thoughts and ideas to his work should visit his tables at the West Broadway Farmers Market on August 5 and Live on the Drive on August 11. His survey can be taken at fmr.org/survey.

By Kenzie O’Keefe
Photo by Mark Peterson

Transit updates coming soon to the Northside

According to a recent University of Minnesota study, North Minneapolis is considered an area of “intense disadvantage” when it comes to transit access. That may soon change.

Two large Metropolitan Council projects are poised to alter the level of transportation in North Minneapolis and its Northwest suburbs on a scale not seen since the completion of Interstate 94 North in 1984.

Metro Transit’s planned Blue Line Extension, known as the Bottineau LRT, will add 13 miles of double-track rail line from its current terminus at Target station to 93rd Ave. N and Oak Grove Parkway in Osseo.

11 new stations will be added, three of them on the Northside: Olson Highway and Van White Blvd; Olson Highway and Penn Ave; and Plymouth and France Avenues. Planners say this will result in a possible single-seat trip from Brooklyn Park to the VA hospital, MSP International Airport, or the Mall of America. Scheduled completion date is 2020.

The Penn Avenue Community Works project is tasked with stimulating economic development, beautification, livability and job creation along the Penn Avenue corridor in North Minneapolis, as well as supporting the Hennepin County Human Services Hub, the Bottineau and Southwest light rail transit (LRT) lines, and enhanced bus rapid transit (BRT) service for the benefit of Penn Avenue corridor neighborhoods. The proposed “C” line will run from downtown bus stations, going north on Penn Ave. to the Brooklyn Center Transit Center, near Xerxes Ave. N and Bass Lake Rd. Upgraded stations, 23 in all, will be located every quarter to half mile to connect with intersecting bus routes and serve many existing stops and major destinations. Other amenities on the route will include curb bump-outs and tree-planting.

The project, estimated at $30-35 million, will be funded by a mix of federal, state and local funds. A source for $15 million of the funding has not yet been identified. The Metropolitan Council recognizes that North Minneapolis has, proportionally, the highest ridership of any sector in the transit system, and is critical to the system’s success.

Metropolitan Council Member Gary Cunningham, whose district 7 includes North Minneapolis, said, “Just getting from Lowry to Plymouth can be a stretch – with the C line going all the way to Brooklyn Park, and much faster, it just offers better transit options. The problem is, requests to the Council’s Transit Advisory Board (TAB) for C line funding haven’t been approved for the last two years.” Cunningham noted that “wherever new transit lines are built or improved, they bring the possibility of economic development.”

Along with the Penn Avenue shelters, Metro Transit will improve 17 other Northside bus shelters between now and the end of December. Two years ago, a Metro Transit study of public transit alternatives for West Broadway explored bus upgrades, re-designed routes, streetcars, possibly connecting with the Bottineau LRT.

By Mark Peterson
Photo and maps courtesy of Metro Transit
Your guide to the 2016 Lowry Ave Harvest Festival

Saturday, August 20th from 11am – 6pm
Lowry Ave. N between Oliver & Russell

See inside for details!

These pages are sponsored in part by the Lowry Corridor Business Association
EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Family Activities**

2. **Local Northside Music at the Main Stage**
   - 12:00-1:30pm
   - No Reason
   - 2:00-4:00pm
   - The Rich Lewis Band/Explodo Boys
   - 4:30-6:00
   - The Nightstones

3. **Artists & Community Resources Area**
   Contact Connie Beckers for more artist information at the goddessofglass@gmail.com and explore the offerings in the Community Resource Area.

4. **Beer Garden**
   A joint effort between the Camden Lions and Lowry Cafe. Grab a bite to eat and a beer, and listen to the music across the street at the Main Stage.

5. **Food Vendors**
   - The Lowry Cafe
   - The Camden Lions
   - So Low Foods BBQ
   - Henry Leo Egg Rolls
   - E&L Foods Gyros
   - Banana Blossom
   - Get Happy

6. **Apple Dessert Bake-Off Competition**
   Contact Joni Bonnell at joni@lowry-business.org to register.

7. **Kid Zone**
   - Boxing with Fighting Chance
   - Kid’s 60 yard dash
   - Climbing Wall
   - Bounce House
   - Games
   - Patrick Henry Herobotics Team

**Don’t miss!**

8. **Classic & Antique Car Show**
   Corner of Lowry and Penn. Trophies will be awarded for “Best of Show” and “People’s Choice.” For more information and to register, contact David Brown: david.brown175@gmail.com, (612) 685-2053.

9. **3-on-3 Basketball Tournament**
   Run by the Police Activities League (PAL). Contact officer Tony Adams to sign up: tony.adams@minneapolismn.gov, (612) 673-3953

**NORTHSIDE CHIROPRACTIC CLINIC**

hopes you have fun at Harvest Fest!

3107 PENN AVE. N. (Across from ALDI)  
(612) 522-0440

JOIN US FOR HARVEST FEST 2016

SATURDAY AUG. 20

VISIT THE SO LOW TENT ON THE CORNER OF LOWRY & PENN!

RIBS, TIPS/HOT POLISH/CORN ON THE COB

NORTH MINNEAPOLIS’ FAVORITE MEAT STORE!!!

CHOOSE FROM 15 DIFFERENT MEAT PACKS STARTING AT $38.99

LOCATED AT THE CORNER OF LOWRY & EMERSON AVE. N.  
★ OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK ★ WE BAG AND CARRYOUT ★
**Harvest Special Deals!**

- **Union Liquor**
  
  **D'Usse VSOP**
  - 375ml Only $21.99
  - 750ml Only $39.99

- **New Amsterdam Gin & Vodka**
  - Assorted flavors
  - 750 ml $7.99

**Buy Martell vs (750ml) for $24.99**

& get Patrón XO Café (750ml) for ONE cent

**UNION LIQUOR**

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**HAPPY HARVEST FESTIVAL!**

- **DOCS GYM**
  - Martial Arts Classes, Personal Training, & More!
  - 3115 PENN AVE. N. (612) 521-5836

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**Metro Check Cashing**

2211 Lowry Ave. N
P: (612) 521-1404
F: (612) 521-1651

**MONEY ORDERS**
**BUS PASSES**
**MONEY GRAMS**
**MAILBOX RENTAL**
**UTILITY PAYMENTS**

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**North End Hardware & Rental Center**

Join us at the Lowry Ave. Harvest Festival
Register for a drawing to win two $500 shopping sprees. Need not be present to win!

3117 Penn Avenue N. | 612-529-9151
North@Work is connecting African American men age 25+ who reside in North Minneapolis to meaningful, long-term careers.

Program benefits:
- Job training (no experience necessary)
- Placement assistance
- Resume writing support, interview practice
- Ongoing support services

Automotive Service | Carpentry and Flooring Installation | Manufacturing

Immediate opportunities to earn while you train. Visit our Facebook page for more information: www.facebook.com/NorthAtWork/

Get started today! To enroll, call Darcus Mitchell (612) 302-3123.

North@Work is a program of Northside Funders Group
Free grief counseling for kids provided by Fairview Health Care is available in North Minneapolis. The six week session started 7/14 and meets Thursdays at 6pm at Shiloh Temple (1201 W Broadway Ave.) People can still register after the first session by calling 651-434-7667.

Still looking for things to do this summer in Minneapolis? Well search no further than What’s Up Minneapolis. For a list of sites, visit: http://summerlunchmap.2harvest.org. Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCY) is offering meals at four sites.

Interested in upgrading your storefront? The West Broadway Business and Area Coalition has $22,500 in matching grants per storefront. Any existing business (with property owner’s approval) and/or a project to convert business (with property owner’s approval) and/or a project to convert residential properties to business is eligible. Contact Carla at 612-335-5874 or visit mncee.org/hes-mpls.

If you’re planning to have an outdoor fire this summer, follow these Minneapolis laws. Fires are permitted 9am-10pm. Fires must be kept less than 3ft in diameter and 2ft high. Postpone a fire when Minneapolis is under an air pollution advisory. Sign up for air quality alerts at http://mn.envirofax.info. Burn only untreated, unpainted, dry wood. Never burn cardboard boxes, trash or debris, because the smoke can be toxic. Fire must be at least 25 feet away from a structure or combustible material and in a fire ring or pit with edges more than six inches high. Have a hose or fire extinguisher present. Postpone the fire when the wind exceeds 10 mph. Fire must be constantly attended by someone 18 years or older and completely out before being abandoned. Any illegal burning can result in a $200 fine.

26th Ave. N. from Broadway Ave. to Irving Ave. N is closed so traffic so crews can reconstruct the roadway. That section of the street will reopen after this season’s paving project is completed in November. Access to churches, residences, and businesses on 26th Avenue from West Broadway Avenue to Humboldt Avenue will be maintained for a majority of the project. However, there will be periods where construction will require no access. All through traffic will be detoured onto Lowry Avenue North.

Appraisers from the City of Minneapolis Assessor’s Office are currently conducting an official review of residential properties in the Folwell, Webber-Camden, and Willard-Hay neighborhoods. State law requires that appraisers from the City of Minneapolis physically view all properties in the city once every five years. Appraisers carry a City identification card. Appraisers will be viewing the exterior of individual residential properties and knocking on their doors to verify property information. Appraisers may also ask for permission to the view the interior of the home (at the time of the review or at a later time via appointment). Residents with questions about the annual review cycle can contact the Assessor’s Office at 612-673-2483.

CenterPoint Energy would like to remind the public of important natural gas safety tips when there is severe weather. Following a severe storm, be alert for leaking gas. If you smell, hear or see a natural gas leak, leave the area immediately on foot and tell others to do the same. Do not drive into or near a gas leak or vapor cloud. Once safely away from the area, call the CenterPoint Energy emergency gas leak hotline at 1-800-296-9815 and 911. If the pipeline operator is not known, call 911. If natural gas is leaking, do not operate anything that might cause a spark including a flashlight or generator.

With current flooding conditions in parts of Minnesota, CenterPoint Energy reminds residents of some additional important natural gas safety tips. Before a flood: Do not turn off natural gas at the meter. The gas meter should be left on to maintain proper pressure in the gas piping within the house and to prevent water from entering the lines should flooding occur. After a flood: If your home was flooded and your natural gas meter was underwater, call CenterPoint Energy to schedule an inspection. The meter may need to be replaced. Have flooded appliances inspected by a qualified technician, like HSP before operating the equipment. This includes outdoor gas appliances such as pool heaters, gas grills and gas lights. If your home did not flood and your natural gas is turned off at the meter, call CenterPoint Energy to reconnect service. Be alert for leaking gas as you return to your home or business. If you smell gas, leave the area immediately on foot and tell others to do the same. Do not turn the lights on or off, smoke, strike a match, use a cell phone or operate anything that may cause a spark, including a flashlight or driving vehicle.

Classifieds & Worship Directory
your car. Do not attempt to turn natural gas valves on or off. Once safely away from the area, call the 24 hours emergency gas leak hot line number 1-800-296-9815 and 911.

**EVENTS + ENTERTAINMENT**

7/28-30 – FLOW Northside Arts Crawl. FLOW starts 7/28 with a Block Party on Plymouth Ave, followed by preview events, gallery receptions and public performances the evening 7/29. On 7/30, spend your day exploring West Broadway from the Mississippi River to Penn as we showcase over 300 artists of all ages and experience levels at 25 different locations. Join us for an exciting day of indoor and outdoor activities as we come together to create and kick off our second decade of shining a light on North Minneapolis through the arts. FLOW is a program of the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition.


7/29 – The Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership, with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the East Exchange Club, are hosting the fourth annual Riverfront Fest on the west bank of the Mississippi River between Plymouth Ave and Broadway in Minneapolis. The event will feature food trucks (including Betty Danger’s and El Taco Riendo), bands, and kid’s activities and water activities. Food and drinks are available for sale but the event is free for all! 5:30pm - sunset. More information: call Kathleen Boe at 612-746-4987 or email Kathleen.boe@minneapolisriverfront.org.

7/30 (ends) – Homewood Studios (2400 Plymouth Ave. N) presents Blue Blossom Friendship, celebrating the artwork of Vietnamese children who Minneapolis-based artist Daniel Kerkhoff met and worked with in 2015. Gallery Hours: Tuesday 5-9 pm, Wednesday and Friday 1-6 pm, Saturday 1-4 pm. For more information contact Daniel Kerkhoff at www.danielterthofk.com, 507-317-6911, juderockfish@gmail.com.

8/4 – First Thursday Films at the Capri presents. Discussion to follow screening. 7-9pm. $5 tickets. 2027 W Broadway Ave. More information: www.thecapritheater.org, 612-343-3390.

8/5 – Minneapolis MADDAS and Phillips West Neighborhood Organization are holding the 14th Annual Senior Safety Pride Day Picnic at Boom Island, 724 Sibley St. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413 from 11am-2pm. Tribute will be paid to senior contributions towards safety in our community. Many seniors are neighborhood watchers; they are historians and mentors. They are a vital part to keeping our neighborhoods and communities safe and strong. This event will include free barbeque, entertainment, fun, fellowship and health and safety information for seniors. More information: (612) 455-4630.


8/11 – The third of three, free “Live on the Drive” public music performances on 34th Ave. N and Victory Memorial Parkway. Live music and food vendors are followed by a movie at dusk. Ashley DuBoise will perform from 6-8pm.

8/13 – The Annual Minnesota Festival for Fathers and Families will be held at North Commons Park, 1891 James Ave. N 12-4pm. Lunch and activities provided free of charge.

8/20 – Twin Cities Juneteenth will be screening A Woman Called Moses a highly rated movie about the life and times of Harriet Tubman. $5 for adults, $2 for kids 12-17, $3 for seniors, free for kids 10 and under. 1-5pm at the Capri Theater, 2027 W Broadway Ave. More information: www.juneteenthminne- sota.org, 612-343-3390.

Beat the heat at one of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s (MPRB) 12 beaches, waterparks, pools, and 60 wading pools. For locations and hours, visit www.minneapolisparks.org/beaches. On the Northside, North Commons Water Park is open M-F, 11 am-7pm and Saturday-Sunday 1pm-7pm. The Webber Natural Swimming Pool is always free, open T-Su 1-7 pm. If the temperature is above 85 degrees at 6 pm, facilities remain open and lifeguards remain on duty until 8 pm.

Tickets are on sale now for the Capri Theater’s 2016-2017 season of “Legends.” Subscriptions, single, and group tickets available: https://capritheater.ticketworks.com

**EDUCATION**

Jenny Lind Elementary School needs adults who want to listen to children read. If you have two or more hours a week during the fall of 2016 to volunteer, you can choose the day and time slot. Stop by the school at 5025 Bryant Ave. N. Sign-ups must take place in person. Training will take place in August.

**BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT**

8/4 – Northside Economic Opportunity Network’s (NEON) Business Incubator, 1007 W Broadway Ave., hosts “Connect and Unwind” business networking events every first Thursday of the month. 4:30-6pm. Get to know other entrepreneurs and incubator members over wine and refreshments. For a full list of NEON events: www.neon-mn.org/events.


**ACTION**

Friends of the Mississippi River is working to reconnect North Minneapolis to the river. To help guide their work, take their 10-question survey, available at www.tmc.org/survey.

8/2 – National Night Out (NNO). NNO is an annual nationwide event that encourages residents to get out in the community, holding block parties and getting to know their neighbors as a way to encourage crime prevention. It’s a great way to promote community-police partnerships and enjoy a Minnesota summer evening surrounded by friends and family. As with many past National Night Outs, Minneapolis was ranked No. 1 among all U.S. cities over 300,000 people in 2015. More information: www.minneap olismn.gov/nno or call 311.

8/9 – The City of Minneapolis encourages all eligible voters to participate in primary voting. Polls will be open 7am to 8pm. Individuals are eligible to vote if they are a U.S. citizen at least 18 years old who has

resided in Minnesota for at least 20 days before the election. Any voters who have moved or changed their name since they last voted must re-register. If you missed the 7/19 deadline to pre-register, you may still be able to vote. Individuals may register at the polls on Election Day by providing one of the forms of identification required by Minnesota law. Please allow extra time at the polls to register. More information: vote.minnesotavotes.gov/voters. Now through 8/8, Minneapolis voters may cast their ballots at the Early Vote Center at 217 S. Third St. All early voting hours are posted at vote.minneapolismn.gov.

**ACADEMIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**GRADUATIONS**

Carleton College

Henry Maier, BA

Elaine Rock, BA

College of St. Scholastica

LaMonte Hall, BA, Psychology

Ithaca College

Gwyneth Brinkley, Film, Photography, Video and Visual Arts

Miami University

Alana Christie, BA & BS, Journalism, Sport Leadership & Management

Normandale Community College

Robin Rachel Burgess, AA, Liberal Education

Amanda Fenliason, AS, Accounting

Vai Lovan, AS, Engineering Foundations

Alicia Elaine Lynch, AA, Liberal Education

Loliya G Memmber, AS, Business

Angela Rose Pukal, AA, Liberal Education

Melissa Nichole Ratliff, AA, Liberal Education

Clifton Merhon Thomas, AA, Liberal Education

Yengfong Thao, Certificates, General Business, Human Resource Management, Management, Small Business Management

Mitchell Dean Tiedeman, AA, Liberal Education

Panhia Chue, AA, Liberal Education

University of St. Thomas

Assadullah Amini, JD, Law

Jiahu Li, MA, Organizational Development & Change

Carlene R Lyons, MA, Teacher Preparation K-12

Justin S McDowell, MS, Software Engineering

Hilary L Mueller, MSW, Social Work

Marcus G Owens, MBA, Business Administration

Tedros Semere, BA, Criminal Justice

Gold T Vue, BA, Bus Admin - Operations Mgmt

Michael J Babine-Dinnen, MA, Teacher Preparation-Secondary

Nina J Elder, BS, Biology (BS)

Joshua R Henninson, MBA, Business Administration

James W Tiff, MBA, Business Administration

Latifah A Kiribadda, MBA, Business Administration

Jeanette M McGie, MSW, Social Work

Vienna N Miller-Priewe, MSW, Social Work

Sherry L Neilan, MBA, Business Administration

Christopher M Noddin, MS, Software Engineering

Hilley V Scully, MA, Teacher Preparation - K-12

Crixell A Shell, MS, Software Management

Laura J Trence, MBA, Business Administration

University of Wisconsin - La Crosse

Meng Mao Kha, BA, Arts and Sciences

Zachary Mueller, BS, Exercise and Sport Science

DEAN’S LISTS

Raphael Barnett

Grady Cromer

Alexandra Goy

Topacio Kegan Gollaz

Koisey Hiama

Michelle Platter

Peter Rose

Bryce Sansom

Djon Tasca

Yommalao Voravong

University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

Alexandria Cannon

Sia Thao

Madona Yang

Pazao Vang

Victoria Anderson

Anisa Awale

Jason Bates

Erika Bloomdahl

Nova Bradford

Ashley Brown

Dolan Cassidy

Matthew Chokkatiarichai

Jade Cohen

Jada Daniel

Traci Eicholz

Richard Gangelhoff

Heather Jarvis

Lucile Lawton

Alyssa Le

Samuel Mayes

Nash Meeker

Estela Mejia Ortiz

Curtis Mullings

Nathan Paul

Alix Poliszuk

Samuel Rosenstone

Grace Rude

Levi Schwartzberg

Gabriela Sierra Bedon

Joseph Vang

Mee Xiong

All Yousuf

Leisure University

Rachel Aubart

Miami University

Alana Christie

Jillian Christie

Minnesota State Mankato

Nancy Guar

A Sher Moua

Joseph Saydeju

Asia Merritt

Khongtxuj Moua

Malee Vang

Dan Vue

HONORS LISTS

Pine Technical & Community College

Jamiya Ahmed

University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire

Kayla Kreuter, BS, Education and Human Sciences

Sciences, Kinesiology

University of Wisconsin - La Crosse

Zachary Mueller, BS, Exercise and Sport Science
Research Subjects Wanted

The University of Minnesota is looking for African American cigarette smokers who are interested in quitting smoking.

This study requires 12 visits. Participants will receive up to $390.

For more information, call 612-626-5981.

Recycle food scraps with organics recycling

“Organics recycling helps us keep our neighborhood clean and healthy.”
-Minneapolis resident

“Nyoj khoom thamavaj pab ua rau pej lub zej zog huv thiab muaj kev noj qab nyob zoo.”
-Lub Nroog Minneapolis cov Pej Xeem

No extra cost to sign up: minneapolismn.gov/organics or call 612-673-2917
Photographer Nikki McComb has lived and worked on the Northside for over a decade. The recent local and national gun violence inspired her to take action with her art.

After Philando Castile was killed, Nikki McComb, a Cleveland resident and employee at Pillsbury United Community’s Oak Park Center, knew she needed to take action. She is a photographer, so she picked up the most powerful tool at her disposal – her camera.

Using Facebook, she has spent the last several weeks calling for family and friends to participate in photoshoots for an anti-gun violence campaign she developed called “Enough.”

Her images showcase victims of gun violence – family members and friends of the dead, along with local leaders – with the names of their deceased loved ones and simple messages that convey that they want the violence to end.

She says that her images have enabled victims of gun violence to show their pain. In fact, she no longer needs to recruit subjects on her own – they’re coming to her. She says that four Northside mothers who have lost sons to gun violence have reached out to her and asked to do photoshoots. “People want to participate even though it’s hard. It’s giving them a way to express themselves beyond words,” she said.

McComb, who considers herself very social media savvy, has shared her images widely. She says she’s tweeted them to nearly “every single media outlet in the City” and pushed them out extensively on all her platforms. She has been interviewed about her project on Fox 9 and WCCO.

There’s one audience she hopes to reach that’s less conventional – perpetrators of gun violence. She explained: “It’s not just to reach a shooter to condemn them, but it’s also to find out what we as a community need to give to them to get them to stop.

Do they need jobs, food, housing?”

She credits Zach King of Southside Custom Express for making the shirts that appear in her shoots. They can be purchased at www.shirtswithamessage.net. She also thanks Houston White, owner of HW White Mensroom, who she says “opens his doors to artists,” and allowed her to use his space for the shoot. He also participated. Additionally, she thanks Bunny Beeks and all the families and kids who participated in her shoots.

McComb plans to continue doing photoshoots for the project and pushing media outlets to help her get her message out. Those interested in participating can reach her at pphoto16@gmail.com

By Kenzie O’Keefe
Photos by Nikki McComb
Pillsbury United Communities & City to launch gun buyback program

Pillsbury United Communities (which owns this publication) and the City of Minneapolis are collaborating to host a gun buyback on August 27. Residents will be urged to surrender firearms in exchange for Visa gift cards. Unlike typical gun buybacks, following the August 27 buyback at two Minneapolis Fire Stations (Station 14 in North Minneapolis and Station 17 in South Minneapolis) the weapons will be decommissioned and given to Twin Cities artists to create statements about the impact of gun violence in the community. Building upon the momentum of the national Guns in the Hands of Artists exhibit that PUC recently presented in the Twin Cities, the reclaimed guns will be given to local artists to create statements about the impact of gun violence in our community. This art will be a part of a new exhibition called “Art Is My Weapon: the Minnesota Installation of Guns in the Hands of Artists.” A call for artists will be posted soon at www.ArtsMyWeapon.com

The art eventually will be for sale; some of the pieces will be displayed throughout the community.

“As someone who lost a cousin to gun violence, I am acutely aware of the emotional toll and the rippling impact it has on family and friends. This issue is personal for me, and unfortunately it is personal for many across our community,” said Chanda Smith Baker, President and CEO of Pillsbury United Communities. “There are too many Minnesotans losing their lives to street violence, suicide, domestic violence and accidental shootings. We are unwilling to look the other way, believing that there’s nothing we can do—but rather we will continue to do our part to make our community safer. We have a public health crisis with gun violence. It affects all of us, and we all must be part of the solution.”

People turning in firearms can do so anonymously, and will receive $25 to $300 Visa gift cards, depending on the type of gun. Authorities from the Minneapolis Fire Department and the Minneapolis African American Professional Firefighter Association will be on hand to accept the surrendered weapons at two local fire stations.

By Kenzie O’Keefe

GUN BUYBACK EVENT DETAILS:
Saturday August 27, from 10-4pm
Station 14: 2002 Lowry Ave. N, Minneapolis, MN 55411
Station 17: 330 E 38th St, Minneapolis, MN 55409

McComb designed this logo, featuring the names of those killed, and had it printed on t-shirts for her photoshoots. They can be purchased at www.shirtswithamessage.net.
Since the mid 90s, the Cottmans have been constant, creative contributors to the Northside arts scene.
This year, they reflect on over a decade of participation in FLOW Northside Arts Crawl.

The Cottmans do not do art. They are art. Or so says one of the youngest members of the family – Yonci Jameson. She is sister to Ebrima Sarge, daughter of Kenna Cottman, and granddaughter of Bill and Beverly Cottman, all Northsiders who live just blocks away from each other in the Homewood neighborhood in Willard-Hay.

This year the family will be participating in FLOW for the 11th time, having been a part of the event since its conception back in 2006. They practice their art independently and together – as The NewWays Ensemble.
Bill is a retired electrical engineer turned full time writer, photographer, projectionist, and radio broadcaster. “I like to think of myself as collecting evidence – for art, for life,” he said. Beverly is a retired North Community High School biology teacher and an “interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary” artist. She does found object sculpture and collage. She is a storyteller who performs as Auntie Beverly. She’s a poet and writer who explores her identity, heritage, and culture. She is a “collection in focus guide” at the Minneapolis Institute of Art and a docent at the Weisman Art Museum.

Kenna Cottman runs Voice of Culture (VoC) drum and dance which operates out of Northside Healing Space which is run by Kwanzaa Church (3700 Bryant Ave. N) out of the building at 2100 Emerson Ave. N. She sings in a band called Soul Beautiful and will be teaching at Brightwater Montessori (5140 Fremont Ave. N) this school year.

Yonci Jameson, 17, dabbles in many art forms. She’s a drummer, dancer, spoken word performer, poet, radio broadcaster, and musician. Her work reflects her social activism. She just graduated from Southwest High School and plans to attend Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) in the fall.

Ebrima Sarge, 9, is a drummer and dancer, currently exploring a new passion – whittling.

Art is clearly important to you all individually, and it seems like it unifies you as a family. How has art been cultivated in your family? Beverly: I grew up in a frame of “there’s an art to everything no matter how small or insignificant.” It is not enough to say that art is a part of our family. It is being revealed to me that through our ancestors and through the cosmic spirituality, we are manifesting something that’s very important for black people. Pastor Aika Galloway recently told me that we would not kill each other if we knew who we were. This manifestation of what we do is all about knowing who we are collectively so that we can stop the killing.

Beverly: For me, the artistic expression is a given. It just is. As I look back into my ancestry and into my culture and heritage, I find that artistry and creativity has applied to absolutely everything we have collected it from the cosmos, and it flows through us. The expression of art that happens during FLOW is just one of those instances where people actually get to see us, and we get to see one another. That hopefully leads us to seeing us and seeing one another all the time – not just at FLOW.

Why do you continue to be a part of FLOW year after year? Beverly: FLOW shows that we have assets as far as the arts are concerned right here on the Northside. It allows us to share that with one another. It also allows others in the city to see that the Northside is a place where they can come and have art experiences. If they come to FLOW and have a really good experience, maybe they’ll come back to the Northside.

Where can people find each of you at FLOW this year? Beverly: I’m constantly surprised by the negative view of the Northside. I live here, and I’ve grown up here. There are challenges, but this is a place of connection, community, love, pride. It’s a place of seeing things you want to see and feeling positive about things that in a white-dominated society aren’t understood – like the fact that when we walk down the street people are outside, talking, congregating and gathering not to do anything but just to be. Over here, that is vibrancy. I want to go to the Ave. and have it be poppin’. I want to go to the farmers market and engage with people. It’s reminding myself and us collectively on the Northside that these are ways we practice our own liveliness. We should honor and revel in those. We don’t have to worry about representing ourselves to the larger Minneapolis or the state. Let’s just live. Let’s learn how to live together and be who we are. Be vibrant. If people and up seeing that we’re vibrant and want to come by, come on by! You’ll realize that you didn’t have anything to be scared of this whole time.

Story & photos by Kenzie O’Keefe

Bill: At this point I am not aware of any performance by The NewWays Ensemble at FLOW.

Beverly: The last time the five of us performed together was in April of this year at the MIA in the Africa Galleries. It was a healing event. We did some storytelling, some drumming, and some improvisational music.

Beverly: I’m excited for this year’s FLOW because I have been more invested in organizations on Emerson and Broadway, like Neighborhoods Organizing for Change and Juxtaposition Arts. I’m excited to see what the neighborhood looks like. FLOW is a good visual representation of the Northside.

Is there anything you are particularly excited for at this year’s FLOW? Beverly: I’m excited for this year’s FLOW because I have been more invested in organizations on Emerson and Broadway, like Neighborhoods Organizing for Change and Juxtaposition Arts.

Kenna: I’m constantly surprised by the negative view of the Northside. I live here, and I’ve grown up here. There are challenges, but this is a place of connection, community, love, pride. It’s a place of seeing things you want to see and feeling positive about things that in a white-dominated society aren’t understood – like the fact that when we walk down the street people are outside, talking, congregating and gathering not to do anything but just to be. Over here, that is vibrancy. I want to go to the Ave. and have it be poppin’. I want to go to the farmers market and engage with people. It’s reminding myself and us collectively on the Northside that these are ways we practice our own liveliness. We should honor and revel in those. We don’t have to worry about representing ourselves to the larger Minneapolis or the state. Let’s just live. Let’s learn how to live together and be who we are. Be vibrant. If people and up seeing that we’re vibrant and want to come by, come on by! You’ll realize that you didn’t have anything to be scared of this whole time.

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Beverly: The healing event was motivated by the death of our friend Kirk E. Washington Jr. He has been a friend of our family since he and Kenna were 17-year-old high schoolers.

Is there anything you are particularly excited for at this year’s FLOW? Beverley: I’m excited for this year’s FLOW because I have been more invested in organizations on Emerson and Broadway, like Neighborhoods Organizing for Change and Juxtaposition Arts.

Kenna: I’m on the FLOW committee, and we’re surprised when people don’t know about FLOW. They’d think that after 11 years, it would be like “oh yeah, FLOW,” but it’s not quite a household name yet. What we really want is for the Northside community, the people of color, the black people who live here, to understand that FLOW is a tradition for us to come out.

Kenna has said that FLOW is important for the vibrancy of the community. Explain. Beverly: We don’t need a big stage to cultivate community here. We just need to convene. FLOW is a convening space. You can pop up two food trucks and have a speaker playing and people...
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