

September 29, 2023

Serving the neighborhoods of North Minneapolis

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Devin Brown says she loves feeling the burn as she paddles through the water. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

Mighty on the Mississippi

Devin Brown is training to kayak the full length of the Mississippi River.

TELLAR

Page 8

ALSO INSIDE

Get ready to vote: A guide to the city elections. Page 10 Candidate profiles for Wards 4 and 5. Page 11 A former Polar football standout starts in Cornhusker country. Page 14



David Pierini Fditor

A new job calls former editor Kenzie O'Keefe across the river

Some from way back pop up in my dreams just to jolt me awake breathless and in a cold sweat. A few stick with me during the work day. I give this small group thanks many times a day as I write or work through the many challenges of producing

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a newspaper

teach me. Kenzie O'Keefe is joining this aroup

If you like North News, you have O'Keefe to thank. Pillsbury United Communities bought this newspaper eight years ago and hired her to relaunch it on a shoestring budget. O'Keefe started from scratch. She wrote all of the stories, coldcalled businesses and organizations to build a sustainable advertising base and cultivated a youth journalism program at North High School. Azhae'la Hanson was in those early

journalism classes. She is now a North News staffer, a flourishing writer and photographer who runs the youth program started by O'Keefe.

With the paper in solid shape, O'Keefe took a senior leadership position at PUC a few years back. Her office was just a couple of doors down from the newsroom, and I remember nearly all of my editors. I admit I lured her into shoptalk at times when her attention probably needed to be mission to keep community voices at elsewhere

Recently, O'Keefe was hired to head the ThreeSixty Journalism program at the University of St. Thomas. This is a nonprofit program that teaches reporting and writing

to youth so they can tell the stories of their the words of the people who live here. Through memories, they continue to lives and communities.

> I will spare you my backstory, but I had the most impact on me. I began as volunteer photographer in 2016 and stuck around long enough to get a job. I became editor in January 2022.

> The first time she offered her opinion on something, I was surprised because she ended her suggestion with the words, "If you don't agree, feel free to push back." Pushing back elevated your name on a layoff list in many newsrooms. But O'Keefe genuinely wanted to hear what I had to say.

I learned something very powerful from these exchanges. She brought no hierarchy into that space, and she listened with great intention and without judgment. She connected with people of all personalities.

As I got to know the Northside, I realized this is partially why many readers like the paper. They feel seen and heard.

O'Keefe set that in motion with a the heart of every story and picture. She understood how media often maligned the Northside with a narrative of deficits, like poverty and crime. Kenzie wanted to flip that script to explore the complexities — in

NS?

And she wanted North News to be vour paper, a space to celebrate the resilience, will say of all the editors on a long list, she creativity, ingenuity and cultural pride of North Minneapolis.

> I can see how Kenzie might push back on this compliment to her. She would give you the credit for making the newspaper so vibrant, which you richly deserve. That's also what makes her special.



Be@theCapri

First Thursday Films @ the Capri:

The Inevitable Defeat of Mister and Pete

Kenzie O'Keefe

10/5

10/14

IN OCTOBER

bare: a pop opera

Camp Capri S3

10/5 (Paradise Community Hall)

Sumner Library renovations set to begin

wheelchair movement.







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North Minneapolis at a glance

Sumner Library will close Oct. 7 for renovations and reopen in the fall of 2024.

Renovations to the library will remain faithful to how it looked when it opened in 1915. Adults and vouth will get their own sections of the library. There will be new furniture and carpet dense enough to support

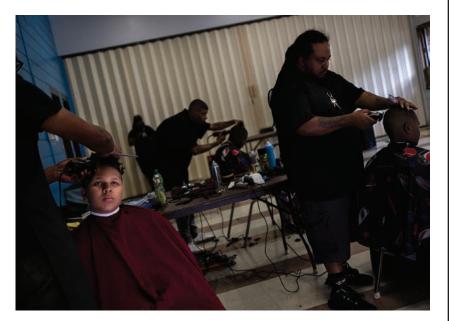
Staff will have a redesign work space and meeting rooms will be remodeled for smaller groups and equipped with tech support for remote meetings.

While closed, library staff will operate key services at UROC, 2001 Plymouth Ave. N starting Oct. 23. Patrons will have access to public computers and printers for scans and copies. Homework help and on-site technology assistance will also be available.

During the closure, all will be sent to the Golden Valley Library, 830 Winnetka Ave. N., though staff can change the location on request.

Back to school cut

Malik Benson got a fresh cut before the start of the school year at a back to school party at North Commons Park on Aug. 31. Northside We Outside, the YMCA and the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board sponsored the event. In addition to haircuts, volunteers aave out 400 backpacks and families were treated to hot dogs, hamburgers and a free family photo. Photo by David Pierini





JUST LIKE LIGHT, **TRUTH CAN BE** MANIPULATED.

We can bend it, reflect it, amplify it, and obstruct it. And what we see depends on our individual perspectives, the lenses and filters we see through

HEREIS

Here is MPLS aims to share the perspectives and stories of people effecting change in our city. All of us contain our own multitudes, our own truths, lived experiences and values. Here is MPLS can help unpack the wide and diverse ways of seeing Minneapolis for what it is, and what it could be-shedding light on better ways forward.

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NEWS

Remembering Nothando Zulu

By David Pierini. Editor

Nothando Zulu's passing on Sept. 11 brings to mind the African proverb, When an elder dies, a library burns to the ground.

With round, expressive cheeks, Zulu was an entrancing storyteller. She tapped deep into a well of African history, portrayed heroic Black women, from Ida B. Wells to Winnie Mandela, and reminded audiences that from great struggle comes great strength.

She motivated, educated and drew deep laughter, like when she told a story about her first - and last - time trying to squeeze into a pair of panty hose (search for it on YouTube).

True to the proverb, North Minneapolis lost a beloved griot. But those who grew up with her, or thanks to her, say Zulu's light will continue to shine.

"You realize that you take the lessons and values they instilled in you, those memories and that impact doesn't stop at the point of death," said state Sen. Bobby Joe Champion, who got to know her as Mama Zulu at the age of 9. "You never take anything to the grave. With Ms. Zulu, there's a sustainability and continuum of values that you believe to be important.

"Mothers are great nurturers who set the tone for everything. She was always about kids and youth and family and love of community. She elevated us through education."

Friends and family held a home going service for Zulu on Sept. 27 at New Salem Baptist Church. The Black Storytellers Alliance, the group she co-founded with her husband, Vusumuzi, began its 33rd annual festival the day after her service.

Nothando Zulu is the second elder from the storytellers Alliance to pass this year. "Auntie Beverly" Cottman passed away in her sleep on March 11 while on a received the For Neal Hurston Award, trip to Egypt with friends.

long Facebook feeds were filled with tributes, expressions of grief and gratitude for the love she had for the community, especially children.

"One of the greatest storytellers of all time has become an ancestor, my sister and my friend, Northland Zulu," wrote Titilayo Bediako, founder of the WeWin Institute. "She had a love of Black people, Black culture, and oooh, how she adored strong, especially for children, for moral and served Black children. Don't get me wrong, she loved all of humanity but she successful at all of that. She was the real loved and cherished her people."

Champion called her "Mama Zulu"

and can't remember a time when she and Vusumuzi Zulu were not in his life.

He learned about Kwanzaa from Nothando Zulu as a kid at The Way community center. He gave into her request to cut his Jeri curl mullet before he left for law school. And, in February, he glanced at her as the governor signed into law a Juneteenth bill he co-authored as a senator

"She would tell us when she was proud of you. She'd say 'Give me some love,'" Champion said. "She would also tell us when we were doing something wrong. Even as she would correct us, she would say, 'Now, you know I love you...'"

Zulu was born in rural Franklin, Virginia, the youngest of six children of sharecropper parents. Her father was a church deacon. She recognized early on that not everyone likes a sermon.

In a 1995 interview with Minnesota Public Radio, Zulu said a storyteller can deliver the same kind of message.

"The role of any storyteller, I say, is to tell the history, to tell the values and keep the mores and all that without having to preach," she said. "The preacher tends to be a great story teller but some people don't like to be preached to in that manner, but you can give them the same information through story without preaching."

At the University of Minnesota in 1976. Zulu collaborated with fellow students to create the Black Theatre Alliance, Amona those students was her future husband. Vusumuzi, who survives her.

The theater troupe performed in community and eventually evolved into more of a story ensemble. In 1990, Nothando and Vusumuzi established the Black Storytellers Alliance and its annual storytellers festival.

Among many awards received, Zulu the highest honor given by the National In the days following Zulu's passing, Association of Black Storytellers. In May, wife and husband were named McKnight Culture Bearer fellows.

Activist Spike Moss, a former executive director at The Way, said Zulu also used her voice on the frontlines of the Civil Rights Movement.

"It wouldn't matter what the protest was about, her presence and voice were always there," Moss said. "She stood decency, for things we needed... She was mother of the movement."





Above: Renowned storyteller Nathando Zulu performs a piece called Libations during a Juneteenth celebration in 2018. Photo by David Pierini

Left: Northando Zulu, right, shared laughter with friends in 2018 after at Juneteenth performance. Photo By David Pierini



Celebrate University-Community partnerships at UROC's annual Community Day open house with engaging displays, live music, local foods, official UROC swag, and more! Visit with U of M researchers and their community partners, meet Goldy Gopher, engage in live storytelling with local performers, and listen in on UROC new podcast, Rules of Engagement.

Grant will help low-income homeowners pay to remove infested trees

By David Pierini. Editor

Low-income homeowners who receive an order to remove a tree diseased with emerald ash borer can now get help paying for removal costs thanks to a federal grant.

The City of Minneapolis Health Department received an \$8 million arant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service for the city's Equitable Tree Canopy Management Program.

The grant comes after more than a year of complaints from low-income Northsiders, who felt blindsided by orders to remove trees at their expense. The

Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board oversees city trees and has been marking trees for removal with emerald ash borer now concentrated in North Minneapolis.

By law, property owners are responsible for the cost. If residents don't find a service to cut down the tree, the board's forestry department will hire a service and the bill will be attached to property taxes.

Tree removals have disproportionately burdened low-income residents. The parks board says as many as 12,000 trees will be condemned over the next five years in low-income neighborhoods throughout the city due to EAB infestation. More than 16,000 city-wide trees have been condemned and removed for emerald ash borer since 2013.

Removing an ash tree can cost as much as \$4,000-\$6,000, depending on the service, size of tree and the difficulty of removing the tree.

Residents said they were not properly notified, nor given tree treatment options prior to the winged beetle settling in the city

Continued on page 19

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catch up with our **Council Members**

WARD 4: LaTrisha Vetaw

I know it has been a long the spring of 2024. More details and frustrating construction including the detour map can season, but the end is near! Even be found at minneapolismn.gov/ though it means a few months of government/projects/dowling-aveinconvenience, improvements to our streets are extremely important for our neighborhoods. I wanted to Osseo Road Reconstruction share a few updates on the various projects happening in Ward 4:

Dowling Ave N Reconstruction and Areaway Removal

Phase 1 (east of the TH 94 bridge) is completed and the entrance and will be closed until the end of this exit on/off of westbound I-94 to/ fall. When the project is complete, from Dowling Avenue and east of people will notice: TH-94 have been re-opened since • A better ride with new roadway Sept. 1.

Phase 2 (west of the TH 94 bridge) is currently underway and • An improved experience for the entrance and exit on/off of eastbound I-94 to/from Dowling Ave and Lyndale & Dowling Ave • Upgraded signals and lighting intersection to west TH-94 will be • Upgraded drainage and storm closed until mid-November. The sidewalk, bike trail, and boulevard More details can be found at restoration will be completed in hennepin.us/osseoroad.

reconstruction/

The existing roadway on Osseo Road (County Road 152) between 49th and Penn avenues (County Road 2) has reached the end of its service life and is due for reconstruction. Osseo Road

- pavement and a redocked bridge
- people walking, biking, and rollina
- sewer infrastructure

Folwell (West) and Victory-Webber Water Main Cleaning and Lining

Minneapolis City Council members LaTrisha Vetaw (Ward 4) and Jeremiah Ellison (Ward

them to keep in touch with the community through this monthly column in our newspaper.

5) were inaugurated in January 2022 and January 2018, respectively. We have invited

by removing rust from the pipes and installing a high-quality lining. This work requires the water mains to be shut down and properties placed on temporary water. Affected properties have been contacted by the Public Works Division of Water Treatment & Distribution Services. More details can be found at minneapolismn.gov/government/ projects/water-main-cleaning/.

Lyndale Ave N Pedestrian Safety Improvements

This project will provide pedestrian safety improvements and ADA accessibility at intersections along Lyndale Ave N. Improvements may include curb extensions, pedestrian crossing medians, upgraded traffic control

justice neighborhoods or with qualifying incomes. The Health Department is gathering additional information on the grant and how the dollars can specifically be allocated, and when they will be available. Thank you again to all the community organizers who did the work to raise awareness on this issue impacting our ward to get us to this point.

Another exciting investment we are seeing in the Northside is \$4 million to Minneapolis Public Works Solid Waste and Recycling for a renovated recycling transfer station at 2700 Pacific Street. Three million dollars of utility funds will match this grant from Minneapolis. The refurbished transfer station will provide convenient services to Northside and Northeast Minneapolis residents. Services offered will help residents dispose city's low-income residents. The the waste stream, like clothing/ Through funding from the grant may only be used for future textiles, excess recycling, bulky

devices and APS push buttons, new ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps, and bus loading zones.

Stage 1 (Closure of Lyndale Ave Every year, the city cleans and N between West Broadway and lines some of its water main pipes Lowry) has been completed and cross streets at 22nd, 23rd, and 27th Avenues North are re-opened to traffic.

> Stage 2 (Closure of Lyndale Ave N between Lowry and 42nd Ave N) is underway and cross streets at 34th, 37th, 39th, and 40th Avenues North are expected to reopen in October

> More details can be found at minneapolismn.gov/government/ projects/lyndale-ave-n-ped/.

> Thank you, Ward 4, for your patience and understanding during this year's construction season. We know it is a pain, but it is very exciting to see so many improvements happening to the Northside. We deserve it!

from the waste stream, including landfilling for home construction debris. This northside facility is essential to helping us reach our City zero waste goals. Solid Waste and Recycling will engage the community to gather input on what materials they want to be accepted at the facility before finalizing the list. The goal is to open the renovated facility by the end of 2026.

As always, join me from noon -1:00 PM every Monday for Open Coffee Hours! These are informal and a chance for me to hear directly from you while we share coffee or a meal (virtually). Office hours are on a first come first served basis. Please try not to call past 12:50 p.m. as we want to leave enough time to chat about what you'd like to discuss. Please RSVP at www. minneapolismn.gov/ward5, and my staff will follow-up with the call-in details. If you have any questions or concerns, reach out to Dieu Do, Policy Associate, at dieu.do@ minneapolismn.gov.

WARD 5: Jeremiah Ellison

access to trees and green spaces Department was awarded \$8 are associated with improved health outcomes, reduced crime, for our Equitable Tree Canopy lower average temperatures, Management Program! This is one and an influx of other kinds of investments and new economic all of the Midwest! The proposal opportunities. Our community includes funding for private property has been severely impacted by the infestation of Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive beetle that has after removals, education on tree been decimating the tree canopy in Minneapolis. Through the hard disease, community engagement, work and advocacy from Parks and workforce development in and Power, Hope Community, urban and community forestry. individuals such as Roxxanne This funding will provide much-O'Brien, Melisa Newman, Mitchel needed assistance to community Hansen, Felicia Perry, Nichole members impacted by Emerald Buehler and more. Our office, Ash Borer. Hennepin County was the city and county heard the also awarded \$10 million to assist need to do something about this serious issue of tree removal costs burdening our community and the Borer-infested need to increase equitable access disproportionately burdened the of hard to dispose of items out of to trees.

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), condemned trees and plantings. plastics, plastic film, mattresses, the Forest Service is making Grant funding can only go to eligible and other things. Solid Waste investments in boosting the property owners in environmental and Recycling will divert items

Trees make a difference. Studies nation's tree cover nationwide. show that communities with The City of Minneapolis Health million in federal IRA funding of the highest awarded projects in tree removals, stump grinding, planting 1-2 replacement trees maintenance, treatment for pests/ in urban forestry.

> Removal of Emerald Ash has trees

NEWS

NEWS

By David Pierini, Editor

business.



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Asian Media **Access happy** with Northside home. But it now owns an old Sears building

Like a number of arts organizations, Asian Media Access got creative during the COVID-19 pandemic. It joined forces with another arts group to create a dance drama that celebrates cultural resilience.

AMA also went into the real estate

Ange Hwang, who has directed the non-profit group at 2418 Plymouth Ave. N., recently announced AMA had purchased an old Sears building in the Frogtown neighborhood of Saint Paul.

AMA will remain on the Northside providing multimedia arts and information technology programming to empower youth as it has since 1993.

In Saint Paul, AMA will convert the two-story 60-year-old building at 425 Rice St. into an integrated cultural center for events, a food court, 3D virtual reality and immersive theme park, a holistic wellness center, an Asian community center, zen aarden and kids zone.

And that's just the first floor (114,630 square feet).

The second floor, at more than 72,000 square feet, will hold a sports and art focused charter school, which will include two basketball courts and a soccer field.

While design leans into Asian cultures, the center will be welcome to the tapestry of rich cultures in the Twin Cities, Hwang said.

The building sits on a 17-acre lot, much of which will eventually be parceled off for million. housing, especially for seniors, she said.

AMA has been exploring some type of expansion since 2010, considering how it might serve the community in different ways

The pandemic accelerated the

organization's thinking. AMA started hearing from Taiwanese, Indonesian, Japanese and other communities not necessarily served by culturally specific service organizations.

"We never actively reach out to provide direct services such as giving out cash or hot meals to neighbors," Hwang said. "And because of the pandemic we really started to get involved with those kinds of services beyond the training, empowerment and leadership building for our young people. That really opened a very different perspective for all of us.

"So, when the Sears building opportunity came up, we felt it would be a good way to really start to make the concept of a new narrative in a physical form.

AMA joined with other Asian-American agencies to form the Asian American Business Resilience Network and purchased the building for just over \$8

Several challenges lie ahead, including fundraising and determine whether the second floor will support a sports complex. But Hwang would like to see the building open to the community within two years.



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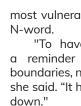
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FOCUS

FOCUS



In the face of isolation and racism in the sport, Brown was called to undertake the Source to Sea journey. It is a testament to her own determination, the Black community, and her ancestral ties to water, acknowledging the historical trauma and

join her.





Devin Brown teaches paddling techniques to new kayakers at Mississippi Regional Park. Brown partners with Mississippi Park Connection to teach kayaking classes to people of color. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

Devin Brown prepares for a historical voyage down the Mississippi River

By Azhae'la Hanson, Reporter

River started with lakes and the patient hands of a mother who taught her to swim. state. "Because I had her, I knew I could trust

the water," she said.

In her 20s came the epiphany. While on a kayaking expedition in the Gulf of Maine. Brown took in the rush of fresh air. Her rhythmic breaths mirrored the cadence of her paddle that sliced through the water. Her battle with the relentless current served Brown left her hometown in New Jersey as a metaphorical struggle: a dance with nature's forces that reflects her quest proximity to the Mississippi River. for inner peace. Amidst the serenade of

Devin Brown's love for the Mississippi life's tribulations, making each stroke a

"I found myself in a kayak," Brown said. "I found healing energy and different depths of myself on the water. In that moment. And so I knew that I had to always figure out how to integrate that moment into my life."

Driven by her newfound passion, Devin to live in North Minneapolis because of its

Her decision marked

of fish, Brown's arms bear the burden of one on which she hopes to make history.

symphony that lures her into a trance-like become the first Black woman in the United her initial struggles to secure employment States to kayak the entire length of the from boat rental businesses, simply due to Mississippi River. Her odyssey will span her identity as a Black woman. Even today, a staggering 2,340 miles, from the river's she occasionally endures unsettling glares headwaters in Itasca, Minnesota, to where from onlookers when she launches her boat. it ends at the Gulf of Mexico in New Orleans.

> kayaking in her early days in Minnesota, tuned out the world to the soothing sounds Brown encountered a stark reality: being a of the passing water, a derogatory remark Black person on the water presented unique from the shore pierced the serenity. the challenges. Often the solitary person of

mourning doves and the playful splashes commencement of a transformative chapter, color on the river and, in some instances, the sole woman, Brown faced obstacles that Next spring, Brown will attempt to transcended the river's currents. She recalled

During a fateful race in June, while Those who make this trip call it Source to navigating through a narrow residential area before the river opened up, Brown While delving deeper into the sport of encountered a defining moment. As she

In a moment that struck her at her

most vulnerable, a man had called her the

"To have that be said to me was a reminder that there's no walls, no boundaries, nothing when I'm on the water," she said. "It hit me when my defenses were

"I give those [negative thoughts] to the water and she gives me clarity,"-

Devin Brown

struggles that have marked the presence of water within Black communities.

Most importantly, because of her own experiences, she wants people of color to

Outside of her full time job, Brown partners with the Mississippi Park Connection to offer kayaking classes tailored to Black and Brown people. Her goal is to introduce more individuals who



Continued on page 19 To prepare for the trip, Devin Brown routinely engages in hot yoga and strength training. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson



amount of balancing to load it on top of her car. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson



Devin Brown's kayak is almost 3 times as tall as she is, it takes a pristine It takes 90 days, or 3 months for a drop of water to reach the Gulf of Mexico from Itasca, Minnesota. Devin Brown plans to make it two and a half. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

NEWS

The guide will help

vou understand:

• What's on the

ballot this year

in Minneapolis

• The powers and

candidates

duties of City Council

• Tips for researching

Knowing the ward

in which you live

On The Ballot

This year in Minneapolis, the only

ballot item is the City Council

election. All 13 ward-based seats

Normally, City Council members

serve four-vear terms. However,

this year we're only electing

them to two-year terms, like we

did in 2021. This is because of

a 2010 state law that requires

Minneapolis to hold City Council

elections soon after redistricting

ward boundaries, which happens

every 10 years based on census

data. The law only applies to City

Council, so there are no other

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Documenters

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these resources.

are up for election.

races this year.

NEWS

By David Pierini, Editor

Ward 4 seat on Nov. 7.

colleagues.

different candidates.

and Recreation Board.

control.

private security patrols.

able to finish.

VOTE(612)

Pillsbury United Communities and Minneapolis Documenters have created an online guide to walk you through each step of becoming a confident, informed voter.

The online guide will also provide you with a scorecard to fill out according to whatever issues and leadership qualities matter most to you. Issues under City Council's influence include: public safety, transportation, housing, environment, public health and taxes. Examples of leadership qualities include constituent responsiveness and collaboration skills.

Ward 4 candidates





Incumbent City Councilwoman LaTrisha Vetaw (left), faces challengers Marvina Haynes, Leslie Davis, and Angela Williams.

Ward 5 candidates



Incumbent City Councilman Jeremiah Ellison (left) faces challengers Victor Martinez and Phillip Peterson.

RATE THE CANDIDATES

Issues Scorecard

ISSUES	YOUR CRITERIA	CANDIDATE	CANDIDATE	CANDIDATE	CANDIDATE	CANDIDATE	CANDIDATE	
List your top issues here. Ex. Housing	List your criteria here. "I want a candidate who" Ex: Record of following through on promises	The candidate who comes closest to meeting your criteria should get a 1 under their name. The candidate who is second closest gets a 2 under their name, and so on.						
Ranking: The candic amount of points is y	I date who gets the LEAST your winner on issues	Ex. 1						

VOTE (612)

Vetaw faces three in first re-election challenge for Ward 4 seat

A Republican, a single mom who says "the rent is too damn high" and a conspiracy theorist who believes COVID-19 is a hoax are set to challenge incumbent Minneapolis City Councilwoman LaTrisha Vetaw for the

DFL-endorsed Vetaw was first elected two years ago and guickly found her seat on the council among its more pragmatic members. Her votes favoring strongmayor aovernance, clearing homeless encampments and opposing stricter regulations on rent increases put her at odds with activists and progressive

A League of Women Voters forum at North Market on Sept. 20 gave a handful of Ward 4 voters a glimpse into four very

Vetaw displayed the polish expected of an incumbent who has held two different elected offices, her first being an at-large member of the Minneapolis Parks home.

life Marvina Haynes brings experiences to the table, especially with the issue most important to her, rent

Angela Williams declared herself a Republican in her filing. She wants each Ward 4 neighborhood to have a commission to address public safety concerns. She said she favors each neighborhood having

Leslie Davis mostly used his time to call the coronavirus a lie. He drew gasps from some in the audience when he used a slur offensive to native Americans while telling a story that strayed from the initial question. At one point, an audience member interrupted a Davis rant, urging the forum moderator to cut him off. He was

Platforms and positions

Vetaw said "constituency service is my jam," and touted her availability to Ward 4 voters. She has a service office in the Camden neighborhood that she rents with her own money and says she

is always available to take calls and listen to residents. She said when Northsiders complained about street lights, she said she secured \$300,000 for lifting improvements and another \$1 million for crime prevention programs in the ward.

She chairs the Public Health and Safety Committee, which has focused heavily on recruiting and retaining police officers, which are at an all-time low with the department.

She supports the Upper Harbor Terminal project, saving it will enlarge the tax base to fund more city services and believes that baked into the project are assurances that Northside neighborhoods will benefit from the development, such as affordable housina.

Vetaw is against rent control because it hasn't worked in other cities, she said. Instead, she would continue to push for the building of more affordable housing, especially through city programs that help first-time buyers and people of color buy a

"I love serving you all down at city hall," Vetaw said. "It's truly been the joy of my life to serve the ward, representing Ward 4 and all of North Minneapolis. There's no dividing line. What my office prides itself on is listening to you, talking to you and finding out what your specific needs are."

Haynes developed a desire to run for office while waging a public campaign to free her brother, Marvin Haynes, who is in prison for a murder he said he did not commit.

Her decision to file has also come from her own struggles with making rent and being overcharged by a corporate landlord.

"I think I am qualified to do this job because I'm a longtime member of Minneapolis who has lived in all of the disparities and the poverty that has happened with this current authoritarian regime," she said.

Her vision for public safety would divert some money from police to some of

Ellison has two challengers for Ward 5: one a familiar foe, the other new to politics

By David Pierini, Editor

Jeremiah Ellison, who has held the Ward 5 seat on the Minneapolis City Council for five years, likes to say August. "I was born and raised here. I "aovernina is a dialogue we must have together."

Now Ellison shifts to something less congenial, a re-election campaign where his two challengers are trying to portray his penchant for progressive policies as harmful to North Minneapolis. Voters will Northside for 20 years, is a drumbeat of get the final word on Nov. 7.

Ellison will face Victor Martinez, a local pastor, who is in his second campaign to unseat Ellison. They are joined by Phillip "OMac" Peterson, a relative newcomer to rallying cry heard after Floyd's death Minneapolis who hopes his ideas for city services and personal story of change will decrees to clean up the city's police appeal to Ward 5 residents.

normally elected to four-year terms. But a 2010 state law requires Minneapolis to hold elections after a census and relatedchanges to ward boundaries.

The Ward 5 seat keeps the sitter on the edge. Development projects, including a proposed light rail route, will bring changes to North Minneapolis and Ellison has had to balance the potential of transformative Investment with fears from residents and business owners that they will be priced out.

There is also lingering poverty and public safety issues following an economycrippling pandemic and the police murder of George Floyd. An uptick in violent crime over." took place as officers were leaving the force following what turned into a global uprisina

Through it all, Ellison has pushed for big changes in public safety, forsaking a police-only model with holistic solutions, like mental health crisis teams and citywide violence prevention programs. Ellison to work on improving dialogue with also championed affordable housing constituents. He holds weekly office through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, 4d Tax Incentive and rent-control measures that died during a controversial vote where three of its proponents, including Ellison, missed a meeting to **Continued on page 19** celebrate the Muslim holiday of Eid.

"When I first ran for office, I kept hearing about the deficits of North Minneapolis," Ellison said during a League of Women Voters candidates forum in know this community. I know how much we have in ingenuity, how much creativity, how much resilience and I wanted to tell that story at City Hall as well."

The campaign of Martinez, a Henry High School grad who has lived on the criticisms against Ellison, especially when it comes to policing. Like he did two years ago, Martinez characterizes Ellison's vision for public safety as "defund the police," a

With the city under two consent department, Martinez stresses the urgency Members of the City Council are to address ongoing crime. He continues to advocate for more police and pushing for greater transparency and accountability in how they operate.

> "I believe in an ecosystem of public safety and I believe (it) should be empowered with as much funds as possible to make these changes and transformations. He (Ellison) doesn't want them to have the money.'

> Ellison said meeting consent decree goals will be expensive but believes compliance can be achieved within five years. "I want to go a step further," he said. "I want to make sure we do not slip back into old habits once the consent decree is

> Martinez said Ellison's advocacy for rent control will drive away development. He also criticized the incumbent for not being available to Ward residents. Marntinez promises a response to questions or complaints within 24 hours.

> Ellison said he and his office continue hours, and hosts or co-hosts community meetings and guarterly town halls.

A Virginia native, Peterson, 46, slipped

Continued on page 19

WHAT IS "RANKED CHOICE VOTING?"

Minneapolis uses a system known as "ranked choice voting." This means that you rank up to three candidates in order of preference, from #1 (your top choice) on down to #3. If a candidate receives a majority of first choice votes, they win the election outright. If not, lower-ranking candidates are eliminated and votes are redistributed to the voter's second choice (and third choice, if needed). More information on ranked-choice voting is available at the city's elections website.

CTE, construction and a crowded hallway

By Ayanna Melander and Samiah Symone Sims, North High School

In 2025 North High school will be the newest renovated high school in the city. As for now, students and staff have entered the new school year with a completed CTE center, and now are facing the realities of navigating a construction site in between classes

Last summer, North High School, one of the oldest in the state, started undergoing renovations after five decades of no changes to the property. Even water fountains were the same, dating back to the 1970's. The first phase of the project was to build out the Career Technical Education (CTE) center. Construction of the CTE center was completed during the summer and classes became available for students to take this fall.

Now that the CTE Center is completed, North High is next in line to get a facelift while school is in full swing. North High journalism students spoke to a handful of staff and students to get their opinions on the matter.

Michael Roberts, a junior, takes a photography class in the CTE program.

"I really liked the new CTE wing that the school board has blessed us with," Roberts said. "It's just an amazing space to work in."

Kenneth Nelson was moved from teaching computer science at North to teach computer science in the CTE center this year. Large windows is something that Nelson is excited for, because before there were few in the building.

"The new addition of the windows is great, because students get to see what their opportunities are, rather than just hearing about it," Nelson said. "I think over the next couple of years it'll be worth it. But right now, it's kind of chaotic.

As the CTE Center is less populated than the high school, he says the only downside is missing the bustle of the crowd of students. Although he is feeling isolated, he said the year is "Much worse for everybody on the other side of the building."

The other side he is referring to is North High, where construction began this summer and will be ongoing throughout 2025.

Courtyard renovations are underway. Next fall, the area will be floor-to-ceiling glass windows. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

is completed with new classes like: said. "Everybody has to go through the then it'll be better." Photography, Robotic Drone Tech, and tunnel. That's really the reality of it. There Principles of Engineering Design, the aren't two ways to get anywhere. Just one North High side has been narrowed down way to get to the other side of the building." to one accessible hallway to get around the building. Enrollment has also spiked, students getting ISS (in school suspension) making passing time a nightmare for staff and students alike.

when it's finished, it's gonna look nice, but the process is just a little hard," Nakaiyah Abdullah, senior, said. "It makes me angry for students to get because I'm in the hallways with too many through the crowded kids and it's not enough space. I don't like halls. the tunnel "

Students like Nakaivah, who don't take CTE classes, won't be able to see changes in the school until 2025. For now, she's stuck with a crowded hallway. In addition to being a senior, it's hard to be excited time for students to get about things you won't be there for.

A positive thing that she has seen room.' however, is how staff are adapting to the changes.

Dean CJ Johnson shares the same an ongoing puzzle that sentiments about finding passing time comes with change. difficult for students and himself.

"The biggest concern is about how we get everybody through the tunnels and little more cumbersome

Last year there was a large number of because of tardiness. This year, students "I think the construction will look nice because teachers have decided to give an

unwritten grace period after passing time ends

"Passing time was extended to five minutes with an unwritten grace period," Johnson said. We know it takes a lona from this room to that

Assistant principal Steve White says it's

"It's fun solving the puzzle. But yeah, it's a

While the CTE side of the building have enough space for each other," Johnson getting around. But next year at this time,

NEWS

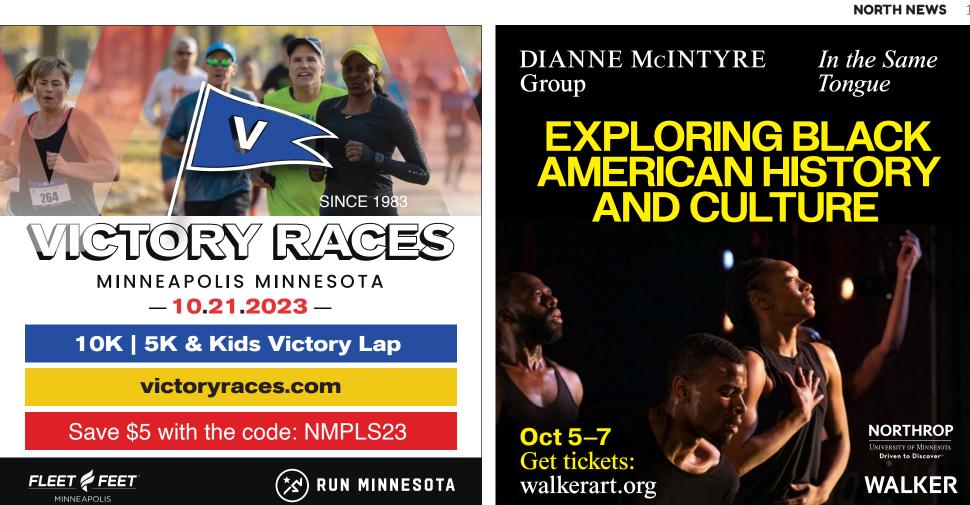
He's timed himself multiple times while walking from one end of the building to another.

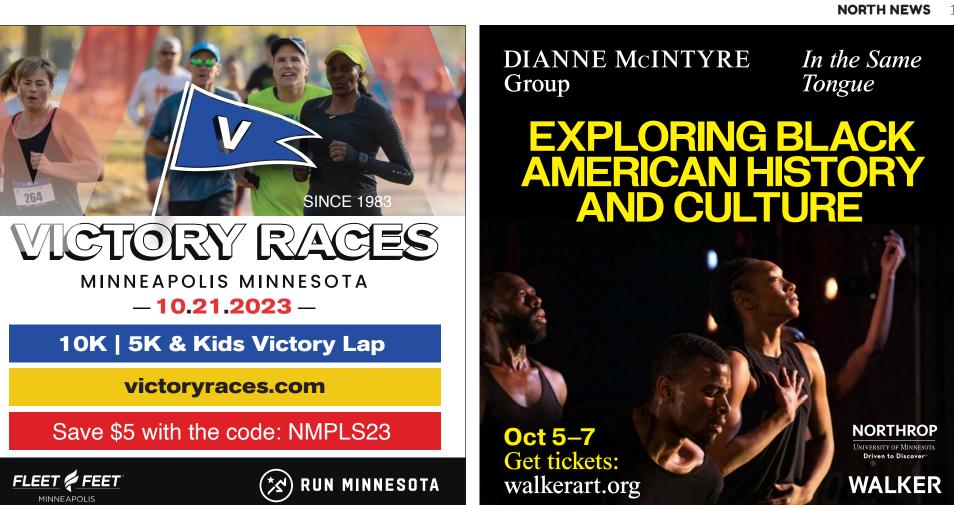
"We're excited for this to be done. So we're hopeful and optimistic," said White.

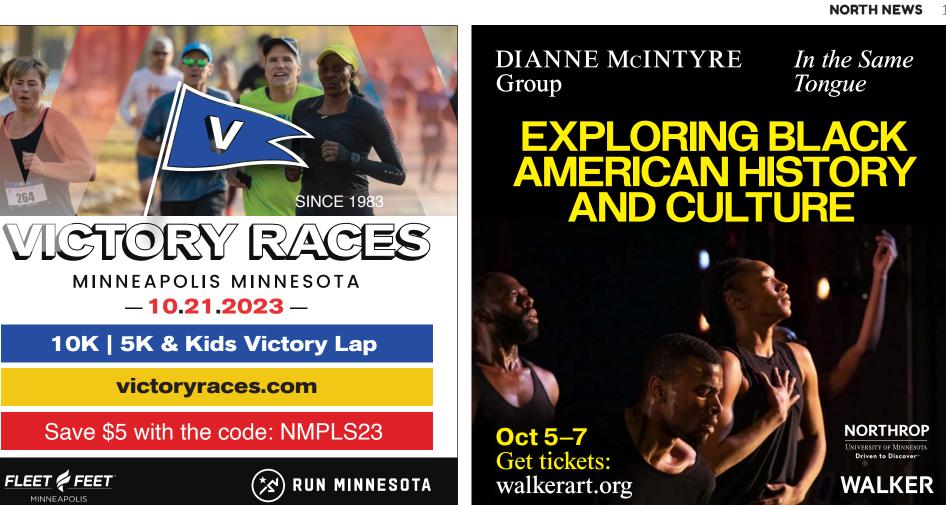
"We see what's been done, and it's being sent to ISS are predicted to drop beautiful so far. We're all impatient to have it done.

North currently only has one hallway to funnel students from one side to the other. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson













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SPORTS

SPORTS



Omar Brown flourishes in football for family and for friends gone too soon

Story and photos by Azhae'la Hanson, Reporter

The boom of pre-game fireworks pound his chest. His teammates surround him, their Husker battle cries echoing as the chaos resumes. they rhythmically pound their helmets. The stadium is quaking beneath his feet, shaken by the thunderous roar of the crowd of over 80,000 that has come to from the tunnel and witness their champions.

As the sea of players flood out of the tunnel, the former Polar finds solace in the stride, he carries act of kneeling. For a moment, the chaos with surrounding him begins to fade, leaving dreams of the little only the steady rhythm of his heart echoing Black boys who in his chest.

"Omarai, Kayvon, Nate" he says to and make it out. He himself.

"Dad, Grandma, Mom."

"Thank you."

He takes a deep breath and The Saturday night lights come into view as he emerges runs to the field.

With each him the want to make it big carries the dreams of those who



Omar's mom, Solana Anderson shows off the Vikings All-State passed and never Team award won by Brown when he was in high school.

down.

Brown carried the defense of the Nebraska Cornhuskers in the early part and some old from Brown's parkboard hear. of the season, earning a Blackshirt that days. recognizes the team's top defenders. This is no surprise to the Northside, as a Polar he was the top cornerback recruit in Minnesota. He made his way to Nebraska from the University of Northern Iowa in 2022 where he earned First-team All American, Defensive Freshman of the Year, and was a first-team-all conference pick. He has collected 159 career tackles so far. His final season with the Cornhuskers started with a homecoming debut for Brown when he played against the University of Minnesota in August.

"Omeezy's Mom."

give the field all I have."

he cannot see.

up."

Anderson said.

just lost a tooth.

on my hands," she said.

got the chance, and he carries the dreams of his mother. Each game he recites their matter how many times he's knocked

Solana Anderson, Brown's mom rallied 64 people, family friends and Polar alumni alike to forsake the maroon and yellow for Nebraska's scarlet and cream. She sported her favorite jersey that read

"My mom is my biggest supporter," Brown said. "She gives me all she has, so I

That morning of the game, Anderson woke up and shouted so loudly she was sure it shook the Northside. She said a prayer of faith for him, of believing what

"The joy I had was unlike any joy I've had. It was this overwhelming feeling I've never had before. I saw Omar go through it in a way I've never seen before. And he's still going, he didn't give in, he didn't give

Supporting Brown is the largest part of Anderson's life, she could probably count on her hands how many of Omar's games she missed in his life. She has Omar's awards and photos plastered all over their family home in North Minneapolis, and has even skipped mortgage payments in order to fund opportunities for her son.

"Omar has the discipline, dedication, and commitment that I haven't even done in my own life. That really inspires me,"

She remembers the first time Brown was sacked. He laid on the ground for a few moments, and then got right back up. She saw him spit something out and when she asked what it was he smiled-he had

"That's when I knew I had a tough kid

She comes from a strong matriarchal foundation so when it came to supporting her own kids, she naturally rose above and beyond the task. As Brown got

teammates by and Anderson found herself life." names as a reminder to keep going no in the routine of feeding hungry teenage boys and then calling after them to shut the door as they went back out to play football together. Some of them were new

default. Brown would bring his friends and "And it's not just football, but it's for his during a summer in highschool when he

come to her and say that if she was their on his face, and to see him in such pain, mom, they'd know they'd make it out. It to her felt almost as impossible as the sun was endearing at first, and then it hurt to itself dying.

Anderson remembers a fateful day "I'm a ride or die for my son," she said. playing kickball in the parks with Brown

picked up his phone. She remembers him A lot of Brown's teammates would running off, she saw his sweet smile fading

Continued on page 19

of 64 supporters that attended the game.

Brown's mother rallied 64 people to attend his game vs. the University of Minnesota.



Brown earned his Blackshirt this year, setting him amongst the Brown looks up and out into the crowd in the direction of his band older, Solana became the team mom by best defenders for the University of Nebraska.





NEWS

FEATURE

Frey says city needs promises before blessing **Blue Line**

By David Pierini, Editor

Blue Line project managers will continue to design a light rail extension route that could run through North Minneapolis after two separate voting groups this week gave the OK to proceed.

The votes only green-light the next step in planning. Not a single line of track can be laid until all the cities along the 13mile corridor vote on whether to accept the route.

And municipal consent is far from guaranteed.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and City Councilman Jeremiah Ellison, both with seats on the Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee, said on Sept. 14 that detailed plans and money for impacted residents and businesses would need to be spelled out if the project was to ever get the city's blessing.

"The anti-displacement work is going to be critical for us ultimately to say yes,' said Frey, who voted to let the project move to the next phase. "The alignments, the proposals for the stops are intentionally broad and we're going to need to get some promises and guarantees before we ultimately grant consent.'

Project officials say the next design phase should answer all the important questions, costs, projected ridership, safety and how to make whole those displaced by construction.

The Metropolitan Council on Sept. 13 voted 12-3 to approve \$75 million for the next step. Commissioners Deb Barber questioned the county's ability to finance two big projects, including a Green Line extension plagued by cost overruns. Commissioner Wendy Wulf, who voted no, said bus rapid transit would be cheaper and would improve mobility for residents currently underserved by the current bus schedule and routes.

Asked whether the city of Minneapolis should push for bus rapid transit, Frey told North News, "I'm not taking anything off the table."

Project planners over the summer released a proposed route that connects Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale and

North Minneapolis to downtown. From Target Field station, a northbound train would travel along North 7th Street, then 10th Avenue and turn west onto Washington Avenue. Trains would crossover I-94 on a new bridge that would extend 21st Avenue. Trains would then merge onto West Broadway Avenue at James. While the route has changed

several times based on feedback from residents, a number of vocal Northsiders continue to oppose light rail. They fear they could be priced out of their homes by gentrifying spin-off development and that property owners won't be compensated enough if they have to start over elsewhere.

"I just drove down University Avenue (Green Line) yesterday and counted 11 boarded-up buildings," said Kristen Porter, executive director of the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition. "So if it's so great, then why isn't it working where (light rail) happened already?"



Kristel Porter, center, and Reve Chamblis of the Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee engaged in a lively chat following a recent meeting. Photo by David Pierini

You are invited to a film by North Minneapolis Youth **Black Excellence**

October 3, 2023, 6:30 pm Capri Theater - 2027 W. Broadway Reception follows



Follow the story of these youth and the adults who encouraged them as they learned film-making techniques from professionals in the field and students from Minneapolis Technical College. This showing is free.

Come support the youth of North Minneapolis.



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Kyah LaRoy sang a set of soul songs and worked the crowd of Open Streets goers who paused and gathered as they heard her voice.



West Broadway Avenue served as a runway for new looks from three designers in the One Minnesota Fashion Show. The show featured looks from Coco Nashay, NdaRa's Jewels and the show organizer, Penash Jones.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Youth Club: St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2901 Emerson Ave. N. grades 6-12, Wednesdays aat 6:30 p.m. Transportation available. To enroll, call 612-529-7726

After School Tutoring: at St. Olaf Lutheran Church Homework help and Expert Mathematician 3-6 pm Tues & Wed, 3-5 pm Mon & Thurs. To enroll, call 612-529-7726

Safe Station: Struggling with substance abuse? Start your recovery journey at Minneapolis Fire Station 14, 2002 Lowry Ave. N., where a firefighter or recovery coach can help get you a variety of services. Open 24 hours. No judgment or shame. Safe Station is a partnership with the Twin Cities Recovery Project and the Minneapolis Fire Department.

Free legal advice: Legal Aid takes on civil cases, such as housing, family, consumer tax, immigration and public benefits. The non-profit organization now has a clinic in the office of the Harrison Neighborhood Association, 1501 Glenwood Ave. Services are free for those who qualify. Must be 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines or age 60-plus. Hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.. Walkins welcome, but appointments are preferred. Call 612-746-3611 to make an appointment.

Library closing: Sumner Library will close Oct. 7 for renovations and reopen in the faa 2024. Sumner wil set up a temporary sight on OCT. 23 at UROC, 2001 Plymouth Ave. N. Limited service includes homework help, computer access, on-site technology assistance and printing and copying.

The Healing Place: The Healing Place is back at Zion Missionary Baptist Church, 621 Elwood Ave. N. It is committed to healing trauma in the Black community by helping to break the cycle of oppression. It is a safe space if you need a prayer, a conversation or just a place to sit. Every Wednesday from 1 to 5 p.m.

Food Distribution: Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, 3355 4th Street N., will distribute free fresh food on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month from 10

a.m.-noon. There are no pre-qualifications. Everyone is welcome.

Free Dinners: The Camden Collective and the Sanneh Foundation sponsor a weekly free food pickup at Salem Lutheran Church, 4150 Dupont Ave. N., each Saturday from 1-3 p.m. Call 612-521-3644 for more information. Walkups are welcome.

Pet supplies: Are you in need of pet supplies or pet resources? The North Minneapolis Pet Resource Center, 1401 44th Ave. N., is open for curbside pickup Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5 p.m.-8 p.m. and Saturday 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Call 764-273-0710 to place an order and leave a voicemail.

Radio updates in your language: Tune into Minneapolis's cultural radio programs for COVID-19 updates. The city is broadcasting updates on KMOJ 89.9 FM (English), La Raza 95.7 FM (Spanish), KALY 101.7 FM (Somali) and WIXK AM 1590 (Hmong).

Minneapolis Ward 4 contact info: If you live in Ward 4 and want to reach City Councilwoman LaTrisha Vetaw. contact Maggie Kohl via email: maggie.kohl@ minneapolismn.gov or cell: 612-258-3982. Contact Betsy Brock with other needs

via email: betsy.brock@minneapolismn. gov or cell: 612-257-5242. You can also reach Vetaw via email: latrisha.vetaw@ minneapolismn.gov or cell: 612-322-1143.

Minneapolis Ward 5 contact info: If you live in Ward 5 and want to reach City

Councilman Jeremiah Ellison, call his office at 612-673-2205 or email him at ward5@ minneapolismn.gov. You can also contact his policy associate Bethny Turnwall at bethany.turnwall@minneapolismn.gov

Hennepin County District 2 contact info: To reach Hennepin County Commissioner Irene Fernando, call 612-348-7882 or email her at irene.fernando@hennepin.us. For constituent services contact policy aide Bill Emory at 612-348-3526 or at bill.emory@ hennepin.us

Minneapolis Public Schools, District 2: Sharon El-Amin is the Board of Education director representing North Minneapolis. She can be reached at 612-986-3281 or Sharon.El-Amin@mpls.k12.mn.us

Do you have an ongoing program, meeting or event you would like to see published in North News? Please send the details to DavidP@pillsburyunited.org

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NOTICES

Tree Removal Grant

NEWS

under the grant.

Grant money can be used for tree removal or treatment, stump grinding, tree replacement and community-led engagement and outreach.

Devin Brown Continued from page 9

follow suit.

not," she smiles. coming months

a new paddler. said another.

trauma."

"As I paddle, I want to unlock those stories, hopefully my presence will be a testament to how far we've come," she said. Paddling the second-longest river in North America is no small feat. Brown is determined to complete the journey in 2.5 months, paddling a minimum of 30 miles a day, amounting to grueling 8-12-hour paddling days, while camping near the shore at night. Unlike most Minnesotans, Brown

is hoping for an abundance of snow in Minnesota this winter to aid her journey

Continued from page 5

"This funding will take a significant burden off community members in lowincome neighborhoods who need to remove infested trees," Mayor Jacob Frev said. "This is a textbook example of environmental justice in action..."

Residents who have already had trees removed are not eligible for financial relief

look like her to the joy of water sports, hoping her travel plans inspire others to

"Here we come whether you like it or

During one of her paddles, two 70-yearold women joined her on the water for the first time in their lives. The two women informed Brown afterward that they'll be attending a four-day kayaking trip in the

During another paddle, first time paddlers could be heard speaking their reservations about entering the river.

"I joined looking for a safe space," said

"Black people and water don't mix,"

"Black and Indigenous people have fought for their lives up this river," Brown said. "And water is healing. It's so important that we reclaim this water after so much

Brown sees her trip as a profound homage to the ancestral ties that bind her and countless others to the life-giving river. Over centuries, the Mississippi has bore witness to the movement of enslaved people as merchandise and those seeking freedom. Brown aims to honor these stories as she paddles through the Deep South.

as she rides the melting waters downriver, when Spring comes in 2024.

To aid her mission, Brown is holding a fundraiser on Oct. 6 to cover the expenses of her journey. The funds will contribute to her safety, potentially involving someone following her along the river, and enabling her mother and young son (aged 6) to drive alongside the shoreline during her trip.

Come spring, she invites fellow adventurers to join her in floating down the waters of Minnesota, sending her off on her attempt to make history with support and camaraderie.

To the community of North Minneapolis and anyone inspired, Brown extends this open invitation: "Join me on the water!"

Ward 4 Continued from page 11

the root causes of crime, such as poverty.

"If we think about a pie having eight pieces, the police get six of those pieces, we don't have money for youth to have jobs or resources," she said. "Put some of the money towards housing resources, mental health resources..."

Williams has also dealt with housing insecurity and from having lived in public housing in North Minneapolis, discovered that tenants didn't know their rights and were being taken advantage of. In 2019, she started the non-profit Housing Resource Network to help ten tans defend themselves against bad landlords.

"Affordable housing? I hate that term because housing is not affordable," she said

She believes police should have all the resources they need to keep communities safe and provide a constant presence. She also mentioned private security for communities though it is unlikely the city would adopt that model.

"I am running because basic city functions are not being executed to the satisfaction of the citizens in this area." Williams said. "I don't want to treat people as numbers. I want to treat people as people. We need people who are for people.

Davis admitted his candidacy was based on his beliefs about COVID-19.

"I need this council position in order to amplify and broadcast the virus lie," he said. "This is a hoax, a global hoax perpetrated on people worldwide. And it needs to be addressed now. We can talk about snow shoveling and speeding in the streets, things like that. But right now, the focus of everything has to be (about) ending the lie."

Davis said he had the scientific evidence, but did not offer it during the forum

Ward 5 **Continued from page 11**

into the race just before the filing deadline. A landscaper, self-proclaimed gaming nerd and part-time bakery employee, Peterson wants to improve city services such as snow removal and filling in potholes.

He was a troubled youth who made bad decisions he began to rectify in his 30s, Peterson said. He is a renter and works hard to make end's meet, which he believes voters can relate to.

Peterson said he would like to change the "food desert" status of his ward and, like Martinez, believes in more cops on the street

"I don't understand why we don't have some officers who live in the community and we know by name," Peterson said. "The style of policing needs to change. Rather than defunding, why don't we re-distribute the funds into areas that create a new type of officer, someone who specifically handles mental health issues so that we're not bringing officers with guns into places. We need to get back to community policing."

Omar Brown Continued from page 15

She learned later that one of his friends, a kid that likey sat at her table, had been shot and killed.

I thought it was going to break him," she said.

It was not the first nor the last death Brown endured. She says since childhood, he's one of the last standing in his friend group. In high school alone, Brown lost four friends and teammates to gun violence. While in college, there were deaths so frequent she didn't want him to come home.

"He called me this summer and told me he didn't know what he'd do if he lost someone else," Anderson said.

An uncontrollable reality so similar to those who leave the Northside to shine on a bigger stage, they bring with them this grief of losing people along the way. And that grief turns into the reason. To get up and keep moving forward.

During his visit to Minnesota, one friend held a necklace high and said:

"Do it for him. O!."

In the necklace was a photo of Kavvon Williams, a friend that was lost to gun violence the year prior.

"We all had them, they're the same dream, and he's living them. He's living all our dreams, Eli Campell, a friend and former teammate said.

"Go Omar!", his mom shouted."

For his mom, for the kids he developed his dream to make it to the NFL with, and for himself, he gets back up.

"I do it for them," Brown said.

Brown will be finishing his final semester at the University of Nebraska in December He will graduate with a degree in childhood and youth studies and is preparing to enter the NFL draft in spring 2024.

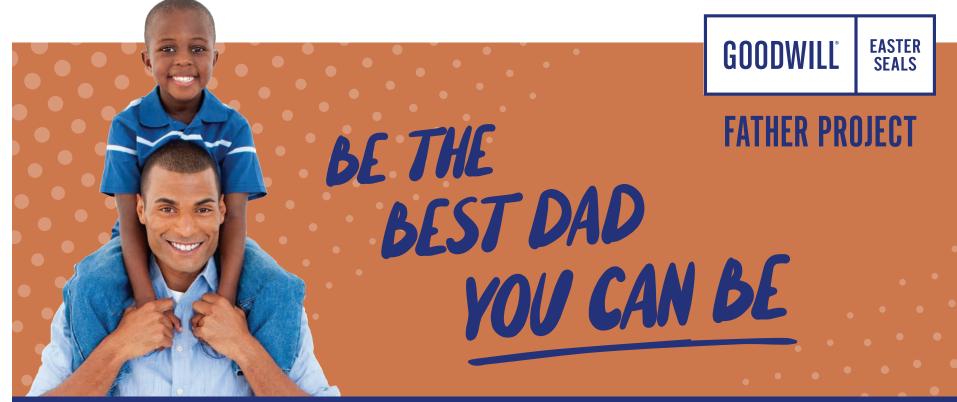
"I can't wait," Brown smiled.



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Hennepin



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