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## A SHINING STAR

THE GRASSROOTS HISTORY OF THE LUMINARY LOPPET IS PROOF THAT WHEN NEIGHBORS WORK TOGETHER, THEY CAN TURN A TOUGH TIME OF YEAR INTO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR JOY

By Elizabeth Foy Larsen



A shining star illuminates Lake of the Isles (Image: Jennifer Shea Hedberg)

Elizabeth Foy Larsen is a journalist and author of “111 Places in the Twin Cities That You Should Not Miss.” She lives in Cedar-Isles-Dean.

Bill Dossett will never forget the moment he realized that the Luminary Loppet was not just any old event.

The year was 2006 and Dossett, who was working as a lawyer in downtown Minneapolis, had recently gotten into cross-country skiing. He’d spent the past few winters volunteering as an events coordinator for the City of Lakes Loppet Winter Festival, which at the time took place on Lake of the Isles.

A Kenwood resident named Peggy Galvin was spearheading a plan to cap off the races with a nighttime ski event, lit entirely by ice luminaries. Dossett had agreed to help and was tasked with setting up hot cocoa stands and hay bales along the course.

After he finished helping at the ski races, which ended on the mall leading to Hennepin Avenue, Dossett put on his skis and headed to the channel that connects Bde Maka Ska to Lake of the Isles.

As he got closer, he saw three giant bonfires lighting up the snow-covered lake, each perfectly framed by the bridges arching over the canal. It was so primal and magical and unex-

pectedly dramatic that the memory of it still makes Dossett tear up.

“It was incredible,” he remembers. “I had no idea it was going to be something that spectacular.”

Neither, apparently, did the organizers of the official Loppet events, who were equally enchanted with the nighttime celebration.

The truth was that no one anticipated the impact a grassroots group of enterprising neighbors would have on a time of year that can be emotionally challenging for many Minneapolitans.

Here was something entirely improvisational and organic, a literal spark of light that dazzled anyone who experienced it.

### The Spark

Peggy Galvin first heard of a winter candlelit event from a fellow Loppet volunteer, who told her about Book Across the Bay, a 10-kilometer ski and snowshoe event on Lake Superior.

A loosely organized plan was hatched to get a few volunteers to make luminaries and place them on Lake of the Isles after the Loppet events were finished. Galvin, who at the time was home raising her kids, coordinated the volunteers.

There was just one hitch: No one knew how to make luminaries at the scale that was needed to line the lake. Galvin asked her husband, Hal, an engineer and hobbyist and self-described lover of “wacky stuff,” if he

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## CITY DECISIONS FORCE CHANGE: UPTOWN ART FAIR DEPARTS AFTER 60 YEARS

By Craig Wilson, Editor



**The Uptown Art Fair, a fixture in the community for six decades, has announced its departure from Uptown citing lack of support from the City of Minneapolis, rising costs and changes to Hennepin Avenue's streetscape. Here's the scoop from its leader.**

Craig Wilson is the editor of the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill.

In an interview with the Hill & Lake Press, Uptown Art Fair Executive Director Jill Osiecki Gleich expressed sadness and deflation after years of struggling to sustain the Uptown Art Fair in Uptown.

"This was an extremely difficult decision. Our organization explored numerous scenarios to keep the event in Uptown, but the event has struggled to turn a profit for the past five years, while operating costs have risen by over 150%. Due to COVID-19, civil unrest and construction, we've only been able to hold the event in Uptown twice in the last five years.

"Moving the event to Bachman's allows it to remain a major fundraiser for the Uptown community, with proceeds going back into the community through programming

and events. Unfortunately, there is no viable location in Uptown to host the event while maintaining break-even or profitability."

### Lack of city support was key to the fair's departure.

On rising costs and decreasing revenue, Gleich explained, "Operating costs include \$100,000 for security, \$40,000 for permitting, \$50,000 for street cleaning, garbage removal and restrooms, and \$25,000 for barricades totaling over \$215,000 in services payable to the City of Minneapolis.

"During the 2023 event, there were severe issues with drug use, including individuals openly smoking crack and harassing artist booths near the bus hub. MPD officers hired for the event provided no assistance in addressing the issue."

### An Impossible New Streetscape

Regarding the new streetscape

designed by the City of Minneapolis and its consultants, Gleich said, "Other than the multiple times we expressed concerns about the street design's impact on the event in writing and during meetings both in person and virtually since 2018, the city did not address our concerns. For the past five years, we have asked for assistance from city officials with this event, but none has been provided, and the new streetscape is unworkable for us.

"The redesign from 31st Street, along with the new layout, prevents booths from being set up on both sides of the street. It is not ADA-compliant and includes medians, extended sidewalks and a bike lane, which leave insufficient room for an emergency lane. Losing the ability to have booths on both sides reduces event revenue and spreads the fair out onto additional streets, fur-

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# Hill & Lake Press

Founded in 1976, Hill & Lake Press reports community news and events, educating and informing our neighborhood community members about issues of the day. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Hill & Lake Press.

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*Our goal is to offer readers diverse perspectives on newsworthy events or issues of broad public concern to the Hill & Lake community. Our copy limit is 300 words (750 words for a commentary) and we reserve the right to edit for clarity and length.*

**Guse Hardware is open and there are parking meters on Bde Maka Ska.**

Guse Hardware IS NOT CLOSED and never has been.  
You CAN and have ALWAYS been able to make turns onto 46th Street from Bryant Avenue. I can walk to Guse Hardware from my house and go there often.  
Where did Susan Lenfestey get this information? Certainly not from Tom, the owner, and she should print a retraction. (Editor's note: see page 3)  
Furthermore, I HAVE SEEN parking meters on Bde Maka Parkway in front of Minikahda Club.

Cathy Fuller  
King Field

**Keep But Simplify LOI Ice Skating**

Outdoor winter skating in a city like Minneapolis is a much-loved seasonal amenity provided by the MPRB.  
But as pointed out in the recent article in the Hill and Lakes Press, due to warming the skating season is

growing shorter by the year, and this sadly will continue given current lack of progress on altering the trajectory of climate change.

Given this trend, budget constraints and the fact that the actual number of people who skate, much less play hockey on the rinks is very small compared to those who use many of the park and recreation facilities year-round, it does seem that more than \$750,000 spent on this each year should be reconsidered.

Those funds could be put to use to benefit the much larger number of year-round park users since there are significant ongoing and unmet maintenance needs in many places.

I'm only familiar with the facilities at Isles but it would seem likely that a significant percentage of that annual \$100,000+ is related to installing and removing the warming house and hockey rink each year, the cost of gas to heat the warming house and the electricity to supply the lighting.

But it would be sad to lose the ability to skate in the open air in such a lovely setting entirely. So here is a compromise: Since most use is daytime and doesn't involve the hockey rink and doesn't require a warming house (though it is nice!), why not simply provide for grooming a large area of ice, including some of the proposed extension trails to the islands in the Master Plan, but do without the warming house, the hockey rink, and the nighttime lighting?

One could station a Zamboni there, or just have a couple or so available for this and other parks with use as needed if this idea makes any sense for them as well.

Such a compromise would allow a significant percentage of this amenity to be maintained, but at the same time would likely save a significant percentage of the cost. Certainly this

could be considered if the alternative is "all or nothing."

Steve Goldsmith  
Kenwood

**Wow**

Upon reading the January issue — wow. You have so many wonderful contributors, both in articles and letters to the editor.

Jim Graves, Susan Lenfestey, Carol Becker, the two District Commissioners and Sgt. Parten all stood out. And then there's the great article about Involve MN.

The Hill & Lake Press does a fantastic job of highlighting important issues while also showing that leaders are aware of them and actively working on solutions.

As this election year unfolds for Minneapolis, I can only imagine how interesting things will get!

Wendy Richardson  
Brooklyn Park

**Facing Addiction Together**

I appreciated the piece about addiction and recovery by Courtney Cushing Kiernat and Lynne Redleaf in the January issue of the Hill & Lake Press. People struggling with addiction are all around us — some more obvious than others — and it can take a toll on not just them but everyone around them and our whole community. I'm thankful that Minnesota is particularly good at handling these issues, and I hope we continue to make progress on this extremely important quality-of-life issue that touches us all.

Thomas Regnier  
Lowry Hill

## UPTOWN FARMERS' MARKET COMING SUMMER 2025

By Dan Sutton and Jonathan Beck

*Dan Sutton and Jonathan Beck are advocating for a refresh of the East Isles Farmers' Market this summer. They live in East Isles.*

In 2018, the East Isles Neighborhood Association launched the East Isles Farmers Market on the Uptown Mall Park, just west of Hennepin Avenue.

The East Isles market ran continuously through 2022 — including through the Covid pandemic.

Uptown road construction and Mall reconstruction planned for Summer 2024 (but now slated for Summer 2025) created an opportunity to pause and reimagine the market in a way that would serve

all of Uptown, as well as drive traffic to Uptown businesses.

A small, informal working group dubbed the Uptown Farmers Market Collaborative is currently in the early stages of fundraising with the support of all eight neighborhood associations immediately surrounding Uptown — including Lowry Hill, Lowry Hill East/Wedge, South Uptown, East Bde Maka Ska, West Maka Ska, Kenwood, Cedar-Isles-Dean and East Isles, as well as the Uptown Business Association.

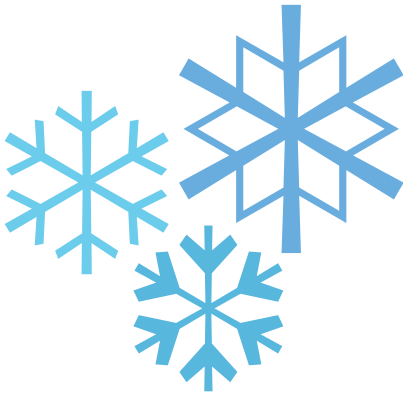
We will share developments with the Hill & Lake Press as we get closer to its fruition. Please consider making a charitable dona-

tion to support this important effort to bring fresh, healthy food and camaraderie to our local community.



**MAKE A FINCANIAL CONTRIBUTION?**

If you are interested in making a financial contribution to funding an Uptown Farmers' Market, please reach out to – [info@eastisles.org](mailto:info@eastisles.org).



A joyful time at the East Isles, Kenwood and Lowry Hill ice skating party at the Isles rink! Could it be Elsa from Frozen or the Winter Fairy Princess? Either way, everyone adored her! (Image: Elizabeth Shaffer)



LOCAL WOMAN EATS CROW

By Susan Lenfestey



Susan Lenfestey is a Hill & Lake Press founder and board member. She lives in Lowry Hill.

In the January issue of the Hill & Lake Press I wrote that Guse Hardware, at 46th and Bryant Avenue South, had closed. It hasn't, and I regret the error!

In several articles, Tom Thomson, the owner of Guse Hardware, had spoken about how the conversion of Bryant Avenue into a bicycle highway had contributed to a decline in his business:

Southwest Voices, August 31, 2023

"The Bryant Avenue redesign, which narrowed the street to add a two-way bike lane

on a curb and doesn't allow for turns onto 46th Street, eliminated one of Guse's four parking spots."

"Customers tell him that they don't drive by the shop anymore because of the street reconfiguration and they forget to come in. Furthermore, many of Tom's customers are contractors with big trucks."

Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal, October 8, 2024, headline

"Guse Hardware sells building, owner plans retirement."

I concluded, wrongly, that meant the end of the hardware store.

Helpful Feedback

Reader Cathy Fuller wrote to tell us that Guse Hardware is still very much open, and that one can still make turns from Bryant onto 46th.

Craig Wilson, editor of the Hill & Lake Press, visited Guse Hardware to apologize and to check out the new intersection. He learned that Mr. Thomson has sold the building, but he will continue to operate the hardware store, at least for now.

To make amends, the Hill & Lake Press will run an ad for Guse Hardware in this and the next two issues, gratis. As for that intersection, yes, one can turn off Bryant onto 46th. Southwest Voices had it backward and I repeated the error. However, the new intersec-

tion is hardly conducive to customer convenience! But don't let that stop you from walking, riding or even driving to this enduring gem of a neighborhood hardware store.

Eating Crow, Secondo. Parking Meters!

Reader Fuller told us that we had it wrong again – this time about parking meters.

As a member of the Hill & Lake Press investigative team (full disclosure, there isn't one) I had written that according to the staff of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, there are no meters planned for Lake of the Isles Parkway, and that contrary to rumor, none are installed on Bde Maka Ska Parkway.

Ms. Fuller pointed out that there are meters on the west side of Bde Maka Ska, just south of the Minikahda slope. I regret the error.

The bigger question remains. As parking meters continue to creep off Hennepin onto residential streets, how far will they go?



Editor Craig Wilson visited Guse Hardware and highlighted the odd and confusing intersection at 46th Street and Bryant Avenue South. The intersection features two one-way sections of Bryant Avenue South heading in opposite directions: traffic north of 46th Street flows southbound, while traffic south of 46th Street flows northbound, converging at 46th Street. Additionally, traffic cannot travel continuously north or south on Bryant Avenue at this intersection. Parking is restricted to the east side of Bryant Avenue due to a dedicated bike lane on the west side, with limited parking available on 46th Street. (Images: Craig Wilson; Map courtesy of Google Maps)



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# EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO MY OPINION: HOW I FELL IN LOVE WITH MINNEAPOLIS

By Susan Lenfestey



Susan Lenfestey in 1972, holding baby Max and rethinking the decision to leave Lowry Hill for a farm in Massachusetts! (Image: Jim Lenfestey)

*Susan Lenfestey is a Hill & Lake Press founder and board member. She lives in Lowry Hill.*

In 1972, while living with two small children in a VW van in the canyons of the Southwest, we conceived child number three. Our plan had been to join an intentional community/farm/school in the hills of western Massachusetts, raising our food and our children communally.

Jim would teach English, I would teach weaving and dance and motherhood. Because of a fire in the converted barn we were to call home, our arrival there was delayed, thus the venture in the van. But we had to go somewhere to give birth. Due to a pioneering doctor who allowed fathers in the delivery room, radical at the time, that somewhere was Minneapolis.

We knew very little about the city, but by luck we found an apartment at 1922 Fremont, near Franklin Avenue, which was then paved with red bricks. There was a tiny grocery store in the lower level of the Melbourne apartment building across the street, owned by an older couple who lived in a flat behind the store. We occasionally sent our 5-year-old son across the street with a list of last-minute needs. They'd fill the order, then make sure he crossed back

safely. Delivery, pre-Amazon. Between the bricks and that store, I was smitten.

In the next three months we discovered Burch Pharmacy, complete with a soda fountain, a post office on the opposite corner, the Walker Art Center and Guthrie Theater right down one hill, and Lake of the Isles down an-

**“...we discovered Burch Pharmacy, complete with a soda fountain, a post office on the opposite corner, the Walker Art Center and Guthrie Theater right down one hill, and Lake of the Isles down another. The love deepened. As did the realization that I was a city girl at heart.”**

other. The love deepened. As did the realization that I was a city girl at heart.

But we had made a commitment to our friends in Massachusetts, so in June, shortly after baby Max was born, we headed east. The goats were predictably unmanageable, the students mostly sullen, the winters grey and soggy, and I was miserable. With three kids under five, I needed sidewalks, the neurons of neighborhood.

We moved back to Minneapolis in the fall of 1974, and luck struck again when we were able to buy a house on Girard for less than what people now pay for a car. We joined our neighbors in working to protect trees and preserve history, to convert oversized mansions into multiple family housing, to keep commuter traffic on Hennepin so we could bike safely on residential streets.

Our children walked to a newly desegregated Kenwood school, rode bikes to friends' houses and soccer practice, and when older, to Uptown. The unintentional community of city living suited me far more than the intentional community we'd dreamed of.

**But nothing gold can stay.**

The little grocery store and the Franklin Avenue bricks are long gone. Burch Pharmacy could not compete with the chains, and the Guthrie moved to the river — wisely as it turns out.

Recently we've seen the heartbreaking demise of Uptown and controversial changes to Hennepin Avenue that have caused businesses to fail or struggle to survive. We're beset with a public safety crisis, and a far-left majority on the City Council that seems more interested in their own oratory than doing the job of running a city, including funding the Minneapolis Police Department and working collectively with Chief O'Hara on recruitment and reform.

I love my country like one loves a losing football team, and I'm sickened at the team now in power. But with Minneapolis, it's personal. We have a rich past.

As with any love affair, the glow wears off, but with patience and effort, a mature patina replaces it.

Every day I see people in this community exerting that effort, whether collecting trash from the lakes, restoring native habitat around them, or building ice magic on them. Because of them, after 50 years in Minneapolis, the love endures.



## WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY?

Below in no special order are just a few immediate delights, old and new, that will help keep the love alive until my horizontal rendezvous with destiny.

**Lake of the Isles.** Its half-moon bridges that frame the channels like portals into another time. The Currier and Ives ice skating rink, now endangered by our warming planet, and home to the Luminary Loppet, the most magical night of the winter.

**Kenwood School.** An anchor of the neighborhood, and alma mater of our children. And the adjoining Rec Center, which our youngest grandchildren recently announced was a reason they should move here from Santa Cruz.

**Birchbark Books.** Louise Erdrich's resilient independent bookstore, keeping us well read, and the other small businesses on that corner.

**Sebastian Joe's.** Serving ice cream and more for decades, and as generous a civic neighbor as anyone could hope for.

**Seven Pools Park.** A gem of cascading pools, a crumbling Depression-era WPA project almost lost, but restored by the vision, energy and generosity of good neighbors.

**Cedar Lake.** The vibe of the different beaches, and the buck-thorn removal crews around it.

**Caucuses.** I still love them for the camaraderie, but they are a lousy way to determine who goes on the ballot later in the electoral process. They should go the way of the Franklin Avenue bricks. In the meantime, make plans to attend yours on April 8, if you want a say on the future direction of our city.

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## THE MYTH OF PLACEMAKING: A LESSON FOR MINNEAPOLIS

Opinion by David Feehan



This rendering from the Downtown Council's Vision 2035 Plan employs a common but misleading placemaking technique to market visions through emotional appeal. It depicts an artificially vibrant streetscape with unrealistic flower gardens along public sidewalks, off-leash dogs, a biking density reminiscent of Amsterdam and a variety of people enjoying a perfect afternoon. However, such a scene is unlikely to materialize without addressing key realities, such as convenient parking, ample clean restrooms and enhanced safety. (Image: Minneapolis Downtown Council)

*David Feehan is an expert in urban revitalization and public-private partnerships with over 50 years of experience leading downtown organizations, teaching, founding community development centers and authoring books and articles. This commentary was originally published in the Minneapolis Times.*

It's virtually impossible to study urban planning these days without taking courses on placemaking. And the founder of the placemaking movement is a name most of us in the community revitalization business would recognize: Fred Kent.

Fred Kent is a friend of mine, and Fred, despite his curmudgeonly personality, has had a major impact on cities around the globe, or as one brochure puts it, from "Bologna to Buffalo." In fact, for those unacquainted with the world of placemaking, here is a brief (well maybe, not so brief) explanation of Fred Kent's impact:

According to Project for Public Spaces: "Today, Fred is applying his community organizing skills to lead a global placemaking movement that is connecting and supporting public space innovators, advocates, and professionals across the globe. The movement has been fueled by a consistent flow of 'transformative agendas' from Fred, which Project for Public Spaces has turned into direct support for communities looking for change. Informing, and grounding, these ideas, Fred has facilitated thousands of community-based projects that have demonstrated a new paradigm for shaping public spaces, including leading ongoing transformations of high profile places from Houston to Harvard Yard, Perth Cultural Centre to Downtown Detroit. Fred has made his passion for placemaking contagious with hundreds of keynotes, ranging from half a million at Earth Day 1990, to a room full of leaders at the World Bank. Perhaps his biggest impact is building the capacity of hundreds of local placemaking organizations, and city-wide placemaking campaigns, and from Cape Town to Kuala Lumpur, San Diego to Mississauga."

However, many if not most cities and downtowns are struggling these days, and the problem is that most have become quite attractive places — but they have emptied out, as people work from home, companies downsize and businesses flee central city business districts for suburban locations or simply close their doors.

So, as helpful as placemaking has been in creating attractive urban spaces, it may not be the answer to solving the dilemma that cities now face — empty office buildings, vacant retail spaces and a feeling that once vibrant downtowns have become ghost towns.

### How does retail thrive? Design for women.

In the terminology of academic research, placemaking is "necessary but not sufficient." A few years ago, I co-authored a book entitled "Design Downtown for Women — Men Will Follow." Our research showed that women are the most important demographic group for a city to succeed. Women make or influence

**"...women are the most important demographic group for a city to succeed. Women make or influence over 80% of retail, dining, residential and healthcare decisions. ... But what do women consider the most hated thing about coming downtown? Parking, especially parking garages, which one woman in our survey described as 'dull, dirty, dark and dangerous.'"**

over 80% of retail, dining, residential and healthcare decisions. Placemaking (or at least, place maintenance) is very important in attracting and keeping women as customers, visitors, business owners and residents.

But what do women consider the most hated thing about coming downtown? Parking, especially parking garages, which one woman in our survey described as "dull, dirty, dark and dangerous." Second on the list of major dislikes was the absence of clean safe public restrooms. Planners should be paying attention to these gripes before adding planters and decorative lighting.

Rick Reinhard, a veteran of downtown revitalization, quotes another veteran who helped author a book called "Centralized Retail Management." Our friend Jim Cloar says

that the problem is not "placemaking" but is "place management."

Years ago, when the International Downtown Association was trying to help its members compete with the growing shopping mall phenomenon, we asked, "what did mall developers know and do that we in the downtown world were not doing?" The answer was relatively straightforward: There was one owner, and that owner was responsible for managing the center. That meant efficient, high-quality maintenance, coordinated marketing (every tenant paid a fee) and a tenancing practice and policy that supported "companion retailing" — in other words, recruiting and placing tenants strategically.

The problem every downtown has that makes it different from the malls is multiple ownership of properties. And the way many downtowns have addressed this is a mechanism called Business Improvement Districts, or BIDs. These BID organizations try to replicate the effectiveness and efficiency of malls by providing centralized management, marketing and maintenance.

And while BIDs have generally done an acceptable job of public space maintenance and placemaking, where they seem to be lacking is overall management and marketing.

Multiple owners of properties make coordinated management a difficult task. BIDs usually need to craft a "cooperation agreement" in which property owners agree to turn over some business recruiting responsibilities to the BID; need to offer concessions and incentives, such as reduced or free rent or tenant improvements; and need to agree to engage a topflight marketing firm to develop a unified brand and programs such as hospitality training for employees.

This requires a new paradigm, a way of seeing downtown as an entity, and the city as being a place where sufficient resources — talent, financing, training — exist. This means abandoning the typical Chamber of Commerce "Drop an ad in Site Selection magazine" approach to business recruiting. It means "growing your own" as Dr. Bob Meeder in Pittsburgh has done for years, and Dan Gilbert in downtown Detroit has been doing recently.

Many years ago, when I was active in managing downtown parking, we used to say, "People don't come downtown because it is a great place to park." We are discovering that people don't come downtown (or locate their business in downtown) because it has nice sidewalks, pretty flowers or decorative lighting. And they certainly don't come downtown because it has bike lanes or bus lanes.

Customers will come downtown for a great restaurant, a destination retail or a well-managed office building at a reasonable price with responsive management. People will choose to live downtown if there are other people around, places to go and things to do. Placemaking is part of the mix, but it clearly is not the answer to restoring the economic health to our downtowns. This will take, to use a football phrase, the "hard blocking and tackling" that overall "place management" implies. And this means the existence of a downtown management organization that understands how businesses work.



INVESTIGATION OF JEWISH TEMPLE  
DEFACEMENT CONTINUES

By Terry White



The suspect spent less than two minutes at the scene before leaving, and drove this Honda Civic. If you have any information about this crime, please contact Sgt. Garrett Parten at (612) 673-5800 or email [PolicePIO@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:PolicePIO@minneapolismn.gov). (Images: MPD)

*Terry White is a regular contributor to the Hill & Lake Press. He publishes the Better Minneapolis newsletter and lives in Field.*

Readers hoping for an arrest in the defacement case of Temple Israel, located at 2323 Fremont Ave. S., will have to wait. The morning of January 15, we spoke with Sgt. Garrett Parten, public information officer for the Minneapolis Police Department.

Sgt. Parten said that the case is one of several high-profile investigations, including homicides. Because it is an active investigation, he could not provide details

on whether police had received any tips or identified a person of interest.

The Hill & Lake Press will continue to follow this incident. The case stems from an unidentified individual spray-painting a swastika on the temple early in the morning on Dec. 16, 2024. Surveillance footage shows a suspect arriving at approximately 7:19 a.m. in a silver Honda Civic.

If you have any information about the incident, please contact Sgt. Garrett Parten at (612) 673-5800 or [PolicePIO@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:PolicePIO@minneapolismn.gov). Refer to incident number GO# 24-356137

BUS FIRE ERUPTS IN LOWRY HILL



A non-arson fire occurred at 9 a.m. on Thursday, January 23, in front of the Masonic Temple on W. Franklin Avenue near the corner of Dupont Avenue South. The fire, witnessed by Steve Kotvis on his way to Kenwood Barbershop, was reportedly caused by a mechanical issue with the vehicle. Fortunately, no one was injured. (Image: Steve Kotvist)

**ANY INFORMATION:**

The case number for this incident is GO# 24-356137. No arrests have been made at this time.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact:  
Sgt. Garrett Parten  
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# THE UPTOWN VACANCY TOUR WITH MAYOR JACOB FREY

By Terry White



A ubiquitous storefront in Uptown, captured during the tour. (Image: Terry White)

Terry White is a regular contributor to the Hill & Lake Press. He publishes the Better Minneapolis newsletter and lives in Field.

### Highlighting obstacles for Uptown’s revitalization.

Small Business Saturday was on November 30, 2024. It included a frigid tour of the Uptown area for Mayor Frey.

The event was organized by Andrea Corbin, owner of Flower Bar on Lyndale Avenue and founder of the Minneapolis Business Alliance, a nonprofit dedicated to revitalizing the city and educating voters on issues affecting residents.

The tour aimed to provide the mayor with an on-the-ground perspective of the hurdles residents and businesses are facing as they work to halt Uptown's ongoing decline.

Currently, 26 buildings sit vacant in the two-block radius around Lake Street and Hennepin Avenue — an in-

tersection that, 15 years ago, was said to be the busiest in the state. Even if that was an exaggeration in 2009, it is certainly far from true today.

The tour highlighted that Uptown needs help from city government because residents and small businesses are still trying to rebound from the pandemic, George Floyd uprising and subsequent property destruction, shootings, homeless encampments, arson and years of construction.

At the event, Mayor Frey entered a semi-hostile environment to listen to concerns — a gesture many attendees felt was more than what Uptown representatives Ward 7 Council Member Katie Cashman and Ward 10 Council Member Aisha Chughtai have been willing to do.

### Uptown needs the same attention paid to downtown.

During the tour, attendees reminisced about how vibrant and fun Uptown used to be.

They expressed a strong desire to bring that energy back and suggested they may withhold support from mayoral and city council candidates who do not prioritize Uptown's revitalization.

In October, the latest version of a Downtown Action Plan was released, and attendees expressed hope that it succeeds.

It was mentioned that the City Council has allocated \$750,000 for Public Works to support Warehouse District Live — an enhanced pedestrian zone featuring food trucks, tables and seating, restrooms and various activities.

Additionally, \$400,000 was approved for the "Chameleon" shop program, which has the loosely defined goal of "growing the downtown retail ecosystem by connecting the community, identifying current opportunities and supporting innovation and vibrancy in various ways."

**“At the event, Mayor Frey entered a semi-hostile environment to listen to concerns — a gesture many attendees felt was more than what uptown representatives Ward 7 Council Member Katie Cashman and Ward 10 Council Member Aisha Chughtai have been willing to do.”**

Another \$250,000 has been earmarked for the Arts and Cultural Affairs department to subsidize rental costs for artists occupying vacant storefronts.

The intention behind these initiatives is intended to transform downtown into a space where people want to work, live and play — 24/7, 365 days a year.

The hope is that by combining tax incentives to attract developers, grants to support small businesses and a stronger focus on safety and cleanliness, people will come back.

Attendees advocated that while resources and attention are being directed toward downtown, Uptown is in desperate need of its own dedicated action plan. For meaningful revitalization to occur, Uptown requires the same level of attention being given to downtown.

They argued that an Uptown-focused action plan must prioritize restoring parking to make businesses more accessible, improve safety and provide amenities like clean restrooms. It also requires city leaders who actively engage with residents and business owners, and it depends on ensuring people feel safe walking to their cars at 1 a.m. after a night out.

Ironically, the city was to charge the Uptown Art Fair \$215,000 for city services, such as security, one of the factors that has led the historic event to depart Uptown for a private south Minneapolis parking lot where they will rebrand as the SoMi (South ‘Minneapolis) Art Fair in 2025.

The festival also cited an unworkable streetscape due to a new median and narrower street that make the space unworkable for the festival.

### Recognizing blight: 26 vacancies in a two-block area.

The group warned that 26 vacancies in a two-block area is a clear sign of blight, and that Uptown is on the brink of collapse.

The fear is that if action isn’t taken, the neighborhood risks being overtaken by head shops and national chain fast-food outlets — not the diverse, small scale and locally owned businesses and restaurants that are desired by local residents.

The belief is that the people who once visited Uptown to shop or dine will find new destinations with ample parking and perceived safety — like suburban locations — and they won’t be coming back.

If this scenario sounds overly bleak, the group encourages people to walk the streets around Uptown.

The reality is hard to ignore: vacancy after vacancy, deserted sidewalks, empty bike lanes, vacant buses, lonely transit stations and trash and graffiti littering doorways.

Attendees found it heartening to see the mayor take the risk of criticism by showing up to witness this firsthand. But the warning signs are everywhere: It’s literally the graffiti on the wall.



## REASONABLE ACTION:

Businesses in Uptown have suggested a few reasonable actions for the mayor to consider:

1. Avoid using the new Hennepin Avenue streetscape as a model for Lyndale Avenue. Attracting customers to the area is already a challenge, and making it harder to access or park could result in the same struggles seen at Hennepin Avenue and Lake Street.
2. Hold regular meetings with residents and business owners. These meetings would address challenges and work toward creating a plan to make Uptown vibrant and exciting again — a destination people want to visit.
3. Appoint a dedicated city liaison for Uptown. This representative would serve as a direct point of contact for businesses, ensuring issues like trash accumulation in new flower planters are addressed promptly.



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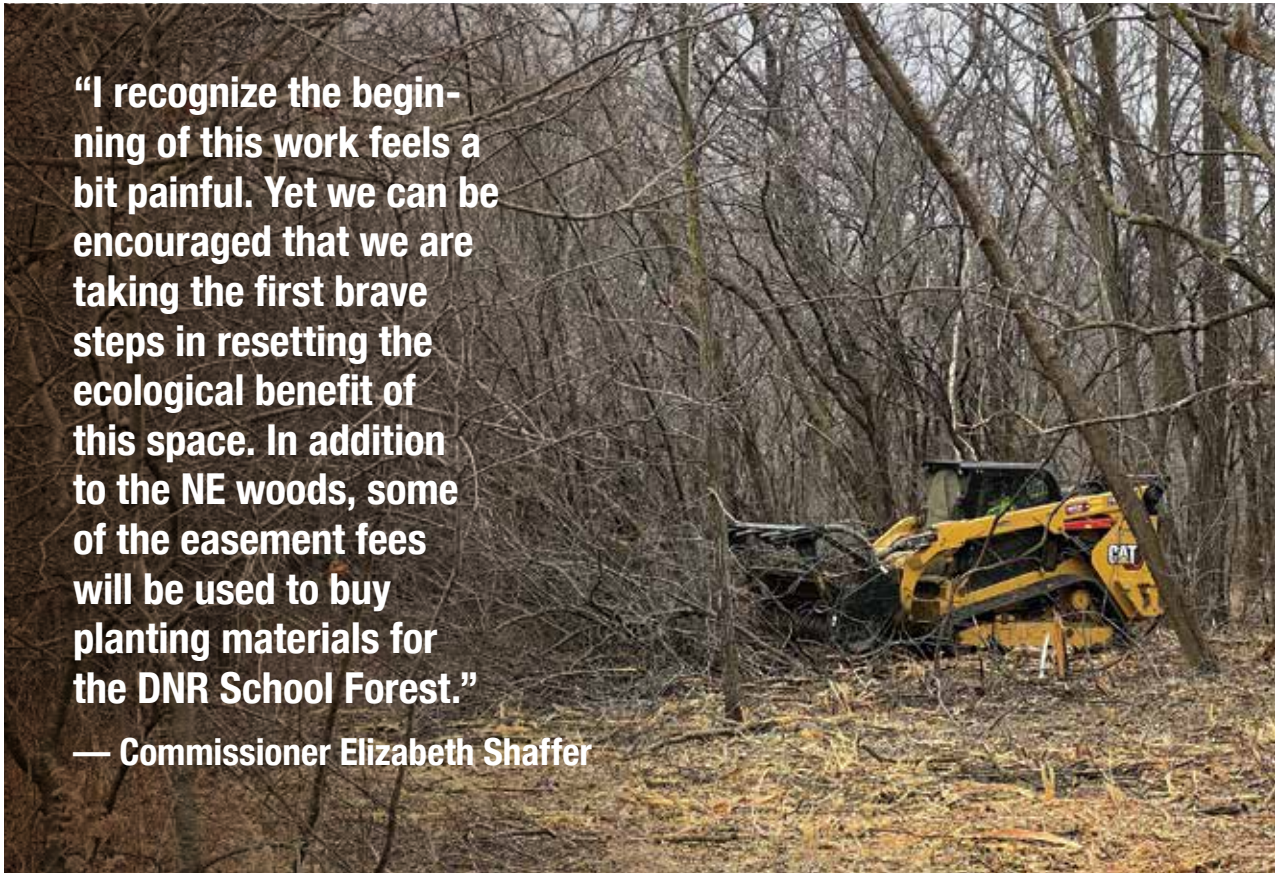
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ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION UNDERWAY IN CEDAR LAKE'S WOODLANDS

By Steve Kotvis



“I recognize the beginning of this work feels a bit painful. Yet we can be encouraged that we are taking the first brave steps in resetting the ecological benefit of this space. In addition to the NE woods, some of the easement fees will be used to buy planting materials for the DNR School Forest.”

— Commissioner Elizabeth Shaffer

Heavy equipment at work supporting ecological restoration efforts in Cedar Lake Regional Park. (Image: Steve Kotvis)

Steve Kotvis is an occasional contributor to the Hill & Lake Press covering issues related to parks and ecology. He lives in Bryn Mawr.

A crucial restoration project is currently in progress in the northeastern woodland area of Cedar Lake. The three-year project is underway thanks to \$93,372 in easement fees generated from the Southwest Light Rail closure of Cedar Lake Parkway by Burnham Road. Park board commissioner Elizabeth Shaffer was instrumental in ensuring that local organizations which have historically cared for the impacted area, particularly the Cedar Lake Park Association, had a voice in the allocation of these funds and the overall direction of the project.

Park board easement funds are typically scant and, when collected, usually go into the Planning Department’s general fund. In January 2022, Shaffer proposed an amendment to get these easement fees contracted to be used to address the community’s priorities, but the park board voted it down. Her amendment eventually passed in June, and fees were added to the contract rather than the general fund. Shaffer explained, “This is when my amendment to direct the fees to a natural resource project around Cedar Lake was supported...acknowledging the impact SWLRT has caused on one of the most natural public

corridors in our city and including the volunteers and community in how the funds would be spent.”

**“This project is so meaningful for today and into the future, but also has historical context. A nature park at Cedar Lake has been the dream of hundreds of people since the rail yards closed in 1986.”**

— Keith Prussing, Cedar Lake Park Association

The resulting restoration contract was awarded to Prairie Restorations, a local environmental firm with a proven record with such projects. The firm was selected in part because its scope of services and pricing allowed for follow up beyond the first stage of eradication. The project aims to rehabilitate and enhance the ecological health of this largely decayed 18-acre natural area. Restoration will better connect the area to other adjacent park improvements including the Ce-

dar Lake Regional Trail Prairie to the north and East Beach, School Forest and Burnham Woods to the south. Significantly, the woodlands will now receive increased institutional recognition and accountability because the MPRB Natural Resources department considers it a “managed” natural area.

The contract includes three objectives, the first being “initial invasive species removal,” specifically targeting removal of mature buckthorn and roundleaf bittersweet. The project is scheduled to run through the second quarter of 2027, but the immediate impact has been jarring to many who frequent these woods. Forest mowers have been plowing and shredding invasives at a rapid pace, removing almost anything under 10-15 feet, and leaving torn stumps roughly six inches above the ground.

Regular walkers will discover a profoundly changed woodland. But, particularly for those who have long recognized how utterly choked the area was with invasives, there is a new sense of possibility, freeing the native trees from the grip of these invasives. While it may be hard for some to move past the stumps and woodchips, a new sense of place is forming, with lines and shapes and spaces never before experienced by people alive today. Finally, for those who are having trouble getting past the wood chips and stumps, park board forestry staff report that the chips biodegrade more quickly than larger cuttings, and shredded stumps are less prone to resprouting than clean cut ones.

The contract’s second objective, “follow up control of resprouts and seedlings,” is scheduled for 2025 to 2027. This will include spot spraying of herbicides (Garlon mixes) to any surviving invasives. The third and final objective is the reestablishment of native plant communities, including various woodland and prairie mixes. Recent research from the University of Minnesota encourages the use of grasses, and the project management team is looking at the purchase of Canada wild rye and silky wild rye.

This project represents a significant public investment in a long overlooked and badly deteriorated natural area. It also demonstrates a commitment to engaging the local community, and to prioritizing the basic needs of our natural areas over the development of facilities, features and amenities. Overall, this project recognizes the value of natural parklands as the foundation of our park system, and there is every reason to be hopeful that in 10 to 20 years this area will be viewed as a model of successful restoration.

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# 'DANDELION' FOUNTAIN IN LORING PARK TO BEGIN RENOVATION

By Josie Owens



Future plans for the Berger Fountain, commonly known as the 'dandelion.' (Images: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board)

Josie Owens is a regular contributor to the Hill & Lake Press. She lives in Lowry Hill.

The Berger Fountain, more familiarly called the Dandelion Fountain, has been an iconic part of Loring Park since 1975 when Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Berger donated it to the City of Minneapolis.

Sadly, the fountain that has drawn people with its unique design and beauty for decades has fallen into disrepair.

Fortunately, local community organizations, specifically the Friends of Loring Park and Citizens for Loring Park Community, have rallied to create an updated design and raise the necessary funds to restore the fountain via the Berger Fountain Task Force.

**History of the Berger Fountain**

Ben Berger, the president of the then Minneapolis Lakers (now Los Angeles Lakers), owner of several movie theaters and a park board commissioner, traveled to Australia in the 1970s.

While there, he was taken with the El Alamein Memorial Fountain designed by Robert Woodward as a

WWII memorial to the Australian 9th Division, who prevailed against the Axis powers in Egypt.

The fountain has a unique design with 211 stalks extending off the main globe. This, coupled with 550 gallons of water per minute pumped through the stalk tubes, creates a dandelion effect with mesmerizingly beautiful cascading water.

Berger returned to Minneapolis determined to bring such beautiful artwork to his city, but ran into a few obstacles.

First was the age-old issue of expense. Berger was shocked to learn what the cost would be to commission a similar fountain. However, the financial answer arrived in 1973 thanks to “The Exorcist.”

**The Exorcist.**

No other movie theater chain booked the famous horror film, and Berger ended up with a film that became the highest grossing horror film of all time. Berger joked that the popcorn sales alone covered the price of the fountain.

Berger originally thought that the fountain would be housed at the

Walker Art Center in its new sculpture garden. However, the Walker declined as the fountain would be a copy and not an original artwork.

He looked across the street and found a home at Loring Park.

Robert Woodward’s fountain head was assembled in Australia and shipped to Minneapolis.

The architectural firm of Liebenberg, Smiley, Glotter Associates designed the base in cooperation with the artist. General contractors Adolphson and Peterson assembled the fountain and built its basin.

The fountain instantly became a popular destination to gather at all times of day, attracting people from around the city, region and country.

Of course, the fountain requires continual upkeep. The community has come forward on numerous occasions to support the fountain when it needed it.

When the motor went out, the community raised \$60,000 in ten days for its repair. In time the quick fixes were unable to keep the fountain functioning.

Mary Bujold, the chair of the Berger Fountain Task Force, said, “We came to the realization that the fountain needed an overhaul and a

full restoration after the park board shut it down in 2018.”

**Community Collaboration**

Friends of Loring Park and Citizens for a Loring Park Community advocated for the fountain to become a part of the park board’s master plan for downtown parks, eventually leading to approval for the restoration project.

In 2021 the Berger Fountain Task Force contracted landscape architectural firm Damon-Farber to do a pre-design study to rehabilitate the fountain.

Focus groups, surveys, pop-up park exhibits, information booths and neighborhood meetings provided critical community input, with improved lighting at the top of the public’s wish list.

A final design for the project debuted in August 2023 at National Night Out in Loring Park. The design features the fountain remaining in its original location with its original size and cascading pools. However, there will be a new triangular plaza around the fountain with additional seating, enhanced gathering spaces and decorative flower planters to separate the plaza from the street.

**Fundraising is nearly complete but needs your help in closing the gap.**

The issue that initially faced Bob Berger in 1973 has resurfaced — a fountain is expensive! Currently the restoration budget is \$1.2 million. Fortunately, the hard work of the task force has paid off, and the project is nearing its fundraising goal.

“We project \$600,000 from private donations to match another \$500,000 from park dedication fees, grants and hopefully park board maintenance dollars” reported Bujold, the head of the task force.

“Many donations have already come in, including a large one from California, showing again the national draw of the Dandelion Fountain. The restoration should be beginning soon!”

Please consider supporting this effort with a tax-deductible charitable donation to restoring this magnificent fountain. To donate, please visit <https://loringpark.org/berger-fountain>

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CITY DECISIONS FORCE CHANGE:  
UPTOWN ART FAIR DEPARTS AFTER 60 YEARS, Front page

ther increasing costs."

Regarding Uptown's retail and safety decline, Gleich claimed that increased crime was not a contributing factor, "However, it is deeply disheartening to make this decision as it may add to the negative perception of Uptown."

When asked about consulting area neighborhoods for their opinion on the fair's relocation, Gleich responded, "Our volunteer board members includes several representatives who live in the area neighborhoods."

On the fair's origins, Gleich clarified, "My understanding is that a small group of business owners came together in 1963 with an idea of having area artists showcase their wares as a way to draw people to the area and into their businesses. Perhaps there was involvement 60 years ago, but the neighborhoods have not been actively involved for many years. Volunteerism has been declining significantly; for instance, neighborhood-sponsored beverage booths, which helped generate in-

come, have not occurred in nearly a decade despite our yearly requests."

**Onward to SoMi**

Starting in 2025, the event will be rebranded as the SoMi (South Minneapolis) Art Fair and held in partnership with Bachman's flagship location on Lyndale Avenue. The new event will feature over 300 juried artists, art demonstrations, live music and food.

Gleich clarified, "Bachman's is an exceptional organization and a true partner. They are allowing us to use their space at no cost, but no financial incentives were offered."

She emphasized the fair's mission: "The vision of the Uptown Art Fair is to bring art to the community while providing a platform for both professional and amateur artists from across the country to showcase and sell their work. As the Uptown Association's primary fundraising event, it serves as an economic engine for the community, generating revenue to fund Uptown projects like community clean-ups,

marketing initiatives, educational seminars, donations to local causes and other community-building activities. Dependent on funding and support of the city, the association has planned additional events in Uptown that aim to bring patrons to the area."

**Community Reaction**

The Hill & Lake Press has been contacted by numerous community members expressing a general sense of sadness around the announcement of the fair's departure. Following the exodus of businesses, increased crime and the challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness and addiction, many are left wondering when Uptown will hit rock bottom and when things will begin to improve. The loss of the Uptown Art Fair after 60 years of relative success is a huge blow.

Mike Erlandson, President of the East Isles Neighborhood Association, commented, "This decision is a tough pill to swallow for those of us who have watched the Uptown

Art Fair thrive for decades. The Uptown Association isn't what it used to be. Rising costs and declining business presence have made it difficult for them to pull off an event of this scale without Bachman's support."

**City Reaction**

City of Minneapolis Ward 7 Council Member Katie Cashman responded, "It's sad to see the Uptown Art Fair permanently relocate to Bachman's Floral but Uptown is resilient and has many exciting initiatives on the horizon. We have been working in partnership with community members to generate funding for a weekly market in the Uptown core. The focus will be on attracting customers and exposure for existing businesses and we are determined to see that come to fruition this summer."



For 60 years, the Uptown Art Fair thrived at Hennepin Avenue and Lake Street in the heart of Uptown. This photo captures happier days when retail flourished, and Uptown stood as a regional retail magnet. (Images: Uptown Art Fair)



LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS HOST PUBLIC SAFETY MEETING

By Marty Carlson



MPD panelists addressed a packed audience at Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church. (Image: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board)

Marty Carlson is a regular contributor to the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Kenwood.

On Thursday, Jan. 23, four local neighborhood associations — representing the Lowry Hill, East Isles, Kenwood and Cedar-Isles-Dean neighborhoods — hosted a public safety information meeting at Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church.

Approximately 160 people attended the event in person, while more than 70 others joined via livestream, reflecting the high level of community interest in the topic. The panel of career law enforcement personnel addressed those concerns with detail and passion.

Speakers included MPD Police Chief Brian O’Hara, Community Safety Commissioner Todd Barnette, Fifth Precinct Inspector Christie Nelson, Crime Prevention Specialist Faith Randal, MPD Public Information Officer Sgt. Garrett Parten, Park Police Lt. Calvin Nobles, 911 Dispatch Manager Deanna Douglas and 911 call-taker Kat Payne, and Minneapolis Safety Clubs founder Aileen Johnson.

Chief O’Hara began his remarks by making a lighthearted reference to the school bus that caught on fire that morning in front of the Scottish Rite Temple, saying it was an ignition fire, not arson, so we could put that rumor to rest. (And fortunately, no one was hurt.)

But in a serious vein, he went on to contrast the current state of the MPD with where it was even a year ago. He noted that when he started his tenure as chief, memories of the George Floyd murder and riots were fresh, community hostility was high, morale was at rock bottom, and staffing levels were at a historic low, reaching their nadir about a year ago. O’Hara said that morale has started to recover, and staffing levels are gradually improving, with the department set to welcome approximately 20 new officers next week, along with roughly 100

young people in various stages of becoming officers, whether as interns, cadets or community service officers. He noted that recruitment efforts to attract officers who better reflect the community they serve are paying off.

Panelists also addressed the persistent issue of juvenile crime, particularly repeat offenders. Sgt. Garrett Parten highlighted that this involves a relatively small group of offenders, virtually all well-known to the MPD, who are in desperate need of support and services.

Parten shared the example of a 10-year-old who — in addition to being a prolific repeat offender — had already witnessed two friends die by gun violence. He stressed that such cases require comprehensive services, which need to come together across multiple levels of government to be effective. Parten expressed optimism that increased attention to juvenile crime at the state legislature could lead to more coordinated efforts and meaningful progress.

During the Q&A session, Chief O’Hara encouraged community members to support law enforcement whenever possible, emphasizing that the MPD’s remaining officers chose to stay during a time of great adversity, and that new recruits show courage by stepping into their roles.

When asked to respond to a question about the effect of the Minneapolis City Council’s budget cuts, he said they will have an impact. He noted that the budget has not gone up more than any other entity that sees the cost of doing business every year go up.

Addressing concerns about heightened immigration enforcement, O’Hara clarified that immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility and “literally not our job,” adding that officer training had recently been updated to address potential complexities. He also highlighted the difficulty of tackling crime effectively “if a whole lot of people are afraid to call the police.”



Top: Left to right: Park Police Lt. Calvin Nobles, Chief Brian O’Hara, Fifth Precinct Inspector Christie Nelson, Fifth Precinct CPS Faith Randal. Above: Left to right: Lt. Ken Anderson is joined by three of his colleagues. (Images: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)

The event concluded with a remarkable work in creating safe-standing ovation for the speakers, ty teams was cited by many on the including Aileen Johnson, whose panel.





**MISSED THE MEETING:**

A full recording is available on the Kenwood Neighborhood Association YouTube channel.



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- BEIGNETS & BEVERAGES (FOR PURCHASE) 4-7 PM
- JAZZ MUSICIANS 5-6 PM



# Lowry Hill Update

Thanks to everyone who joined us at the recent Annual Winter Party, Neighborhood Safety Meeting, and to those braving the cold for our monthly Neighborhood Walks! These events help build community in the long winters, and we appreciate your participation.

Did you know storm drain street trash pollutes our lakes and rivers? Winter can be especially bad, as debris breaks down in the elements. But adopting a drain is free, and takes only minutes to maintain: [mn.adopt-a-drain.org](https://mn.adopt-a-drain.org)

And our website is getting a facelift soon—the sleeker, more user-friendly site will go live later this season.

♦♦ Stay warm out there! ♦♦



## Lowry Hill Board Meetings

**Feb. 4 • Mar. 4** 1st Tuesdays, 7 – 9 PM  
Kenwood Community Center: 2101 W Franklin Ave  
*All residents are welcome! If you have questions or would like to be on the agenda, please email us: [lhna@lowryhillneighborhood.org](mailto:lhna@lowryhillneighborhood.org)*

## Neighborhood Walks

**Feb. 15 • Mar. 15** 3rd Saturdays, 10 – 11:30 AM  
Start + end at Sebastian Joe's: 1007 W Franklin Ave  
*Join us for friendly walks around Lowry Hill! This is a great way to stay active and get outside, meet your neighbors, pick up litter, and build community.*

## Support Lowry Hill

*LHNA relies on your support to fund neighborhood programs, events, and advocacy. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and all donations are tax deductible: [donorbox.org/support-lhna](https://donorbox.org/support-lhna)*





**[lowryhillneighborhood.org](https://lowryhillneighborhood.org)**  
*for full details, newsletter sign-up and more*



# AN INTERVIEW WITH MINNESOTA 61A STATE REP. KATIE JONES

By Terry White

*Terry White is a regular contributor to the Hill & Lake Press. He publishes the Better Minneapolis newsletter and lives in Field.*

Terry White: Katie, thank you for sitting down with me today. Can you start by sharing a bit about District 61A and your background?

Rep. Katie Jones: Absolutely, Terry. District 61A covers the southern part of downtown Minneapolis, the Harrison neighborhood, Bryn Mawr, the Wedge and the Lakes neighborhoods like East Isles and Kenwood. I'm originally from Lebanon, Indiana, where my family ran small businesses. I moved to Minnesota after meeting my husband at a summer camp in Bemidji. We've lived in the Wedge neighborhood for over a decade.

TW: This is your first term in office. What are your expectations? What are your priorities?

KJ: I'm passionate about representing the vibrant voices of our district and leveraging its wealth of ideas to build a stronger Minnesota. Downtown is the economic engine of the state. Its comeback will help the entire state. I also want to focus on small business grants for corridors under reconstruction, like Hennepin Avenue. Reconstruction is an area I have spoken with GOP colleagues about because towns like Montevideo also have corridors that are 60 to 80 years old.

TW: What role does the state play in economic development?

KJ: There are some areas that require a regional focus, such as providing incentives for converting downtown office buildings into residential. When it comes to small businesses and helping them rebound after construction, the state has the biggest purse. We can carve out state aid to help them.

TW: Do you expect to be going to the Capitol given that the DFL is planning to boycott?

KJ: We've gotten support on how the DFL is handling this situation. The DFL caucus had negotiated a power sharing agreement. The open seat is clearly a DFL seat. So, the GOP should not attempt to turn a two-week majority into a two-year power grab. The House will end up with a tie.

TW: Changing to a completely different topic, you built a strawbale house. Why that method?

KJ: Yes! My husband and I built a strawbale home right here in the district. We care deeply about sustainability and were disappointed with the amount of fossil fuel-based materials in conventional construction. I've worked in energy and so has my husband. Strawbale offers excellent insula-



Local Rep. Katie Jones takes the oath of office administered by former Rep. John Lesch. (Photo: Rep. Kaohly Her)

tion, reduces our carbon footprint and aligns with our environmental values.

TW: How does your environmental focus influence your stance on public transit and urban development?

KJ: We really care about climate. Transit and housing density are key for climate resilience. I support compact, walkable communities to reduce sprawl and protect farmland. Expanding transit options while improving efficiency, like converting office spaces into residential use, also builds safer, livable neighborhoods. To encourage more housing, laws need to change throughout the state to allow for more density and things like accessory dwelling units (ADU).

TW: How can the state impact public safety? Is economic development part of the solution?

KJ: Local response does come from the city, but the state has an oversight role. With consent decrees, I think we can bring in people to testify about whether they are being fulfilled. We can also look at the power dynamics of the police union. Doctors also provide public safety, and they do not have a union. I think it's worth having the conversation about whether the police union has a disproportionate amount of power. The community must be able to hold them accountable. There are some statutes I want to look at to see about rebalancing the power between the union and the community. Economic development is 100% part of the solution. We need more eyes out and people walking on the streets. That's where adaptive reuse or conversions of office buildings to residential should be pursued. If we can bring residents to downtown, with more eyes on the street, it will incentivize more businesses to come in.

TW: The Met Council and the Green Line extension have been controversial and frustrating for

many. What's your take?

KJ: I will say, we want a functioning transit system. The Green Line's delays and cost overruns reveal governance issues. I support reforms ensuring projects are better planned and executed. Handing implementation to MnDOT instead of the Met Council seems like a step toward better accountability.

TW: Will it ever be finished?

KJ: Yes, it will. The date I've heard is in 2027.

TW: Some people have suggested the Met Council should be an elected board. Where do you stand?

KJ: I am open to a conversation about the structure of the Met Council. We need regional planning, but the board members should have qualifications in transit, wastewater management, parks, or urban planning. It's also worth looking at possibly the Met Council does the planning, but MNDOT does the implementation.

TW: What opportunities for bipartisan collaboration do you see? For example, will there be a bonding bill? Given how things are starting, will anything get done in this session?

KJ: I think once we get going in February things will get done. Everyone has items in their districts they want in the bonding bill. Housing and infrastructure are areas where I've had positive conversations with GOP colleagues. We all want better housing options, childcare support, and transit. We all want to move things forward for the State of Minnesota.

TW: There was a big shift toward the GOP in this last election, why do you think that happened?

KJ: What happened in Minnesota reflects the national sentiment. I still think the DFL is the par-

ty of working families. That is evidenced by the work we have done in the last two years, such as paid family leave and free school lunches. I think DFL representatives can succeed by staying in touch with their constituents, listening, and communicating what they are doing.

**“Economic development is a top priority, especially focusing on small business grants for corridors under reconstruction, like Hennepin Avenue.”**

TW: How can the DFL make sure that programs stay within budget?

KJ: We need to make sure that policies have the impact we intend them to have. We need to think structurally about the full package value we want to deliver on because it has to be cost effective. That gives us more money to spend in other areas. We want to stretch our dollars.

TW: Finally, what are your thoughts on the cannabis roll out?

KJ: I'll be honest, I know very little about it.

TW: Would it be appropriate to use the tax money on schools?

KJ: I think our schools are going to need more money. All our schools are experiencing budget difficulties. We are an aging state and enrollment is declining but we need to keep the buildings open. We need to have well paid educators.

TW: As a new legislator, how are you staying connected with constituents?

KJ: I'm holding regular coffee hours and town halls to hear directly from residents. I encourage anyone with concerns to email me at [rep.katie.jones@house.mn.gov](mailto:rep.katie.jones@house.mn.gov).

TW: Thank you, Katie. Best of luck in your first term!

KJ: Thanks, Terry! I'm grateful for the chance to serve and hope to make a positive impact for District 61A.





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# CELEBRATING A YEAR OF PROGRESS

By Katie Cashman Ward 7 Council Member

*Katie Cashman is the Ward 7 Council Member representing most Hill & Lake neighborhoods as well as Uptown. She lives in Steven's Square-Loring Heights neighborhood..*

It's been one year since I was sworn in to the City Council and I'm proud of the progress we made in 2024. From police recruitment to renters' rights, the city had an incredibly productive year. Working together with neighbors, council colleagues and the mayor's administration, we advanced the revitalization of commercial corridors in downtown and Uptown, increased investments in comprehensive public safety, enacted climate-conscious policies and advanced renter and worker protections.

My Ward 7 team focused on exceptional constituent services, robust communications and problem solving across jurisdictions. For Ward 7, I hosted 10 community engagement forums, spoke at 36 neighborhood association meetings, sent 24 newsletters and resolved more than 2,000 constituent cases. It is truly wonderful to be part of such an engaged community.

I prioritized public safety. Passing a new police union contract in July will bring police salaries up nearly 21.7% over the next three years. This and further recruitment investments led to 1,000 police applications and filling 76 new hires, 36 of which are police officers that will be on street patrol. We ended the year with a net gain of officers for the first time in five years.

We also have more investigative capacity and crime prevention specialists on staff. During 2025 budget negotiations, I collaborated with Council Member Aisha Chughtai to fund the addition of a new Crime Prevention Specialist position for the 5th Precinct to increase this important service. (Editor's note: According to the Minnesota Star Tribune: "Three separate council actions reallocated \$150,000 — more than one-quarter of this year's \$521,000 mounted patrol budget — to fund a civilian crime prevention specialist position in the Fifth Precinct, pay for additional needle pickup in the Hiawatha neighborhood and bolster transportation for seniors.")

The comprehensive public safety system, including violence prevention, has continued to improve. A recent analysis of Minneapolis safety by the NYU School of Law showed that the city is currently redirecting 9% of its calls for service to non-police services like 311, Traffic Control and the Behavioral Crisis Response team. The city's goal is to increase this to 20% in the next decade.

Increasing housing supply is another focus. Council Member Michael Rainville authored and I co-authored an ordinance that has



Council Member Cashman at the launch of the Groove Lofts at the Northstar Center downtown. (Image: Sherman Associates)

made it easier to convert vacant downtown offices into new housing. This solution helps us adapt our downtown to changing working conditions and address office vacancies.

With Sherman Associates, we celebrated the grand opening of Groove Lofts at the Northstar Center in December. Groove Lofts hopes to add 500 new residents to the downtown core in a beautifully converted historic building. The City Council also invested in shelter providers like Agate and Avivo that provide low-barrier housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, renters will now benefit from mandatory disclosures and eviction protections. Together, these policies will ensure that Minneapolis continues to provide more housing for all.

It is well known that the last four years have seen drastic changes to commercial retail and labor markets. Our targeted revitalization approaches are starting to pay off. This year, the Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs launched the Vibrant Storefronts initiative which brought five arts organizations to Loring Park, invigorating formerly-vacant commercial spaces. In 2025 this will expand to Uptown with an additional one million dollar investment. The 2025 city budget also includes several small business and community initiatives in Uptown that I look forward to bringing to life. I'm proud to have supported labor protections in various industries as they fight for dignified working conditions and economic justice. Should I win reelection this fall, I plan to continue these important conversations over the next four years so that downtown and uptown can thrive.

As climate change escalates nationwide, Minneapolis is paving the way for sustainability

**"I'm proud to have supported labor protections in various industries as they fight for dignified working conditions and economic justice. Should I win reelection this fall, I plan to continue these important conversations over the next four years so that downtown and Uptown can thrive."**

leadership. I am the chair of the new Climate and Infrastructure Committee, and my office secured major victories by increasing access to future public transportation projects like the Blue Line Light Rail Extension and B Line and E Line Bus Rapid Transit corridors in Uptown. I also joined five of my colleagues, Council Members Chughtai, Wonsley, Ellison, Chowdhury and Koski, to coauthor a resolution and budget amendment to push the city towards a zero-waste future where building materials and household waste is diverted from the incinerator and landfills. This year, we also negotiated hard-fought wins with our utility providers, CenterPoint Energy and Xcel Energy.

It has been my honor to serve you as your Ward 7 City Council

Member. I am hopeful and optimistic about what we can accomplish together in the years to come. Together, we can continue to lift up each and every one of our neighbors as we make Minneapolis a beacon for progress. I'm seeking DFL endorsement this year and running for reelection. I hope to earn your support and continue this good work. DFL precinct caucuses are coming up on April 8. I can be reached at City Hall by email ([ward7@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:ward7@minneapolismn.gov)) as well as by phone and social media. I look forward to a great year ahead.

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MEET THE NEW WARD 7 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES:  
PAULA CHESLEY

By Marty Carlson



Paula Chesley (Photo: Paula for Ward 7)

*Marty Carlson is a regular contributor to the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Kenwood.*

The 2024 Ward 7 City Council seat became an official horse race in late December, when East Isles resident Paula Chesley announced her candidacy in an email to local residents. First-term incumbent Katie Cashman had announced her reelection bid two weeks earlier, and with Chesley’s entrance, the race became an actual contest.

So who is Paula Chesley?

Chesley is familiar to many in East Isles and around the lake because of her neighborhood volunteer activities and activism, but to many in the larger ward, she’s a new face.

To start with, she’s a woman of many dimensions. In the neighborhood, she’s known for her leadership in starting the East Isles Safety Walking Group, serving as a block captain, and recently serving on the board of the East Isles Neighborhood Organization, among other roles. Professionally, she’s worked as a yoga instructor at various studios in the Twin Cities since 2017, and currently works at the Emily Program, where she teaches yoga and meditation to individuals in recovery from eating disorders. She became an East Isles homeowner in 2020, and is a proud, self-described “childless cat lady.”

But that’s hardly the full picture. Among other things, she was part of a contemporary dance troupe in Berlin from 2013-17. Her beloved late cat, Billie Jean, achieved a moderate level of Internet fame, with her renown stretching as far as the Star Tribune and Washington Post. That’s a fun fact to be sure, but what many people may not know is that Chesley has serious academic credentials as well: she’s not “just” Paula Chesley, but Dr. Paula Chesley, holding a Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of Minnesota, with a minor in statistics.

After growing up in Mankato, West St. Paul and St. Cloud, Chesley double-majored in English and French at the U of M. Following her graduation in 2001, she traveled to France on a Fulbright Teaching Assistantship and, in her free time, used the opportunity to obtain a master’s degree in computational linguistics from the Université de Paris 7, before getting her doctorate from Minnesota in 2011. Along the way she obtained fellowship support from the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education and the Fyssen Foundation in France.

As a newly minted Ph.D., Chesley spent

a year as a visiting professor at the University of Alberta, then served as a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Tübingen, in Germany, from 2012-13. But, as Chesley examined her anticipated career path from her German perch, she decided to make a change. Chesley says she saw her work as requiring increasing amounts of computer time, less interaction with people, and in pursuit of results that were abstract and intangible. Chesley concluded she wanted to work with people directly and help improve lives.

Chesley planned to chart her new course during an ex-pat month in Berlin, but that turned into a two-year dance intensive after she successfully auditioned with Tanzfabrik Dance Studios, also in Berlin. Dance morphed into yoga; after her return to the United States, she reinvented herself as a yoga instructor, which ticked all the boxes of working directly with people, improving lives, and —as she puts it — bringing them joy.

Chesley’s political life has been as varied as the rest of it. She has volunteered for campaigns of Barack Obama, Hilary Clinton, Dean Phillips and Erin Murphy, among others. Her experience with direct political activism arguably began in 2020, when she received a citation for toplessness from the Minneapolis Park Board Police, and advocated successfully for the ordinance to be repealed [Nota bene: No need for pearl-clutching; Chesley says she was in a barely populated area, lying on her stomach, and reading a book at the time...].

Why is Chesley running for City Council?

Asked what prompted her to run for the Ward 7 seat, Chesley says it was a combination of disillusionment with incumbent Katie Cashman and the priorities of the current Council, which she argues have not been supportive of Ward 7 or the city as a whole. Chesley is particularly bothered by the raft of non-binding resolutions passed by the Council that tell other units of government what to do, starting with the Council’s Gaza ceasefire resolution, and including its resolutions regarding Hennepin County’s HERC facility and MNDOT’s I-94 re-do, both of which Cashman championed. Chesley says she’s more interested in actions that are within the Council’s purview and get results for local residents.

Top priorities if elected include promoting public safety (particularly new officer recruitment), revitalizing Uptown and Downtown (by reexamining tax rates, public-private partnerships, business incubators, grants and improvement districts), and affordable housing

(building more, addressing encampments).

Asked to describe her politics, she says she started as a farther left progressive who has become more of a centrist — a shift driven in part by the city’s public safety issues these past few years. Her role models accordingly run the gamut, from John Fetterman to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to Gretchen Whitmer on the national level, and from Andrew Johnson to Andrea Jenkins to Lisa Goodman on the local level. She says she has also been following the career of newly-minted San Francisco mayor Daniel Lurie, whom she believes will bring a results-oriented approach to a city roiled by political turbulence since the pandemic.

**“Asked what prompted her to run for the Ward 7 seat, Chesley says it was a combination of disillusionment with incumbent Katie Cashman and the priorities of the current Council, which she argues have not been supportive of Ward 7 or the city as a whole. Chesley is particularly bothered by the raft of non-binding resolutions passed by the Council that tell other units of government what to do ... Chesley says she’s more interested in actions that are within the Council’s purview and get results for local residents.”**

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MEET THE NEW WARD 7 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES:  
ELIZABETH SHAFFER

By Marty Carlson



Elizabeth Shaffer (Photo: Ryo Hamasaki)

*Marty Carlson is a regular contributor to the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Kenwood.*

The race for Ward 7’s City Council seat altered substantially in late January when 4th District Park Board Commissioner Elizabeth Shaffer announced her candidacy. Shaffer is already a well-known figure in the area, and her entrance represents a potentially significant challenge for first-term incumbent Katie Cashman, serving since 2024 for a two year term, who now finds herself in a three-way race with incumbent Commissioner Shaffer and first-time candidate Paula Chesley (also profiled in this issue).

Raw numbers illustrate the challenge Shaffer’s candidacy poses to Cashman. Park Board District 4 substantially overlaps with the boundaries of Ward 7. In the 2021 election for Park Board, Shaffer defeated incumbent Park Board President Jono Cowgill with 61.5% of the vote, receiving 11,900 first-choice votes. Cashman, by contrast, won her 2023 council race with 4,055 final votes, and prevailed over second-place finisher Scott Graham by a mere 177 votes. Cashman now has the advantage of incumbency in the Council seat, but both candidates are well-known in the ward.

So who is Elizabeth Shaffer?

If there’s one word that captures her character, it’s probably this: Endurance. A passionate long distance through-hiker, triathlete, runner and biker, Shaffer is also a mother to four now-adult children, which any parent will tell you is an endurance test of an entirely different sort. Her 2021 park board race was also characterized by stamina: Shaffer met with nearly every neighborhood organization and park-related interest group in the district and held “open time” events in every district park as well, absorbing everything from enthusiastic support to physical threats along the way. Since her election, Shaffer has acquired a reputation as a workhorse, readily available to her constituents but also willing to dive into the minutia of park board policy and budgeting.

Born in Glencoe in 1966, Shaffer spent most of her youth on a 150-acre farm between Buffalo and Monticello, the second of four kids. Fun fact: Her 88 year old father continues to live in her childhood home and still runs a herd of 50 cattle. Shaffer graduated from Monticello High School, then got a B.A. from Wheaton College, in Illinois, in

1987, with a major in communications and a minor in music. While there, she met her husband, Steve, and the two married shortly after her graduation. They spent their first two years in Minneapolis, living in Phillips and the Wedge, before relocating to Chicago when Steve got a business development job with a nonprofit in the city’s Austin neighborhood.

While there, Shaffer obtained a master’s degree in education from the University of Illinois, and began a teaching career, first as a substitute teacher in the Chicago Public Schools, then teaching language arts in Oak Park. Steve, meanwhile, moved from non-profits to the private sector, getting his MBA, then working for Grant Thornton and a wide range of tech start-ups.

Shaffer’s first son was born in 1995, and three more kids (two daughters and another son) arrived between 1997 and 2002. The demands of parenthood brought an end to Shaffer’s professional teaching career but teaching continued to be a common thread. In 2002, the family briefly relocated to Shenzhen, China, and Shaffer, by necessity, began home-schooling her children. The family relocated to Minnesota later that year, and she continued teaching her kids until high school.

Shaffer’s family moved to Lowry Hill in 2012. Her entry into public civic life started small but grew rapidly, when she began volunteering at Thomas Lowry Park, then a relatively neglected park space near her home. Shaffer initially saw it as a simple way to connect with neighbors and give back to the community, but in short order she was elected president of Friends of Thomas Lowry Park. That role took on added significance in 2019 when the Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association approached FTLP about directing some must-spend Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds to restore the park’s historic Seven Pools water feature. Shaffer took the lead in raising an additional nearly \$350,000 for the project, mapping out a year-long fundraising plan, setting deadlines, and working with neighbors to leverage their contacts to raise the needed funds.

Shaffer’s success with the Seven Pools project prompted neighbors to recruit her to run for park board in 2021. Mounting a grassroots campaign, she overwhelmingly defeated her incumbent opponent and says her steady presence in the district parks led to her receiving regular constituent service calls before she was even elected. Those experiences

helped her hit the ground running when she took office, she says.

Looking back, Shaffer can list off dozens of accomplishments during her park board time, but she is particularly proud of her recent effort to create a park board endowment, which she hopes will benefit future generations, as well as increased natural resources funding, funding for badly needed path and trail maintenance, and helping foster a respectful “back to basics” board culture, after a period in which the board had been embroiled in controversy over issues such as park encampments and the defund the police movement.

Why is Shaffer running for City Council?

Shaffer says there’s a similar sentiment now, with constituents expressing frustration about politicization, infighting and wasted energy on the Council. Shaffer says she’s about getting to work and focusing on the essentials. In particular, she wants to foster a supportive business environment that also benefits workers, promote public safety and support the police, ensure the city is fiscally responsible, support environmental well-being and green spaces, and try to promote respectful, constructive dialog on the Council.

Asked about political role models, Shaffer notes that she never really aspired to be an elected official, but says she holds Amy Klobuchar in high regard, and has tremendous respect for the work Andy Luger has done as U.S. Attorney, finding innovative ways to use federal resources to support local law enforcement during one of the most challenging periods in the city’s history. Shaffer also name-checks Dean Phillips, who she says showed real courage by expressing unpopular but prescient views during the recent presidential campaign.

**“Shaffer says there’s a similar sentiment now (as there was when she ran for the park board), with constituents expressing frustration about politicization, infighting and wasted energy on the Council. Shaffer says she’s about getting to work and focusing on the essentials. In particular, she wants to foster a supportive business environment that also benefits workers, promote public safety and support the police, ensure the city is fiscally responsible, support environmental well-being and green spaces, and try to promote respectful, constructive dialog on the Council.”**



A SHINING STAR Front page



The Luminary Loppet has become a cherished winter highlight, offering a magical evening for children and families at the heart of the season. (Photo: Jennifer Shea Hedberg)

could figure out a solution.

He called a few local grocery stores and secured 500 used plastic buckets, and he and Peggy set to work in their backyard trying to determine the best way to make a luminary.

Hal also enlisted the help of his best friend, an architect named David Bryan. On a day close to the scheduled event, they borrowed a truck, loaded up the buckets, and went to Lake of the Isles, where, as Hal describes it, “an exercise of mistake after mistake” ensued.

Luminaries won’t freeze, they soon learned, if they are placed directly on the lake. They can’t be out in the cold too long, or they will freeze solid. Not enough time and they will break when you drill the hole to drain them.

Hal monitored them every two hours, waiting until the ice was an inch thick. That milestone happened at 3 in the morning, which is when the volunteers got the call that they needed to get to Lake of the Isles immediately. “It was sort of like delivering a baby,” Hal remembers. “She’s crowning. Let’s get to the hospital.”

Wearing headlamps, the volunteers sloshed around in the icy water. The truck’s stereo was blaring music while they worked. Hal remembers that one neighbor, clearly not pleased, walked outside, got into the truck and switched off the music.

It was a slog, to be sure. Hal wanted to space the luminaries 20 feet apart and decided to measure the distance in his skate ski strides, stopping so Bryan could spray paint a dot of ink in the snow to mark the spot. It worked well enough, except that strong winds sometimes altered Hal’s stride. Then, volunteers placed the luminaries and lit them — another process of trial and error.

On the night of the event, the team was able to take in the joy on the faces of the skiers. Even though there were roughly only 150 participants, the Luminary Loppet was nothing short of magic.

The volunteers — the founders still call themselves “Luminarians” — had created a public experience that gave people the kind of chills that are not caused by cold weather.

Innovating and Improving

While they were thrilled by the success of the first Luminary, the Galvins assumed it was one and done.

Then, John Munger, who was the Loppet Foundation’s executive director, showed up at their front door and was crushed to discover the volunteers had thrown away the plastic buckets.

Munger said the Luminary was such a success that he wanted it to be a regular feature in all future events. Hal Galvin went on the hunt for more buckets.

And with that, a decade of innovating and improving the process and the attractions began.

In the early years, volunteers were recruited and scheduled over the phone, often on a single afternoon when the coordinators got together at the Galvins’ house to make calls and eat chili.

The second year, the harvesting of the luminaries was more civilized: volunteers were notified at 10 p.m. instead of 3 a.m. But it was still no joyride.

Jim Young, a Seward resident who was working as a software developer, remembers finishing up in the middle of the night and hanging his rain clothes over his bathtub, being careful to be quiet so as not to wake his wife.

“As I went into bed, I could hear the ice starting to melt off of my rain pants and clink down into the tub,” he says. “It was that thick.” Today, Young is the event’s “managing luminary,” having taken over for Hal Galvin who then handed the role to Dave Bryan.

The freezing and harvesting continued in that vein for several years. Young remembers talking with a volunteer about the challenges predicting when the luminaries would freeze.

That volunteer suggested they contact an engineer he knew, who would set up a spreadsheet that registered ice thickness, temperatures and wind speeds to get a more accurate estimate for when they will be ready. That man, Rick Budde, still helps with that task.

The innovations didn’t stop there. In 2008, the bonfires that had enchanted Dosset were replaced by an ice pyramid, which became a fixture in all future Luminaries.

The fire dancers and “Ice-Cropolis,” a series of 31 ice columns placed in a semicircle near the canoe docks,

also started that year. (The arrangement of the columns is based on the mathematical formula of the Fibonacci code.)

Hal Galvin and Bryan had practiced making it at Bryan’s cabin in Wisconsin and then tinkered for years about the best way to stabilize the columns on the ice. “It’s all trial and error,” says Bryan.

In 2009, Jennifer Shea Hedberg, the founder of Wintercraft, which is a company that produces ice globe kits, created an installation of tall luminaries underneath the bridge between Lake of the Isles and Bde Maka Ska.

The following year, Hedberg moved her installation to the Enchanted Forest, which is on a small peninsula near Ice-Cropolis. Inspired by the shafts of ice that build up on the shores of Lake Superior, Hedberg made hundreds of ice glass sheets and installed them throughout the Enchanted Forest.

“That night was my breakout moment,” she remembers. “I loved doing this and wanted to do it forever.” Over time, the Enchanted Forest grew to include ice mushrooms and castles, all lit from within.

In 2023, Dosset, now working as a carpenter, designed the Ice Globes — made using balloons — that hang alongside Luminary Lane.

Despite poor conditions — it had rained a few days before the event — 14,000 people showed up that year, including Dosset’s partner’s mother, who had end-stage cancer and was bundled up in an improvised ski-wheelchair.

The changes weren’t all artistic. Hal Galvin invented the “Pantoozelator,” a machine that marks the placement of the luminaries.

Made from auto parts, plastic and a baby jogger that was left on the curb with a “take me” sign, the invention has a name inspired by the names of the toys in Dr. Seuss’s “How the Grinch Stole Christmas!” Galvin also was the brains behind the Water Cow, a device that can fill 12 buckets in a minute.

As the event grew, so did the legal requirements, including permits and porta-potties. Those tasks fell to Carla Pardue, an East Isles resident who at the time was working for Al Franken’s office, where she

was the deputy finance director.

Pardue also started and ran the Luminary’s party, which initially was held on the canal to Bde Maka Ska and included live music. “The party came about because people wanted a place to gather,” she says. “They were cold. They were thirsty. So we made some fire pits. And then Surly came in to serve beer.” It was a chance for people to relax after they skied, to have hot cocoa and make s’mores.

Today, Pardue thinks about these collaborative efforts — volunteers often work 12-hour days — with fondness and pride. “This is winter in Minneapolis and we’re outside,” she says. “We’re doing something that nowhere else in the world would do. . . and we’ve been able to do it without a plan but by [following] what we think people want. . . This was our way of giving back and of creating something and it was able to come from joy.”

When the Loppet started charging to cover expenses (a change that was initially not greeted with enthusiasm by more than a few neighborhood residents), Pardue jumped in to help with registration.

Now, the Luminary is the largest annual fundraiser for the Loppet Foundation and supports year-round programming.

**Passing the Torch**

Today, the Luminary Loppet draws as many as 18,000 participants each year, who register for timed entrances.

Climate change has forced some adaptations, including the last two years, when participants had to walk around the lake because the ice was too thin for skiing. Unsafe ice also forced the party to be permanently relocated to the soccer field on the south side of Lake of the Isles.

Organizers are thinking about how to make the event less reliant on cold temperatures. “We all hope that there is snow and really good ice so that we can be on the lake, but we’ve also shown that we can put on a really great event without those conditions,” says Lindsey Johnson, who started volunteering for the Luminary in 2012, when she was a student at the University of Minnesota.

She now works for the foundation as the event’s manager. She is proud of the fact that regardless of the conditions, people are still enjoying being outside during the coldest time of the year.

Almost 25 years later, many of the original Luminarians are passing their roles down to the next generation. They’ve written manuals with step-by-step instructions and engaged apprentices to learn the ropes.

“It’s time to pass the torch,” says Peggy Galvin. “I believe in the goodness of people and the evolution of things and that there will be new people with new ideas and new approaches. And I trust that that is a good thing, that you should not always hold on tight thinking nobody else can do what I do. . . I think we’ve created something very cool. We’ve set it on its path and it has flown and it has its own legs and there will be other people impacting it and helping it to be better.”



The before...



The original crew and founders: Hal Galvin, Peggy Galvin, Charlie Henke, Dave Bryan and Jim Young (Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)



The expanded family — Back row: Carlyn Unger, Hal Galvin, Peggy Galvin, Charlie Henke, Dave Bryan, Glenn Olson, Bill Dossett and Jennifer Shea Hedberg. Front row: Rich Harrison, Brian Milavetz, Loppet Foundation Events Manager Lindsey Johnson ( Loppet staff ), Emme Corbeil, Jim Young and Cess Duijnham (Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)



Carla Pardue (Image: Rich Harrison)



Longtime volunteer Bob Amis pushing a sled with the help of a volunteer. (Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)



Loppet Foundation Luminary Event Manager Lindsey Johnson (Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)



Peggy Galvin (Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)



Jim Young (Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)



The after...



Hanging lanterns at the Luminary Loppet  
(Image: Jennifer Shea Hedberg)



Items frozen inside of the globe ice lanterns  
(Image: Jennifer Shea Hedberg)



Finnish tower lantern (Image: Jennifer Shea Hedberg)



"Butterflies" ice sculpture by Mary Arneson  
(Image: Jennifer Shea Hedberg)



"Ice Pollen" ice sculpture  
(Image: @wavescrib)



Above - Jeremy Gould's ice worms  
(Image: Jana Freiband)



At Left - Luminary Loppet ice sculpture under the Bde Maka Ska bridge to Lake of the Isles  
(Image: Bruce Challgren)

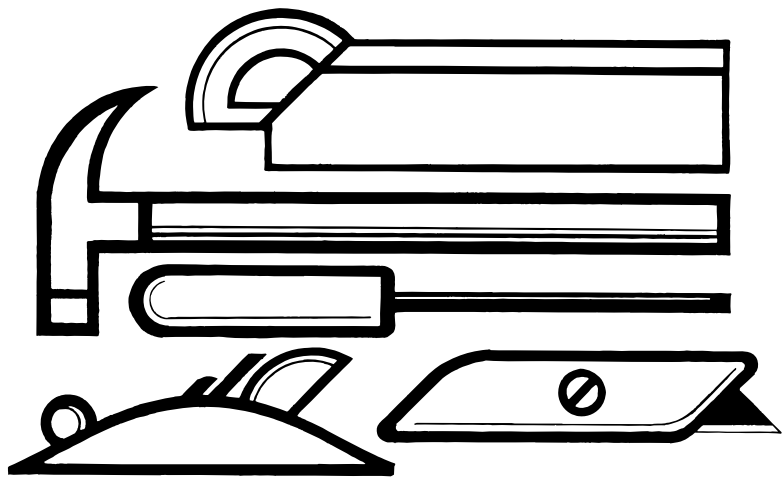


WINTER KITE FESTIVAL



Colorful kites danced across the sky like a rainbow over the frozen expanse of Lake Harriet during the Winter Kite Festival on Saturday, Jan. 25, from noon to 4 p.m. (Image: Ryan Jandl)

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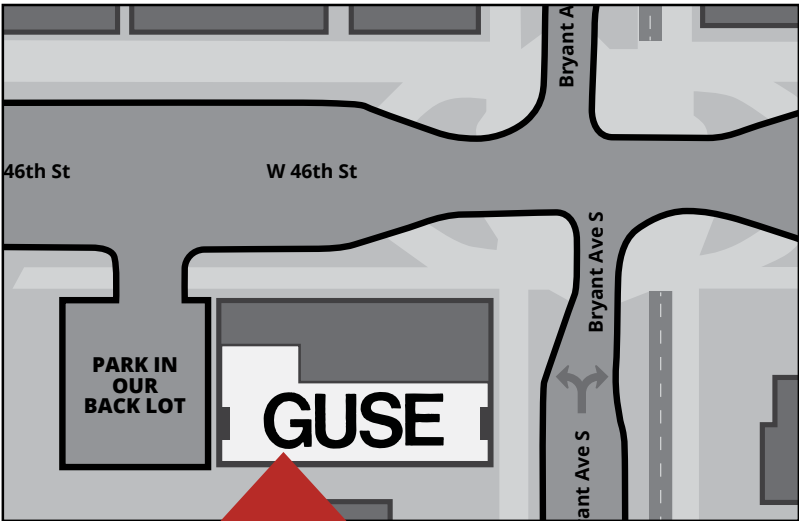


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# Meet Your Neighbor

Interview by Craig Wilson, Editor

## Zoë François, Renowned Cookbook Author, Baker and Media Personality



(Photographs copyright © 2024 by Zoë François)

*Craig Wilson is the editor of the Hill & lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill.*

### Where did you grow up?

I grew up with wandering hippie parents, so my childhood was spent traveling the country in search of the perfect place to land. It was an adventure that stretched from California to Vermont with many stops in between. By the time I graduated from college I had gone to 18 schools. An alternative childhood to be sure but it was the only one I knew so I didn't realize how odd it was.

### When did you discover your passion for baking?

Around the age of seven, in one of the communes I lived in, another child and I got into the pantry and made a Dutch Baby or what we called a "Puffy Pancake" and watched the flour, eggs and milk puff up in the oven and nearly explode. It was exhilarating and the first time I'd experienced the magic of baking. It made a lasting impression. The maple syrup we poured over the top, that we'd made from our own trees, was a bonus.

### How did it develop into your career as a pastry chef?

In 1989 while in college I started a cookie company called Zoë's Cookies. I baked them fresh in the morning and sold warm

cookies from a homemade cart on the streets of Burlington, Vermont, where I went to school. That lasted a semester until winter landed and I had to get back to my studies. It would be a decade of working other jobs before I would return to my true calling and attend the Culinary Institute of America in New York, to study pastry in earnest. My first job out of school was with Andrew Zimmern in a new restaurant he was opening in Minneapolis.

### What motivated you to publish your first cookbook?

In 2021 I left the restaurant world to raise my two sons. When my younger was two, I met Jeff Hertzberg at a children's music class who had an idea for a book about a crazy bread recipe he had developed. He asked me to write it with him and I thought it would be a fun kitchen adventure I could do at home with the boys. Little did I know it would be the beginning of a nearly 15-year partnership.

### How many cookbooks have you published?

I am now working on my eleventh cookbook. Eight in the "Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day" series with Jeff and three solo books, "Zoë Bakes Cakes," "Zoë Bakes Cookies," which landed me on the New York Times Bestseller list, and I am currently writing "Zoë Bakes Pies," due out in 2027.

### Were any cookbooks more challenging than others to write?

The first book was a challenge because we had no idea what we were doing. "Zoë Bakes Cookies," my most recent book, was the most surprising, because it became a very personal book for me. The recipes are not only delicious but also tell my family stories, some of which I didn't even know until I was researching the book. It taught me the power of a recipe and how it can connect us to our roots in a profound way.

### Do you do your own food styling and take your own photos?

Yes, I do all of my own food styling and photography. I studied photography and art in college but never found my true medium until I discovered the culinary arts. Now it all plays well together, the pastry and photography.

### Do you have a personal favorite or "must have" recommendation?

If you mean a favorite cookbook, there are too many to pick just one. I have a collection of over 500 cookbooks, most of which are about baking and pastry. I have my grandmother's old Betty Crocker cookbooks from the 1950s, which are splattered with cocoa, butter and have her handwritten notes throughout. They are treasures, not only for the recipes but for the memories.

### How have other mediums, like television and the internet, changed the way you communicate with your audience?

I was terrified the first time I went on TV in 2007 to promote our debut bread book. It was 15 years later, during the pandemic, when I was doing Instagram Lives to teach people at home how to bake, that I discovered I enjoy being in front of the camera and sharing my craft with people. I was contacted by a few production companies as a result of my Instagram presence. I ended up creating "Zoë Bakes" with Andrew Zimmern's local production company for the Magnolia Network. We ended up being nominated for an Emmy Award together, which was such a lovely full circle moment with my old friend.

### What do you do when you're not baking?

Haha. I am an entrepreneur with a website (zoebakes.com), a Youtube channel (@zoebakes), a weekly Substack newsletter (Zoë François), the TV show (Zoë Bakes), cookbooks to write and social media (@zoebakes) to maintain, so I am always baking. I am lucky to LOVE what I do and would do it even if it weren't my career.

### Why do you choose to live in Minneapolis?

My husband and I came to visit in the early 1990s on our way to move to San Francisco and never left. We fell in love with the lakes and the art scene and just knew it would be a great place to raise a family. I have been fortunate to find the most talented and generous food community I've ever experienced. It is quite wonderful, unique and something to treasure.



Friends.  
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ZOË’S PERFECT CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES



My favorite cookie from the 1980s has evolved over time as I’ve amped up my skills and perfected my tips and techniques. This version is my perfect chocolate chip cookie. The beauty of this recipe is that it is meant to change according to your mood. I’ve even changed it since it appeared on my TV show and blog. It’s the perfect example of how fluid baking can be, which is exactly what makes it so fun and exciting!

- 2 2/3 cups / 320g all- purpose flour
- 1 ¼ tsp baking soda
- 1 ½ tsp kosher salt
- ¾ cup / 170g unsalted butter, at room temperature
- ¼ cup / 57g shortening
- 1 cup / 200g granulated sugar
- 1 ½ cups / 300g lightly packed brown sugar
- 1 ½ tsp pure vanilla extract
- 2 eggs, at room temperature
- 8 to 12 oz / 225 to 340g bittersweet chocolate, chopped in largish chunks (about ¼ inch / 6mm; see Baker’s Note), Flaky sea salt for finishing.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter, shortening, granulated and brown sugars, and vanilla on medium speed until creamy, about 3 minutes.

Add the eggs, one at a time, beating on medium speed until incorporated. Add the flour mixture all at once and mix until just incorporated. Mix in the chopped chocolate pieces.

You may need to give the bowl a couple of swipes with a rubber spatula at the end to make sure the chocolate is evenly distributed.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Scoop the cookie dough using a #20 (3-tablespoon) portion scoop onto the baking sheet. You can make the cookies larger or smaller, but it will affect the baking time.

Refrigerate the dough balls for at least 30 minutes; but if you have the time, they improve if you let them sit for 24 to 36 hours. After they are chilled, you can bake them or freeze the dough balls for baking later.

Preheat the oven to 375°F / 190°C. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Evenly space six chilled cookie balls on the prepared sheet and sprinkle them with flaky sea salt.

Bake in the middle of the oven for about 12 minutes or until golden brown and slightly puffed. Repeat with as many batches as you need.

Allow the cookies to cool slightly on the baking sheet, until you can move them without them falling apart, about 5 minutes. Then move them to a cooling rack to finish cooling.

**BAKER’S NOTE:**  
My husband likes a cookie with more dough and fewer pools of chocolate, so I make some with less chocolate for him and then dump the rest in for me. You can adjust to how much you like.

VARIATION: CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES WITH BACON BITS

This is a cookie I made for my family while vacationing at a cabin. We’d just had a big breakfast and there was bacon fat left over. Instead of throwing it away, I used it in a batch of cookies. Holy moly were they good! Replace the amount of butter and shortening in the recipe with ½ cup / 110g bacon fat + ½ cup / 110g unsalted butter, and add in ¼ cup / 55g crispy bacon pieces when you add the chocolate. Bake as directed.

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- Kenwood Neighborhood Organization (KNO)



- Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association (LHNA)



- West Maka Ska Neighborhood Council (WMSNC)





EMBRACING WINTER

Photos by Courtney Cushing Kiernat











Dorothy Richmond is founder of the Dear Neighbor column and a longtime resident of Cedar-Isles-Dean.

Dear Neighbor,

It's February, the month that holds Valentine's Day, dedicated to love. Let's talk about the love of our surroundings.

Neighbors and neighborhoods start with houses, and I am blessed with all three. When I got divorced some years ago, the grueling but necessary processes claimed my life for the better part of a year.

Fortunately, dividing the spoils was relatively simple. We have wildly divergent tastes: He favors mid-century modern; I like old — bordering on the primitive — so there was no bickering about who got what. In fact, I think each of us was happy to be spared the other's effects.

I've always loved old things. The first time an erstwhile boyfriend entered my house in St. Paul, he looked around and said, "The only thing missing is a velvet rope with a sign that says 'Abraham Lincoln lived here.'"

My husband's and my one item of contention, however, was the house. Again, our differences ran headlong. I wanted the house; he wanted its real estate value. We went back and forth, and finally I bought him out. The house, once ours, was now mine.

I'm not a warrior by nature but I'll go to battle when my soul is at risk, and that's how I felt. I wanted to keep the house for a number of reasons.

First, I'd loved the house since the day I entered it nearly 30 years ago. For sale? Not anymore. Built in 1930, it showed every year of its age. The original owners lived here for over 60 years and changed nothing. We were the third owners.

The second owners who lived here only a couple of years installed central air conditioning, had the wood floors refinished, and got things up to code. In other words, made it safer and more comfortable. Other than that, it was Welcome to Herbert Hoover Land!

I loved the woodwork, the textured walls, the weird nooks and niches, that it had a library, and the kitchen hadn't been touched. It still hasn't. My husband liked that it had the original screens and storm windows, a workroom in the basement, and a big garage. We both loved that it overlooks Cedar Lake.

I've often thought that if a burglar broke in, he'd look around, scrunch up his face, and leave. Nothing to fence here.

We raised our two daughters in this house, and those memories live on everywhere I look. Their visits now are seamless, and when they retreat to their respective rooms they're comforted by the old bed, the old things, their childhoods revisited. The house is solid and, like all good things and relationships, solidness takes time.

As I write this, Los Angeles County burns. I am gutted by the visuals and even more so by interviews with people who've lost their houses, stammering and stuttering, as one does when in shock, barely beginning to absorb their monumental losses.

It's excruciating to even imagine the pain that will haunt them most likely forever. I began working on this column days before the Southern California wildfires started, igniting in me compassion for all those who have suffered at the hands of nature's arson.

I am moved by people whose houses were stolen by the fires who talk longingly of their neighbors and the community they once inhabited. History and loved ones — they're what keep us going.

The final linchpin in keeping me here was, and always has been, my neighbors. After

nearly 30 years, the friendships and kinship I have and feel for the people who surround me are irreplaceable.

Good neighbors, like all good friends, are our safety nets. Though we fly solo, there's comfort in knowing that they're there, that when we (invariably) fall, they catch and hold us before crashing. There's also tremendous comfort in knowing that I am a strand in others' nets and, when needed, I'm here and happy to provide whatever helps.

My house and neighborhood are like Katharine Hepburn — aging with grace, wrinkles and all. Not everything needs a facelift, especially when the original is soulful and honest and solid.

How could I leave all this history? I couldn't, and I'm grateful that I didn't have to, but heartbroken for those who have had to lose their cherished homes and history.

For me, old houses, old things, old friends, and, of course, my daughters, are my historians and feed my soul. They bring me contentment.

And you? What are your sources of contentment?

— Dorothy



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