First-graders Maylene Vang, left, and Ashley Thao respond to applause after their class sang a traditional song at Hmong International Academy’s Hmong New Year celebration in November. Hmong New Year is an annual celebration to honor ancestors, unite families and give thanks for the year’s harvest.
Petites, harvesting mushrooms along moments. From dancing at Les Jolies year and selected a handful of standout of photos he took on the Northside this Pierini has combed through the thousands year in photos feature. Staff reporter David inspired us along the journey. from, what we’ve accomplished, and who back and remember where we’ve come from. In that spirit, we bring you our annual Welcome to the final 2019 edition of North News. It’s hard to believe that another year, our fourth under ownership by Pillsbury United Communities, of putting this paper out each month will soon pass. One of the things I love most about producing local news is the record of life in the community that it creates. As the days, meetings, events and occurrences fly by, newspapers always offer a way to look back and remember where we’ve come from, what we’ve accomplished, and who inspired us along the journey. In that spirit, we bring you our annual year in photos feature. Staff reporter David Pierini has combed through the thousands of photos he took on the Northside this year and selected a handful of standout moments. From dancing at Les Jolies Petites, harvesting mushrooms along the Mississippi, to celebrating National Night Out, to building a new skate park, Northsiders made many memorable moves this year. Check out the snapshots on Page 9.

Despite this paper having the shortest production timeline of our year, there’s no shortage of news on the following pages. A forum on how the community is policed turned into a contentious discussion about how the community is researched on Dec. 10 (Page 17).

First Avenue and the Northside Neighborhoods Council connected entrepreneurs with resources on Dec. 2 in hopes of equipping them to take advantage of upcoming business opportunities related to the Upper Harbor Terminal (Page 7).

Read the latest about the Association for Black Economic Power and its high profile project, Village Financial credit union, on Page 8. They’ll enter 2020 with new leaders, new vision, and new funding. After being shot with a pellet gun, Wendy Puckett is back on Broadway serving up SOULROLLS to her devoted patrons (Page 3).

The city council passed Mayor Jacob Frey’s 2020 budget on Dec. 11. As part of the mayor’s prioritization of economic inclusion, the West Broadway Corridor has been proposed as one of six “cultural districts” that will have access to significant funding—more than $2 million—for infrastructure development by the City of Minneapolis (Page 4).

Learn what life at Lucy Loney has been like after Love Them First from interim principal Lisa Pawelak (Page 22).

Our North High students have written a handful of stories too: read about both the Polars men’s and women’s basketball teams’ seasons so far (Page 3 and Page 17), a couple of best friends who have turned their local accomplishments into college scholarships (Page 17), and a recap of December’s First Thursday Film event (Page 17).

As we head into 2020, our team is going to take an in depth approach to the way we cover certain stories. 2020 is going to be a consequential time for North Minneapolis. Real estate values and speculation continue to climb. Gentrification and displacement require urgent attention. The need for new business support is pressing. We plan to devote significant resources to coverage of the Upper Harbor Terminal, Section 18 and the future of MPHA’s single family homes, domestic violence, changes to the demographic landscape of the Northside, and the experiences and actions of our Council Members.

Finally, if you need a last minute holiday gift or just want to make a resolution to support local media in 2020, remember that we sell home subscriptions to North News for just $30 (North Minneapolis residents) and $50 (everyone else). Get us delivered to your mailbox each month and help fund our youth work in the process.

Until the new year,

Kenzie O’Keefe
Editor/Publisher, North News
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After being shot in the face by an attacker with a pellet gun as she left her business on Friday, Nov. 22, Wendy Puckett is back serving up SOULROLLS on W Broadway Ave. The owner of Wendy’s House of SOUL, which operates inside K’s Grocery and Deli, had surgery on Dec. 6 and was back at work by Tuesday the 10th. Wendy’s friend Pam McCurdy, who helps market the business, says Puckett has received hundreds of Facebook messages and many donations since the incident and that she has been “so touched” by the support. “We are thankful for everyone’s outreach, prayers, and donations and keeping us in their thoughts. It’s really impactful when you have something traumatic happen to have that support.” Community members interested in supporting Puckett and her business are being asked to buy a meal or use Puckett’s catering services now that she has reopened. By Kenzie O’Keefe

Lady Polars’ basketball season starts with highs and lows

Despite early season losses, the Lady Polars say their season will turn around. As of Dec. 16, the varsity team is 1-5. “It’s just a rough start,” said sophomore Joy Cunningham. After a slew of losses, the team’s comeback began on Dec. 14 when they fought for their first win of the season against rival Patrick Henry High School. Over winter break and into January, the team will have a chance to continue winning. They will hit the road to Mora, Minnesota on Dec. 27 and Pequot Lakes on Dec. 28. They will return home on Jan. 10 vs Roosevelt and Jan. 21 vs South. This is Coach Mike Friestleben’s second year being head coach for the lady polars. Friestleben says the team is young, but that they are growing closer and improving with each game they play. “...Although there have been some struggles this season, the entire team is on the right path to become an excellent basketball team and make North Minneapolis proud,” he said. By Aryy Taylor, Melvina Manciel, Tina Robinson

Meteor Bar to open on Washington

Just down the street from the newly arrived Bar Brava, another drinking establishment is preparing to open its doors. Meteor Bar, which bills itself as an “elevated dive bar,” according to the Star Tribune, will begin serving quality, classic cocktails inside the former Donnie Dirk’s Zombie Den at 2027 N 2nd St, imminently. Follow them on Facebook @meteor.bar for the official opening announcement. By Kenzie O’Keefe

Find fitness during the holiday season at North Market

For some, the holidays are a time of rest and relaxation, but fans of the North Market fitness classes aren’t taking any time off. Val Fleurantin, a former engineer at Medtronic and Target who turned her passion for fitness into a full time job, will lead her free classes through the holidays. Fleurantin is just one of the fitness instructors at North Market. Bootcamp is held on Wednesdays at 6pm. Dance classes are Mondays and Fridays at 6pm. There is also a strength training program for seniors on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 9:30am. Other classes at North Market include Yoga, Tai Chi, and Trap Music Bandz. By Abdi Mohamed

Controversial police line item resolved in 2020 budget

The Minneapolis City Council passed the 2020 city budget on Dec. 11. In his proposed budget, Mayor Jacob Frey had requested to fund 14 new police officers for the Minneapolis Police Department. The council voted to keep the number of officers in Minneapolis at 888 instead of raising it to 902. Instead, the budget will fund the training of a new cadet class to eventually bring the force to its approved size. The money saved from not hiring new officers this year has been allocated to the new Office of Violence prevention and a program aimed at reducing domestic violence. By Abdi Mohamed

Holiday on 44th delivers another year of holiday cheer

The cold air made its case for staying indoors Friday night, Dec. 6, but Christmas music, horse drawn carriage rides and roasting chestnuts won out as Northsiders took in the annual Holiday on 44th Street event. Photos by David Pierini

McKai Bell, 10, was a young man of many disguises.
By Kenzie O’Keefe Editor

Remediating the economic harm many of Minneapolis’ most marginalized communities have experienced is a top priority of Mayor Jacob Frey’s 2020 budget, approved by the city council on Dec. 11.

One of his solutions is designation and funding for six “cultural districts” where systemic disadvantage has been most acute. One of the six districts is in North Minneapolis: the West Broadway Corridor.

Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) have been “stripped from assets” and “blocked from receiving return on investments,” Frey told a crowd of community members at UROC on Dec. 5. “Cultural districts are about building these communities.”

He was speaking at a meeting hosted by city and university officials who hoped to collaborate with community members on the possibilities for the envisioned districts. Shauen Pearce, Frey’s policy director for economic development and inclusion and the former executive director of the Harrison Neighborhood Association, said the event reinforced much of what is already “in the works” at the city level.

She said community members’ emphasis on “ownership” as an essential component of economic inclusion leads her to believe that the city is “on the right track.”

“People talked about having a balance between individuals getting ahead and having collective or cooperative ownership over spaces and the importance of doing ownership first,” she said.

According to Pearce, Minneapolis’ concept for the districts, which is “centered on ownership, commercial development and redevelopment that is led by and for [BIPOC],” would make it the first of its kind in the country.

Over a million dollars has been allocated for street sweeping, trash pickup, improved lighting, and safety initiatives in these areas. Another $300K will expand the Great Streets Façade Program and fund art in cultural districts. Additionally, the city will launch a commercial property development fund of $2.5 million to support commercial development in economically disadvantaged areas. $2 million of that is “targeted specifically” for cultural districts. This comes at a moment when land speculation in North Minneapolis appears to be at a high point.

The five other proposed districts are Franklin Avenue, East Lake Street, 38th Street, Central Avenue and Cedar Avenue.

Ward 5 Council Member Jeremiah Ellison made a point to credit the already established American Indian Cultural Corridor on Franklin Ave. for the overall idea when he had his chance to speak to the crowd at UROC on Dec. 5. “We owe a lot to our American Indian community here in this community for this concept,” he said.
Happy New Year, Northsiders! 2020 is going to be an incredible year for several reasons, but I want to share specifically around one of particular importance to us: the 2020 Census.

The Census is taking place April 2020. Population data collected through the Census will determine how ward boundaries will be redrawn in 2022. The Northside lost a City Council representative in 2012 as a result of the 2010 Census, leaving only two Council Members to represent the entire Northside.

With the exponential growth of downtown, we could stand to lose another City Council Member leaving the Northside with only ONE Council Member.

It is important for EVERY Northsider to be counted to protect our voice and power on the City Council. Your data is protected when you participate in the Census. The 2020 Census will be the first that offers the opportunity to fill out the entire form online, but you also have the option of filling it out in person, by phone, or by mail.

The Census is important for several reasons. It impacts our representation on our City Council. The Census determines how Minneapolis will be redistricted meaning new ward boundaries will be drawn in 2022. Since North Minneapolis, particularly Ward 4, is predominantly single family homes, we do not have the same population density as Downtown and other parts of the city. This means that a likely outcome in the redistricting process is Ward 4 may significantly grow in number of voters.

The Census is important for other reasons including why it is so important EVERY Northsider is counted!

A few people have shared concern about data privacy. It is against the law for the Census Bureau to publicly release your responses in ANY way that could identify you or your household. Census workers must take a lifelong oath protecting the information they collect, and no government agency or court can use this data in any way — no exceptions.

There is no obligation to take the Census, but by providing multiple ways to submit, and all the data privacy measures taken to ensure security, the hope is to remove as many barriers to people participating as possible. In addition, the Census does not require the respondents to be US Citizens, and as the census responses are protected by federal law, residents that are not citizens can participate and ensure that Minneapolis gets a complete count.

There are several ways for you to get involved in the 2020 Census. The City of Minneapolis has a Census Complete Count Coordinator, as well as a site with job information, grant opportunities and updates. Check it out here: [http://www.minneapolismn.gov/census/index.htm](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/census/index.htm)

As always, reach out to my office with any questions or concerns: (612) 673 2204 or ward4@minneapolismn.gov.

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Minneapolis City Council members Phillipe Cunningham (Ward 4) and Jeremiah Ellison (Ward 5) were inaugurated in January 2018. We have invited them to keep in touch with the community through this monthly column in our newspaper.

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After the first budget markup, (where the City Council makes changes to the Mayor’s proposed budget), most of the amendments I proposed on behalf of Ward 5 passed, along with a number of great amendments from my colleagues around the city. First, I co-authored an approved amendment to fund a third-party study of MPD’s staffing, (both civilian and sworn officer) so that we may get an objective view of how to best spend your tax dollars as well as examine the recommendations from the 911 MPD workgroup. Second, I co-authored a failed amendment to reduce the size of an additional, extra-large cadet class to keep it in line with a normal-sized cadet class, and proposed we use the funding to fully staff our Intimate Partner Violence work, the Blueprint Approved Institute within GVI, and other violence prevention strategies. I also moved to increase funding towards various economic inclusion efforts that I believe have and will benefit the Northside. We added funding to support grant opportunities within the Promise Zone, gave funding to continue our efforts to create savings accounts for all children in Minneapolis, funded work to help people recover from predatory payday lending, and funded an economic impact study to understand the effects a rent stabilization policy would have on the city’s rental market. Lastly, the approved motion put additional money into the new Commercial Property Development Fund—a fund designed to help small business owners and entrepreneurs buy commercial property and promote local ownership.

Reflecting on 2019, we had a busy year on the policy front, especially when it comes to renter protections. First, the council president and I co-authored an internal policy and staff direction called the Renter First Policy. The policy gives guidance on how the City can improve its service to renters in, primarily but not limited to, our regulatory ability. Two ordinances subsequently sprung out of the Renter First policy; both the recent Tenant Relocation Assistance and the Emergency Repair Board ordinances were designed with guidance from the Renter First policy according to recent committee presentations from staff—I was a co-author on both ordinances, as well. Then of course, the Renter Protection ordinance was passed in September, which caps security deposits and places a limit on the extent someone can be denied housing because of their credit, rental, or criminal history. I also co-authored the Intentional Community Cluster Development ordinance, which will diversify our housing types, allowing healthcare agencies and others to create “tiny homes” for folks transitioning out of homelessness. This will give people more options and more agency over their lives.

So, what’s coming up for next year? Several council members, myself included, are pursuing an ordinance that would increase renters’ ability to buy the buildings they live in, called Tenant Opportunity to Purchase. I’ll also be working on co-authoring a Tenant Right to Counsel, so renters can be represented in eviction court—something that currently doesn’t happen enough. I’ve run out of room here, but stay tuned for more information and please reach out with any questions you may have about any of the work I’ve described above.

Make sure to sign up for our newsletter to get more regular updates from the Ward 5 office at minneapolismn.gov/ward5. And keep an eye out for more of these columns in North News.

Thank you, and as always, I look forward to seeing you out in the community! Call my office at 612-673-2205 or email me at ward5@minneapolismn.gov.
Patrick Henry’s wrestling lineup features three young women.

By David Pierini Staff Reporter

Everything Melissa Gross wanted in a son was about to score big points for the Patrick Henry wrestling team with a ferocious pin move known as the head and arm.

The recipient is suddenly muscled down to the mat on their side with their head and arm locked in an unforgiving opponent’s tight grip. The attacker squeezes and applies all their weight on the chest until the opponent’s shoulders roll flat to the mat.

Gross was at the edge of the mat shooting smartphone video as the referee raised the arm of her daughter, Hannah Brown.

“My father was a wrestler, I was the manager of my high school wrestling team,” Gross said. “I wanted a son so bad so I could watch him wrestle. Now my dreams are coming true with girls.”

Her daughter is one of three girls on the Patrick Henry wrestling team. During a recent quad meet, where Hannah pinned her Washburn opponent, teammates Jamesa Robinson and Danae Lawson also won with pins.

Top: Sophomore Hannah Brown needed little time to pin a vulnerable opponent. Bottom: Danae Lawson comes off the wrestling mat victorious and gets congratulated by Brown. Photos by David Pierini

'Strong. We’re just wrestlers'

“’No big deal,’ Robinson said, “we’re just wrestlers.”

Once seen as a controversial rarity, girls in boys wrestling are becoming more common. Last season, more than 2,124 girls were on high school wrestling teams, a 27% increase from the previous year, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations.

Minnesota high schools had 20 girls on wrestling teams last year, according to the federation’s annual sports participation survey.

The gender equity law known as Title IX does not require high schools to allow girls to wrestle, but many states, including Minnesota, allow it. Some states have separate teams for boys and girls and a couple, including South Dakota, forbid “mixed wrestling.”

Despite the growing numbers of girls wrestling, there remains discomfort for some schools, coaches and wrestlers. Before the start of the quad meet at Washburn High School, a coach from Trinity at River Ridge told Patrick Henry coach Anthony Minus that their faith-based school has a rule against boys wrestling girls. Trinity forfeits the point at any weight class where a girl is penciled in to wrestle.

“I guess I get it, but you still have to have progress,” Minus later said. “I think the girls add to the culture of wrestling. We train everybody the same to go out and compete. These girls are tough and they are just as dedicated and have the same drive as the boys.”

Minus also coaches Henry’s softball team, on which Robinson is a top player. He encouraged her to come out for wrestling her junior year, when he had only a handful of kids, including Brown. This year, Robinson’s best friend, Lawson, followed in hopes of upping her fitness before enlisting in the Air Force.

Lawson and Brown both wrestled the girls from Washburn. Robinson scored the pin against a taller boy in the 126-pound class before the end of the first of three rounds.

On the mat, Robinson is fierce, unflappable and one of Minus’ tougher wrestlers.

Brown is actually the second of three girls in her family to wrestle (her twin sister wants nothing to do with the sport, except to root her on). She is by far the most vocal of the girls when it comes to their opportunity to wrestle against the boys.

Earlier this year, she wrote the Henry student council seeking their support to fund the purchase of girls’ wrestling singlets, which are higher cut, in hopes it would welcome more girls to participate.

“I love the sport. I can be mean when I wrestle,” Brown said. “I definitely take advantage when I sense the slightest hesitation from [a male opponent]. We can be intimidating.”
First Ave. seminar on UHT kicks off business initiative for Northside entrepreneurs

By Abdi Mohamed  Staff Reporter

No more than a few hours after clocking out from his IT job at Minneapolis Public Schools, Angelo Williamson found himself fulfilling a last minute catering job at First Avenue. The historic music venue is usually home to traveling performers, but on this night, it was the gathering space for Northsiders like Williamson to learn about the business opportunities set to come to their community through the Upper Harbor Terminal redevelopment project.

The event took place on Dec. 2 and was organized by the Northside Neighborhoods Council (NNC) and sponsored by First Avenue, the Northside Economic Opportunity Network, and the US Small Business Administration. Attendees of the workshop were encouraged to network, interact with the sponsors, and listen in on a panel with current Northside business owners.

Eric Won, one of the organizers, sees the UHT as an economic driver for the Northside. He hoped the First Avenue event would inform prospective business owners on how to get involved. “What we need are ancillary businesses that would naturally grow around a music venue. It’s what happened in Nashville, Bangor, Maine and Portland, Oregon,” Won said.

The music venue envisioned for the UHT will hold 8,000 to 10,000 people. All those people could be a stimulus for the Northside economy, according to Won who isn’t sure the Northside is ready for that potential influx of consumers.

Systemic bias and economic barriers have made it difficult for businesses in communities of color like North Minneapolis to thrive. For Northsiders to benefit from the coming development, Won believes Northsiders need to take advantage of available resources and start businesses now.

Markella Smith, the executive director of the McKinley Neighborhood Association, agrees. She attended the event as a voice for the NNC, ensuring the community’s vision for the development was shared. In preparing Northside entrepreneurs early on and connecting them to local resources, Smith hopes to avoid pitfalls that usually cause new business to fail.

According to Smith, the idea for the First Avenue business event came about “organically” through conversations at the Collaborative Planning Committee (CPC) organized by the City of Minneapolis. She and the other members of the CPC recognized what they saw as the unique opportunity to generate wealth in the Northside. “It's about changing our narrative,” Smith said speaking to the community engagement of the UHT. “It’s not just building minimum wage jobs but creating that generational wealth which is not an opportunity that we always necessarily get.”

The growing fear among many community members is that outsiders will be the ones who benefit most from the UHT development. Issues of gentrification, cost of living being raised, and economic competition have been raised.

The 48-acre UHT was once a barge shipping terminal now planned by the City and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) to be repurposed into a destination for the region made up of parkland, a performance venue, housing, and businesses.

Nearly 20-acres of the site is planned to be public parkland for recreational activities such as fishing, sports and leads to trails. The rest of the development will consist of the outdoor music venue to be operated by First Avenue along with retail businesses, office spaces, possible housing and a hotel. This second part of the UHT was in focus at Monday night’s event.

Northside entrepreneurs like Williamson are starting to see the UHT development as an opportunity to transition to their businesses full time. Right now, Williamson works as an IT professional for Minneapolis Public School but manages and cooks for his business, Wha’ Jamaican, during his time off.

Williamson wants to see more community owned and operated restaurants take shape in this development instead of more big chain or fancy restaurants with. “I feel like we have a lot of restaurants and places that are not necessarily invested in the health of the people. They’re vested in the monetary gain of people and a lot of the time that feels like exploitation,” Williamson said.

His authentic bistro takes an “urban spin” on Jamaican cuisine but by sourcing locally and changing some ingredients, Williamson aims to have a healthy option for his customers without sacrificing the traditional flavors he grew up on. Although having a quick “take-out” restaurant is nowhere in his current business model, Williamson’s goals are to bring a four-star dining option to North Minneapolis. He’d love to see a future space of this magnitude take place and make space for Wha’ Jamaican at the UHT.

Won estimates the construction timeline of redeveloping the entire UHT in the next two to three years. This is the time frame Won and others involved in the community engagement work hope to help incubate new businesses in time for them to move into storefronts. Failing to prepare now could result in a lost opportunity for many.

Dayna Frank, the CEO and owner of First Avenue thinks the UHT will be “catalyst of economic development” bringing in business from food, hospitality, childcare, and retail in North Minneapolis for event goers and locals alike. She sees North Minneapolis residents as having a large role to play in the planning process. “This was really driven by seeing the opportunity as the plan begins to develop and wanting to make sure that Northsiders are going to be first and foremost the ones to benefit from it,” Frank said.

As the City and the MPRB make plans with contractors to lay the groundwork for the UHT, more community workshops and events are set to be held throughout the Northside in anticipation of the opportunities local entrepreneurs can benefit from. There are roundtable discussions with monthly themes set in place for community members to have their questions answered.

Won hopes to organize a business bootcamp in the Spring to help accelerate the process for several entrepreneurs looking to house a business at the UHT. There are many moving parts with this development and those involved look to get a head start on their planning.
Village Financial project leaders say they are poised for a productive 2020

By Kenzie O’Keefe Editor

In a one-room office in the basement of 227 Colfax Ave. N, a tiny team is working diligently to get a project to open a black-led credit union on the Northside back on track.

The credit union is a community-driven idea that has been advanced by the Association for Black Economic Power since 2015. After two of the organization’s key leaders were ousted at the end of the summer over allegations of financial and organizational mismanagement, it became apparent that ABEP was far from its goal of opening a credit union by 2020.

Resources were running out, board numbers had dwindled, and the work that needed to be done in order to get federal approval to open a credit union were overwhelming to an organization that suddenly had no leadership.

Board member Malcolm Wells says it was unclear whether ABEP would survive the year: “It was really this daunting kind of a thing.”

Four months later, Wells says the future is much brighter because of “great decisions,” new leadership, and recently secured resources.

Samantha Pree Stinson was named ABEP’s new leader on Nov. 27. Pree Stinson previously served as “organizational alignment lead” for the nonprofit. She was its only staff member not laid off this fall.

“I see myself as a community vessel,” she said, noting her strengths as a project manager and convener of people and skillsets. Before joining ABEP, Pree Stinson was Ward 4 City Council Member Phillipe Cunningham’s policy aide. She says her decision to leave her steady job at city hall and delve into the grassroots development of a credit union reflects her deep belief that “the best solutions” for the black community “are the ones that come from us” on the “street level.”

“I am a person who loves as local as you can get it. That is my passion,” she said.

Pree Stinson is ABEP’s only current staff person other than a part time IT intern, Brandi Morgan, a junior at Century College.

Pree Stinson’s staff position isn’t the only leadership role the board needs to fill. As of Dec. 17 when this paper went to print, the nonprofit had just two board members—Wells and Elaine Rasmussen. Former board member Felicia Perry, who helped lead ABEP through the volatility of the past few months, recently chose to step down.

ABEP plans to host board elections in January. Wells said his hope was to name five new board members.

Despite the tumult of the past few months, Wells and Pree Stinson say they’ll enter 2020 energized and excited for what’s ahead.

“We have a lot of opportunities to take advantage of,” said Pree Stinson.

Some of those opportunities are financial. Pree Stinson says ABEP has secured three new grants since September—$90K for the nonprofit to rebuild its infrastructure and from ABEP’s best known project, Village Financial credit union, Pree Stinson says little can be determined until new board members are in place.

ABEP’s application for a federal charter will need to be drastically revamped or recreated entirely, said Wells. That determination and work will be done after a new board is in place.

Where the credit union will be located and when it will open are yet to be determined, but Pree Stinson says “there is no question” it’s going to happen and that it’s going to happen transparently and collaboratively with community. “The new strategic plan to complete the final stages of the project will determine the new timeline that we can share with community,” she said.

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension is currently investigating allegations against ABEP’s previous leaders, Me’Lea Connelly and Joe Riemann. “The investigation has begun and there are no new updates,” said Pree Stinson.

“That’s above us now. We’ve moved on,” said Wells.

Visit www.mynorthnews.org for an update on the results of the January board elections.
In many ways, the Northside remained exactly the same in 2019. You can still get a pasty at Milda’s. The Polars went to state. It’s still hard to access the Mississippi waterfront. Neighborhood organizations did a lot with a little. Community demanded accountability, justice, and safety and created a whole lot of beauty in the process.

But, much has changed.

Makeda Zulu Gillespie became the leader of UROC and the community rejoiced. Juxtaposition Arts built a temporary skatepark and Broadway became more colorful. Northern Metals was forced to shut down its shredder and the air got cleaner. The Village Financial credit union project looked all but dead and then was resurrected. Thor Construction went bankrupt and eventually shuttered.

Lives were snatched too soon by domestic violence, guns, and the opioid crisis. A Mother’s Love showed up for those in pain.

Schools fought hard to serve students with a system that wasn’t designed for them. Lucy Laney Elementary taught big lessons on the big screen.

The physical landscape is being transformed. Devean George’s latest housing project is being constructed on Golden Valley Road and Artspace broke ground on theirs down in Harrison. NorthPoint continues the transformation of Penn and Plymouth. New bars and restaurants—Bar Brava, Meteor, and Royal Foundry—popped up on Washington and Glenwood. Houston White introduced us to Camden Town. New Rules brought us a cafe in the heart of community. A chocolatier brought sweetness to Victory.

Here are some of those moments.

What were your favorite moments of 2019? Reminisce with us @MyNorthNews on Facebook.
Kevin Heger flies high at the new skate-able art plaza at Juxtaposition Arts, which opened during the summer on Emerson and W Broadway Ave. The plaza mixes skating with open space, art installations and stormwater management and was made possible by donations from a Kickstarter campaign, Mississippi Watershed Management Organization and the Super Bowl Host Committee Legacy Fund.

Ezekiel Straub, a student at Bethune Community School, stayed upright as he raced across the Minne-Loppet finish line at Theodore Wirth Park in February. The annual ski race for elementary school students is organized by the Loppet Foundation.

All photos by David Pierini
Valerie Fluerantin, left, grabbed Sara Lane for a turn in front of the blues stage at the first Camden Town Blues and BBQ Festival. Hundreds gathered in the North Market parking lot for the first ever festival on Aug. 17. Some of Minnesota’s best musicians, including Wain McFarlane, Ginger Commodore and Jellybean Johnson, paired well with the smoky meats of competitive barbecue.

Max, a horse with the Minneapolis Police Mounted Patrol, got to know Desirae Burch, 13, during a National Night Out party at Elizabeth Hall International Elementary School in August.

Anu Jofati, 5, center, learned how to finish her moves with style during a breakdancing class at Webber Park Library taught by Joseph “Minnesota Joe” Tran. Tran showed kids how to top rock, kick out and freeze, three elements of breaking, during the free lesson in July.
On a tour of the Minnesota House chambers, Michael Donald, left, and Marcus Zachery took a long look at its ornate ceiling. The two Patrick Henry High School students visited the capitol as part of an annual event for black boys at Henry called “100 Black Men Strong.”

Eighth-graders at Ascension School wore red robes for their May graduation and Melvin Kamara was greeted with congratulations after returning to his seat with his diploma.

Educational assistant David Sanner tried to coax an anxious student into class on the first day of school at Sojourner Truth Academy. She eventually joined her third-grade class.
A heron perches atop a dead tree on the Mississippi River. A 2011 tornado destroyed a heron rookery, but many herons have returned to an island near the North Mississippi Regional Park to renest.

Amanda Johnson leans into Sam Akinogbe as they sit and talk looking out at the Mississippi River. “It was my day off and I begged him to take me here,” Johnson said. “I had to get away from the concrete.”

Jason Lund picks and trims troops of oyster mushrooms growing at Mississippi Mushrooms, located in North Minneapolis at the Upper Harbor Terminal site, a former barge shipping terminal in the process of being redeveloped. Mississippi Mushrooms uses local waste materials like sawdust and grain and recycle the materials for their farming process.
Although he portrayed former President Barack Obama, Northside Achievement Zone scholar Cordae Williams had to carry his own podium. Cordae was one historical figure during a Black History Wax Museum at a NAZ family graduation ceremony in March.

Congresswoman Omar wasn’t the only Ilhan at the Urban League’s Family Day in August. Ilhan Hassan, 10, got a hug from the congresswoman after excitedly telling her they shared a first name.

Zaharra Cook, 6, blew bubbles outside Elizabeth Hall International Elementary School during the school’s first National Night Out block party in August. She also climbed in a fire truck and met Trooper and Max, two horses from the Minneapolis Police Mounted Patrol.
A man dances to gospel music on a Friday night in the parking lot on W. Broadway Ave. in September. The music was coming from a van while a church fed hungry people who stopped by.

Lora Johnson hugs a fellow member of First Community Recovery Church during a service on a September Sunday. The church brings together people touched in some way by addiction.
RESOLUTIONS ARE FOR QUITTERS.

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NORTH NEWS
December 20, 2019

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University study on policing leads to questions about how the community is researched

Activist Al Flowers questioned why the University of Minnesota’s survey of Northside attitudes on policing did not involve the work of local groups. Photo by David Pierini

By Abdi Mohamed Staff Reporter

The worlds of academia and community activism came to a head on Tuesday night Dec. 10 during a forum on policing in North Minneapolis. Researchers from the University of Minnesota presented their findings of a two-year long study that surveyed residents of the Northside about their experiences with police. The forum was aimed at gaining insight from the community through feedback, which instead became the epicenter for a conversation around the feelings of exclusion and exploitation members of the Northside feel when it comes to academic research.

The research project was spearheaded by Michelle Phelps, Ph.D, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota. One of her students, Amber Powell, MA, helped lead the presentation of their findings. They shared their methodology which involved interviewing 120 Northside residents and 25 community activists and political figures, aiming to gauge the community’s attitudes about police conduct.

Researchers found that the lack of accountability was an issue for many participants of the survey when it came to police conduct. They also found members of the community faced “dual frustration,” a term that describes the dilemma in his assessment of the data. He emphasized the importance of having a shared identity with the community for accurate findings. “It’s good to know that someone is accurately portraying the North Minneapolis experience in academic literature,” Robertson said.

Although the research team might have gone to some lengths to close their blind spots, Northside residents like Cynthia Jackson feel that their process was inherently exploitative of the community.

“I don’t want to say I hate the police, but I hate the way we are policed,” said Jackson, who is a graduate student of advocacy and political leadership at Metropolitan State University. Having lived in the Northside for over 20 years, Jackson stated that she’s never had one positive interaction with a police officer. Jackson along with some others at the event felt as though it was a waste of time and exploitative with researchers receiving grant dollars for work that doesn’t present new information. “We’re not laboratory specimens to be put under a microscope. To be studied and researched and still be in the petri dish,” Jackson said.

One issue a few community members expressed with the study is the lack of ethnic nuance between black respondents by simply labeling them black or African American. The cultural difference between African immigrants and African descendants of slaves (ADOS) as some refer to themselves, is a significant one. It’s a distinction some felt necessary to include in the study due to the historical context between police and the African American community.

Some, like community activist Al Flowers, said they wished Northsiders had been given a leadership role on the project from the onset.

“You should be working with us. Don’t bring us in on the back end,” he said.

Roughly $90K in grant money funded this study, most of which went to research students in the form of stipends for their work, according to Phelps. Participants of the survey who were interviewed were reportedly given a $30 gift card. Some event attendees, like Flowers, said they would have liked to see more of the money go to Northsiders living with these issues.

Much of the criticism that came from community centered on the research team being community outsiders. Powell was raised in Milwaukee, and is a black woman with five black brothers. All of the graduate students involved in the project identified as people of color. Powell said that having similar identities to Northsiders enhanced their work but said she is aware that her status with the university still marked her as an outsider to the community. “We tried to be honest and transparent about that,” she said.

Phelps and her students hope to publish the finalized piece of their research next year after digesting the feedback they received from attendees of their forum.

"I don't want to say I hate the police, but I hate the way we are policed."

Cynthia Jackson

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Polars play catch up and clinch wins after a delayed start to their season

By David Snoddy Jr. Howard Hadley Jr. North High Interns

After the first five games of the season the Polars have a record of 3-2. They are undefeated in their conference. They had a tough loss against highly ranked Lake City in the first game of the season. Many of the players were fresh off the football field after their state championship game on Nov. 29, leading some to believe that their loss was because they weren't yet ready to play.

But, the team bounced back in their second game against South High School (96-66), doing what needed to be done to secure the win. On Friday Dec. 13, they lost to St. Croix Prep but came back the following day, winning their big game against rival Patrick Henry High School at home. On Dec. 16, they defeated Washburn 86-69. Keep an eye out for power forward Quentrail Jamison-Travis, a senior who has been a surprise force to be reckoned with on the court despite never having played basketball for the Polars before.

Sophomore Willie Wilson has been carrying the team as expected this season but had a tough game against South High on Dec. 10. Calls from the referees didn't go in his favor. After two technical fouls, he was not allowed to play in the following game against St. Croix Prep.

The Polars won’t be taking much of a break while school is out for the holidays. They play in the Augsburg Holiday Tournament on Dec. 27. Their first game is against South St. Paul at 5:30pm. The tournament will continue on Dec. 28 and 30; opponents will be determined as the tournament goes on. The only home game over break is against Milwaukee Math and Science at 3pm on Jan. 4.

Best friends turn talents into scholarships

By Lexi Hollmon North High

Jasmine Jackson and Taylor Tidwell-Bennett, seniors at North Community High School, are best friends who have been excellent and inspiring role models on the court, in school and out of school to everyone they come in contact with. They’re very accomplished bright young women who are going to take their excellence and team sportsmanship into college with them.

These two both recently got a scholarship and acceptance letters. Tidwell-Bennett, who got accepted into Hamline University also received an Honors Scholarship.

“When I received my scholarship, I was actually really surprised. It made me proud because I realized that I’m not just a statistic. If I could get a scholarship to a really good school coming out of North High, than people younger than me could too,” said Tidwell-Bennett.

Jackson, who got accepted into Upper Iowa and Iowa Central, said she wants to continue basketball but is still unsure of what college she wants to attend. “I plan to attend college and play basketball. I’m not sure as to what college I want to attend as of now,” she said.

Their senior years have been filled with successes—and some struggles. Tidwell-Bennett said that waiting for college decisions has been “kind of nerve wracking.” Both balance sports at North High and taking classes at MCTC as PSEO students. “You miss out on a lot of high school experiences because your weeks are full of trying to reach PSEO deadlines,” said Tidwell-Bennett.

Catch a film in the neighborhood on the first Thursdays

On Dec. 5, Amazing Grace, a movie about Aretha Franklin, played at a First Thursday Film event hosted by the Capri Theater at North High School. It was at North because the Capri Theater, located on W Broadway Ave. and Logan Ave. N, is currently under construction. First Thursday Films are made possible by the MSP Film Society every first Thursday of the month. The next one will be in January; Love Them First, the documentary about Lucy Laney Elementary School, will play at 7pm in the North High Auditorium. Tickets are $5 and can be purchased online or at the door. First Thursday films also aim to “create a space for dialogue and better understanding,” according to their website. After every movie there is an open mic conversation held with the audience about what they thought about the movie and some things that they noticed. Love Them First will be hosted by the filmmakers: Lindsey Seavert and Ben Garvin. By Kyla Moore North High Intern
NEWS RESOURCE

NORTH NEWS

RESOURCES

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide offers free tax preparation to anyone of any age at Pillsbury United Communities Oak Park Community Center, 1701 Oak Park Ave, beginning on 2/3 and continuing on Mondays and Tuesday through 4/14, from 10am-1pm. Call 612-377-7000 for an appointment. Walk-ins are accepted if counselors are available. Oak Park Center is closed 2/18 for Presidents’ Day. Due to the temporary closing of North Hennepin County Library, tax preparation is available at these new locations: Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, 3355 N 4th Street, Wednesdays from 9am-1pm beginning 2/5 and continuing through 4/15. Summer Library, 611 Van White Memorial Blvd, Saturdays from 9am -1pm beginning 2/1 and continues through 4/11. First come, first served.

Hennepin County residents are invited to apply for multiple openings on the Hennepin County Library Board. Applications are open through 12/31/19. The role of a board member is a three-year term with $50 dollar compensation for each meeting. Board members are tasked with determining the contents of the collection, accepting and managing gifts and trust funds, and making recommendations to the county administrator about appointment or removal of the library director. Visit bit.ly/HennepinCountyLibraryBoard to learn more.

WSB Engineering is looking to hire women and people of color. The firm has created a program called Opportunity+ which will run January through April. Training will occur at the CareerForce office in North Minneapolis from 5:30-8:30pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursday evenings. WSB is committed to hiring four participants that complete the program and plans to partner with other organizations to find positions for the other participants. Learn more at: wsben.org/opportunity.

The City of Minneapolis is installing syringe drop boxes in public spaces to provide places for anyone to safely dispose of used syringes. The installation of the boxes began on Nov. 1 and was completed by Nov. 18. Overdose calls to the Minneapolis Police Department have jumped from 286 in 2015 to 954 in 2018. For more information visit minneapolis.gov/opioidresponse

Hockey for girls and boys ages 6-14 offered at North Commons Park and Northeast Arena from November through February. All equipment is provided and the cost is minimal. Register and get more information at North Commons Park, 612-370-4921. Register early to get the most for your money.

The Census Bureau is hiring temporary employees for the 2020 Census. The jobs offer weekly pay, competitive pay rates, flexible hours, and paid training. Learn more here: https://2020census.gov/jobs/

Northside Boxing Club (1704 33rd Ave N) offers free lessons to kids ages 9-21. Training includes boxing drills, technique work, running and strength conditioning. Each session ends with a healthy meal. Hours are Monday-Thursday from 4pm-5:30pm and 6pm-7pm. On Fridays, youth open boxing is offered from 4-7pm.

Minneapolis Solid Waste & Recycling program may do so at any time by visiting www.minneapolis.gov/recycling. There is no extra cost, but you have to sign up.

Tuesdays – The Twin Cities Mobile Market delivers affordable and healthy food weekly to locations across North Minneapolis and the Twin Cities. A wide variety of fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy products, and staples like rice and dried beans are available at below-market prices. Cash, all major credit cards, debit cards, SNAP/EBT, and Market Bucks are accepted. Questions? Call 612-280-2434. Their delivery schedule does change. For schedule and map information, visit www.wilder.org/Programs-Services/tcmnPages/default.aspx.

Do you live in North or Willard/Hay? Then your block could be eligible for a mini block grant through the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council. Funds are available for a project or event you want to create. For more information call 612-335-5924 or email contactus@nrrc.org.

The Northside Residents Redevelopment Council is partnering with Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid to connect residents of Near North and Willard Hay with free attorneys. If you are having legal troubles that relate to your home or business and live in the Near North or Willard Hay neighborhood visit their clinic at the NRRC office Mondays and Tuesdays from 10am-3pm or set up an appointment by calling 612-335-5924.

EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT

12/31 – New Rules’ New Years Eve Party 9pm-3am. Open bar. Ticket prices range from $40 to $100 depending on general admission or VIP passes. New Rules is located on 2015 Lowry Ave. N in Minneapolis. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit newrules.com.

1/2 – First Thursday Films at North Community High will be showcasing the documentary “Love Them First: Lessons from Lucy Loney Elementary” as part of their Black Cinema: Under the Skin program. North High will host First Thursdays in 2019-2020 while the Capri theater is closed for expansion and renovation. The screening begins at 7pm and costs $5 at the door. North High is located at 1500 James Ave N in Minneapolis. After the show, there will be a conversation with directors Lindsey Seavert and Ben Garvin.

1/14 – The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage will host its annual meeting at NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center from 6-8pm. The meeting will discuss the CMAH’s plan to enhance the work of the council and view the newly released 2019 annual report. Guests can take part in a short legislative training to find out how to get involved in the 2020 legislative session. For more information contact Shakira Bradford at shakira.bradford@state.mn.us or at 651-757-1752.

Wednesday – Kid’s Bookclub. 2:30-4pm. Webber Park Library. No pre-reading required. A book will be shared with a discussion and activity to follow. Sponsored by Friends of the Webber Park Library. No registration required. Designated for youth in grades 1-6.

Thursdays – After School Kids Jam. 4:45-5:15pm. Join Coach Chad Sandifer and other kids/teens to do dance aerobics, cardio kickboxing and fun movement games. This program is sponsored by the North Market Grocery Store.

Fridays – Family Storytime. 10-10:30am. Webber Park Library. Free of charge for all ages and their parent or caregiver, Talk, sing, read, write and play together in a format appropriate for young children. Share books, stories, rhymes, music and movement.

 Saturdays – Explore Nature! 10:30am-12:30pm. Webber Park Library. Enjoy nature themed activities, meet a live critter and learn about the Mississippi watershed and our regional ecosystem. This program is collaborated with the North Mississippi River Regional Park and the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization.

Saturdays – The Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery at 1256 Penn Ave North, 4th Floor, has a free Children’s Reading Circle from 10-11:30am every Saturday morning. Children can earn a free book. Storytellers weave and read books to all children that come. Volunteer storytellers are welcome. Contact them to volunteer at info@maahmg.org.

The Capri Theater is now closed, the old theater seats are being removed, and every nook and cranny of the building is being emptied in anticipation of a June construction start on the theater’s renovation and expansion. While the theater is closed, Capri programming will continue at alternate Northside locations. See website for details.

DEPARTMENT

What’s Up 612? is an online resource for children and youth, ages 5-21, where citywide afterschool activities can be found. More information can be found at: http://www.whatsup612.com

Project for Pride in Living (PPL) seeks volunteers interested in mentoring and tutoring youth in grades K-5th grade who are living in supportive housing in Camden. Volunteers are matched 1:1 with a youth to build a strong relationship, tutor in literacy concepts, and engage in enrichment activities like arts & crafts, games, creative play, etc. To apply, visit www.ppl-inc.org/volunteer or contact Volunteer Coordinator Caitlin Dougherty at caitlin.dougherty@ppl-inc.org /612-455-5108.

Teen Tech workshop is held every other Thursday. North Regional Library, 5-7pm. Get creative and make music, videos, animation, and other projects using high- and low-tech tools, everything from iPads and 3D printers to synthesizers and sewing machines. Led by the library’s Teen Tech Squad. More information at http://www.hclib.org/about/locations/north-regional.

MN Comeback and Great MN Schools launched Minnesota School Finder. This resource guide for parents provide objective, relevant information on schools across Minneapolis so parents can find schools that are the best fit for their kids.

HOUSING

The Minneapolis City Council has approved an ordinance strengthening protections for renters in Minneapolis. The ordinance will cap security deposits at a maximum of one month’s rent and gives property owners two options for screening potential renters: use inclusive screening criteria outlined in the ordinance or conduct an individualized assessment. The inclusive screening criteria will limit consideration of criminal background and rental history, including eviction history, and will prohibit the use of a credit score. The ordinance goes into effect on 6/1/2020 but property owners with 15 dwelling units or fewer have an effective date of 12/1/2020.

On 12/3 the Economic Development and Regulatory Services Committee of the Minneapolis City Council approved the Tenant Relocation Fees Ordinance. Ordinance author Councilmember Phillip Cunningham began work on this ordinance a year ago, with the mission to address the gap in a safety net for renters whose landlords are held accountable for negligent and harmful practices and have their rental licenses revoked, denied, or canceled. This work is part of several actions the Minneapolis City Council has begun taking to address the unique needs of the City’s growing population of renters.

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison filed a suit against North Minneapolis Landlord Steve Meldahl after he kept security deposits from tenants and retaliated against them for seeking health and safety inspections. Meldahl was the landlord of 25 properties in North Minneapolis where he sometimes required security deposits as high as $2,000 or more. Those who may have been victimized by Meldahl or his company S.I.M.
Properties Inc. are encouraged to come forward and file complaints with the Minnesota AG’s office by calling 651-296-3353 or emailing attorney.general@q.state.mn.us.

The City of Minneapolis is accepting applications for the 4d affordable housing incentive program. This program helps property owners obtain property tax reductions for agreeing to keep a portion of rental units affordable for 10 years. The program launched in 2018 and has preserved over 700 units of affordable housing. Benefits of the 4d program includes a free or low cost energy assessment and a grant to each 4d property in the amount of $100 per affordable unit, along with payment of first year state and county fees. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until Jan. 8, 2020. For more information visit the program website at minneapolis.gov/4d or call 612-673-5055.

Hennepin County funding assistance for lead paint: Homeowners and landlords may be eligible for a free home test and as much as $8,000 in lead reduction costs, such as new windows. Contact: healthyhomes@hennepin.us or 612-543-4182.

The City of Minneapolis offers free energy efficiency home visits and 0% financing on recommended energy-saving upgrades while providing information on rebates and incentives. Visit www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/sewers/fats-oils-grease.

The City Council approved a Renter-First Housing Policy, a framework that affirms the City’s commitment to advancing renter protections and developing new tools to support affordability and stability in rental housing. The implementation of the Renter-First Housing Policy will include both early intervention and safety-net strategies. Highlights include strengthening enforcement measures to ensure repair issues are addressed quickly while minimizing negative impacts on the renter; targeting inspections efforts toward properties in disrepair or with a high volume of renter complaints; and creating financial opportunities for property owners to maintain housing conditions and affordable housing without increasing rents. Learn more at: lims.minneapolismn.gov/Download/File/2132/Renter%20First%20Policy%2003.01.19.pdf

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity has developed a new program to help first-time homebuyers who have faced barriers to buying a home through traditional mortgage lenders. Under the program, homebuyers can buy on the open market using Habitat’s affordable, fixed-rate mortgage. They can work with the realtor of their choice, complete Habitat’s homeownership education and buy a home in their preferred neighborhood or city. The new program reaches a broader income range, including those who may think their income is too high to qualify. Households earning $40,000–$80,000 have successfully bought a home in Habitat’s redesigned homeownership program. The program revolves around an “unbeatable mortgage,” a 30-year fixed-rate with monthly payments set to no more than 30% of income. Down payment assistance may be available. Interested residents can find more information on the mortgage program at: www.BuyWithHabitat.org or by calling 612-540-5660.

The City of Minneapolis can help renters who want smoke-free housing, and it can help property owners make their buildings smoke-free. For smoke-free rental housing help, renters and property owners and managers can call 311 or visit www.minneapolismn.gov/smoke-free.

BE AWARE

The City Council has approved an ordinance that prohibits “conversion therapy” in Minneapolis. The practice of conversion therapy refers to the treatment of LGBTQ individuals as having a mental disorder that can be cured or corrected. Medical, mental health and child welfare experts have denounced the practice as ineffective, unreliable and unsafe. The City will enforce the ban through potential administrative citations and civil fines. Bans on conversion therapy exist in 18 states and about 53 cities.

Northside Eco-Harbor will be hosting regular meetings every Monday from 5-7pm. There will be regular roundtable discussions held about equitable and sustainable planning and design concepts critical to the economic, environmental and social health of Northside neighborhoods. Everyone is welcome to attend. The meetings will be held at 2015 Lowry Ave N, Minneapolis, MN 55411.

Minneapolis Solid Waste and Recycling is changing how it collects batteries from homes. No batteries may go with recycling. Alkaline batteries such as AA or AAA may be disposed of in Solid Waste and Recycling black garbage bags. Rechargeable batteries, lithium batteries and items containing batteries such as cell phones and electronic cigarettes are prohibited from all City of Minneapolis garbage and recycling carts. Hennepin County will accept batteries at its permanent drop off locations in 1400 W 96th Street Bloomington, MN and 8100 Jefferson Highway, Brooklyn Park, MN.

Retail establishments are now required to charge a fee of at least 5 cents for carryout bags due to an ordinance passed by the City Council of Minneapolis. The requirement will go into effect Jan. 1 and the retail establishments will keep the fees that they charge. The aim of this ordinance is to encourage shoppers to bring their own bags, reduce litter, and keep plastic bags from clogging the gears in recycling facilities which workers spend four to six hours a day removing. For more information on the ordinance visit https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/2018-00134.

City of Minneapolis has drafted documents on frequently asked questions (FAQs) and rules to help provide guidance to employers and employees about their rights and responsibilities under the City’s wage theft prevention ordinance. The ordinance takes effect on Jan. 1, 2020 and adopted parts of the state’s new wage theft law. Employers must adhere to a regularly scheduled payday, provide pre-hire notices of certain employment terms and conditions, and provide statements at the end of each pay period. he documents are up for review and comment until Dec. 31, 2019. To learn more visit the City’s website, email wagetheft@minneapolis.gov or call 311.

The City Council has approved the City’s vision, mission and values as part of the Strategic and Racial Equity Action planning process—a framework that will set the direction for the future of the City and ensure the implementation of racial equity goals. The Strategic and Racial Equity Action Plan is a four-year plan that will embed racial equity principles into all aspects of the City’s work, aligning work from City leadership to departments and defining goals at all planning levels that can be objectively measured and inform
resource decisions. The goals were also informed by community engagement from the Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Minneapolis 2040’s first goal is to eliminate disparities and a targeted number of policy areas from the plan have been identified as policy priorities for the Strategic and Racial Equity Action Plan.

The City of Minneapolis has banned a hazardous chemical, Perchloroethylene known as “perc,” that is used in the dry-cleaning industry. Perchloroethylene is the main chemical solvent used in dry cleaning and may cause cancer as well as damage to internal organs. The City of Minneapolis worked in tandem with several organizations that include the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Department of Health, and the Minnesota Cleaners Association to convert all known dry cleaners away from perc.

Homegrown Minneapolis invites community members to participate in any or all upcoming meetings or weigh in online to help develop a food policy action plan. City staff intend for the plan to guide the City toward a more equitable, climate resilient, just and sustainable local food system and local food economy. Access to healthy and local food is important for the health of people who eat it, for the local communities it helps support and for protecting the climate. For more information on upcoming topics, meeting dates and locations and how to stay involved, please visit their website at www.minneapolismn.gov/foodactionplan.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board would like to hear from area residents as they embark on improving the facilities at Elaize Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary. The construction is slated for 2020 and 2021 and will include an all-gendered, family-friendly, accessible bathroom, building an addition to the visitor center and re-envisioning the front entrance. To participate in this project, visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EloiseButler and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board website.

Carbon monoxide (CO) exposure incidents increase during the winter months and CO is often called the silent killer. It is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that when inhaled, enters the blood stream preventing proper absorption of oxygen, leading to illness and even death. Treatment for CO exposure is fresh air or oxygen. Severe exposure requires medical attention. Do not return to your home or building until the source of the problem is discovered and corrected. For more information about natural gas safety, visit CenterPointEnergy.com/BeSafe or call 612-372-4727 or 1-800-245-2377.

People must be at least 21 to buy tobacco products in Minneapolis as of Oct. 1, 2018. Minneapolis raised the age from 18 to help protect younger generations from lifelong nicotine addiction, tobacco-related illnesses, and the tobacco-related health disparities between white populations and people of color. Research shows raising the age to buy tobacco will keep an estimated 30,000 young people from starting to smoke over a 15-year period in Minnesota.

The City’s Municipal Minimum Wage Ordinance took effect Jan. 1, 2018. There will be a tiered phase-in period for small and large businesses. Large businesses that employ more than 100 workers were required to pay employees a minimum of $10 an hour beginning Jan. 1, 2018. Small businesses with 100 or fewer employees will be required to pay workers at least $10.25 beginning July 1, 2018. Large businesses have until July 1, 2022, to reach a minimum wage of $15 an hour and small businesses have until July 1, 2024 to reach $15 an hour.

Through its 311 service, the City of Minneapolis has opened a new hotline for reporting hate crimes. Which are harassing behaviors motivated by prejudice. The hotline number is 311 for anyone calling from within the city of 612-673-3000 statewide. The 311 hotline will be answered 7am-7pm weekdays and 8am-4:30pm weekends. Those with a report to make can also call the Department of Justice at 612-664-5600. As always, in the case of immediate physical violence, property damage, or threats, people should call 911.

The City Council received the City’s first-ever State of Data report: a document that outlines the current way data is managed by the City and provides a roadmap to improve transparency, accountability and accessibility. The report is a point-in-time summary of where the City of Minneapolis stands with respect to data governance and management, including the way data now informs policy decisions by City leaders and how accessible and understandable that data is. The report also presents a roadmap to making the City more data-driven in operations and services, and looks at how data use is evolving into the future. The 2018 State of Data Report is available on the City’s website.

Following Minneapolis fire laws will help keep our neighborhoods safe and livable: outdoor fires are permitted 9am-10pm, fires must be less than three feet in diameter and two feet high, and a fire must be completely out before being abandoned. Illegal open burning or recreational fires could result in fines that start at $200. For more information on recreational fires or to register a complaint about a recreational fire, call 311 or email Minneapolis 311@minneapolismn.gov, or to register a complaint about a recreational fire outside 311 hours, call 911. The Fire and Police departments are authorized to extinguish a fire immediately if it is hazardous.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) has banned all tobacco products on Minneapolis park properties and owned and/or operated facilities.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Da Hive, a coworking and educational space for black women, launched in late August as an extension of the Black Women’s Wealth Alliance. BWWA’s founder, Kenya McKnight, operates Da Hive and aims to make it a location for black women entrepreneurs, students and employees to work towards their economic goals. Many of BWWA participants are enrolling as members of Da Hive after having taken several business related workshops. The space will help incubate a number of businesses and continue to host workshops to improve the business skills of their members. To learn more about Da Hive visit www.dahive-us.com.

The Minneapolis Business Portal is a new online platform designed to connect entrepreneurs and small business owners to the information and resources needed to plan, launch and grow a business. The online portal, available at business.minneapolismn.gov, features roadmaps, checklists, tools and resources to help both new and existing businesses.

Northside Economic Opportunity Network is now accepting applications for their private office spaces that feature windows, open workspaces and more. There are several office space and pricing plans available, ranging from a drop-in guest pass ($10/day) to a platinum plan ($500/month with private office). For more information visit https://www.neon-mn.org/spaces.
By Kenzie O'Keefe Editor | Photos by David Pierini Staff Reporter

Lisa Pawelak has suddenly found herself in a spotlight after more than a decade behind the scenes at Lucy Laney Elementary School.

After former principal Mauri Friestleben left Laney to lead North High School in August, Pawelak was named interim principal just weeks before the 2019-20 school year began—and weeks before the feature length documentary about the school, Love Them First, became widely available online.

In typical Laney fashion, Pawelak turned what some might see as a set of challenges into motivation to rise to an occasion. She decided to embrace the attention and encourage her staff and students to “Shine your light,” the motto she chose for this school year.

This month, she spoke to North News about her desire to lead Laney long term, her home life in Willard Hay, and her commitment to living in alignment with her beliefs.

You're originally from Illinois. How did you end up working and living in North Minneapolis? I'm 40 now. I've officially been in Minnesota longer than I was in Illinois. I came for college when I was 17. I loved it and I never left. I originally wanted to be a veterinarian, but I developed some pretty severe allergies to animals in high school. My father is a school social worker and my mother is a school nurse, and so I just slid into that social work major in college. After an internship and AmeriCorps, I decided I wanted to work in the schools. I had two choices: I could get my teaching license or I could get my master's degree in social work. I decided to go the social work route. I knew I wanted to work in Minneapolis, and I've always wanted to live and work and go to church in the same community. I applied for paraprofessional jobs and I got one at Jordan Park School, which is now Hmong International Academy. My husband and I moved to North. That was about 20 years ago.
What neighborhood do you live in? Willard Hay. We were on 16th and Irving for a number of years. Then we moved three blocks down to 16th and Logan.

How did you end up at Laney? It's my 13th year here in this building. I came as the social worker in 2007 and then I moved into the assistant principal role when Mauri moved into the principalship. I didn't have any aspirations or dreams to be a school administrator at all. She dragged me a little bit, kicking and screaming. And then I adjusted. The assistant principal was a good fit. I did that for six and a half years and then she got the opportunity to go to North High. Again, I was pushed, kicking and screaming.

You're currently interim principal. Why the interim title? Mauri was offered and accepted the principal role at North High on Aug. 2. I was named as interim of Laney the same day. There wasn't enough time to do the typical process of canvassing the community, getting an interview team together, having people apply, doing interviews and things. Because of the timing, the superintendent named me as interim for the whole year. And at some point this year, Laney will go through the principal interview process.

Will you be a candidate? I hope so. I would like to work here forever. Laney has a really strong history of growing our own. I'm one example of that. Right now I don't use the title interim. I feel like it brings a level of instability, and whether I am Laney's permanent principal or not, I am going to lead in a permanent way for the time that I'm here.

I heard a rumor that Laney is one of the only, if not the only school in North Minneapolis that has a waiting list. Is that true? And if so, what do you think makes it that anomaly? We are over-enrolled. The district will do enrollment projections every spring. We were budgeted and funded for just over 400. I believe we're around 40 over right now. I have been told that we are the most requested school. I don't know about an official wait list. I heard that rumor also, but I have not seen a list.

Why do you think Laney is the most requested school? We have staff in the right positions. We have teachers who care deeply, and we have listened to the needs of our families and responded to those needs in a way that treats each one of the children as if they are our own family members. Because of that, our parents have grown to trust us, and give us the benefit of a doubt. And it also brings out the best in children. When you see the children for their purity of who they are, they want to show you their best selves. They'll see you walking down the hall and they'll stand a little straighter, and their chest will puff out a little bit because they want you to see them. They want to show you what you already see in them.

How has the release of the feature length documentary about the school, impacted day to day life at the school? I was probably one of the most hesitant and skeptical staff people around KARE11 coming in, in the first place. But we are public servants. We are paid with taxpayer dollars, and we are raising, teaching, and educating the community's children so there's no reason to have closed doors. I never thought we had something to hide, but I think it's easy to come in as a media person and take a little snapshot, but the systems and structures that we have set up in public education are very deep, and there are a lot of painful layers. I was like, "Are you really going to stay? What are you going to see? How are our children going to look through your eyes?" But I think they did a great job. Mauri had no intention of leaving Lucy Laney, but having her go has impacted the spread of the documentary in a good way because we say all the time, "Lucy Laney is not the only Lucy Laney." We are not the only school that is fighting to do everything we can to do right by our children. We're just the only school that had two reporters from KARE11 in the building following us, primarily Mauri, a lot.

Speaking of Mauri being a central figure in the film, what's it been like just to follow in the footsteps of such a well-known and celebrated principal? She's an amazing leader. I worked side-by-side with her for 10 years. She taught me a lot. This is what she raised me for. She still supports me. Nobody could be Mauri. Mauri is Mauri. And I am Lisa. I try to lead with a deep humility and with servant leadership because we are a team. No one person, no one leader, even if they are the best known and they are the best leader, they can't do it alone. Lucy Laney is strong and we are very deep in our strength.

Whether you're principal for a year or for the long term, what are your hopes and dreams for Laney? I want Lucy Laney to be a place that leads the way for us as a society to drop some of our prejudices, and some of our biases around who our children are and what they come with. We have a very deficit-based way of thinking about children of color, particularly African and Native American children. And there is nothing wrong with our kids. None of them. Everybody comes differently. We do not love all of our children first.

What's this year's school motto? It's "shine your light." Our professional development focus this year, is around language and dialect. I also knew the documentary was coming out publicly. The title is Love Them First; this is a love of high expectation, this is a love of firmness, this is a love of providing you the supports you need to reach those expectations and to help you navigate this system that is set up against you. The beacon of light kept coming to me. And I was like, "Shine your light." That's what we're doing, we are shining bright. That's what having a documentary does too; is it shines its light. We might as well embrace it.

What keeps you up at night? I worry about a lot of things and I know that worry gets you nowhere. So, I try really hard not to, but I think about the impact that the state designation has. I think about how much pressure our teachers put on themselves to move the children in proficiency and in growth. Our teachers take it so personally, and they care so deeply. I wish I could pull some of that burden off of them. We are in our last year of a five year school improvement grant. We've prepped and planned well for the end of that grant, but I'm worried about that. It's taking up a lot of my brain space—thinking about budgeting and leading through a budget season where, not only are we ending this grant, but our district is also facing a $19 million budget gap for next school year. But we will be okay. My faith is really strong. And I don't believe that momentum like this will be stopped easily.

When you're feeling stuck, who do you call? Or who do you look to? I go to God. I look to the word in the Bible.

Who do you look up to and admire? I'm trying not to say Mauri because I already said her name a few times. My daughters. They are 12 and 13 and go to Franklin. I won the parenting lottery.

There are district educatoors who don't choose to send their kids district schools. Why have you made the choice to keep your kids here for the entirety of their education? I believe strongly in the public schools, and I believe strongly that some of our segregated realities are the responsibility of the parents of white children, like myself, to change and to shift. If I want to be credible, I need to do that in practice. I don't believe that it is a compromise to choose to send my children to schools in the neighborhood where I live, that happened to be racially and economically isolated, where the children at their schools don't look like them. I believe they are better because of it. I don't believe that there is a better set of teachers. I wish that more people would feel similarly and act similarly.

How do you keep this job from being your whole entire life? I don't compartmentalize. I believe that I am one person. I had my daughters at Lucy Laney. We live in the neighborhood. I don't need any of it off because it's just part of who I am.
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