



Regent Neighborhood

ASSOCIATION

July 2020 Newsletter | regentneighborhood.org

Black Lives Matter

In June 2014, when the RNA hosted a conversation on race with Karen Menendez Collier from Centro Hispano, Reverend Dr. Alex Gee from The Nehemiah Center, and Professor William P. Jones, an audience member asked where someone could start. Rev. Gee told the audience that we can begin working for justice by supporting the organizations fighting for racial justice.

The Nehemiah Center, Centro Hispano, The Urban League, Madison Boys & Girls Club, Groundwork, YWCA Madison, and the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, are just a few of the organizations working to make Madison a better place to live. The Regent Neighborhood Association Board appreciates these organizations, their good work, and their challenge to all of us to do the same. ■





Regent Neighborhood
ASSOCIATION

Regent Neighborhood Association
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Madison, WI 53705

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A Note from the President —

Dear Neighbors,

I've sat down several times to write this column. With the ever changing times, with COVID-19 and the horrible deaths of our Black brothers and sisters in this country, it has been very difficult. We, who are so privileged in our neighborhood, need to examine how the RNA can continue to facilitate conversations for racial justice.

It is heartwarming to hear stories of how neighbors are reaching out to support neighbors, from a simple yell across the street to say, "Hi", to a shared backyard fire during this pandemic. We need to prepare for the new normal.

The most exciting news we have to share is that the Highland Underpass Art Project is moving forward due to the artful work of our Alder Shiva Bidar. So many thanks, Shiva, for all of your work securing art for this gateway.

Our beloved 4th of July Festival has been canceled due to health and safety concerns for all of our neighbors and guests.

The RNA Board also agreed to cancel our annual May membership meeting and move it to November 2020, at which time we will elect open RNA table officers and Board members at-large. If you are interested in finding out more about how our neighborhood functions, please contact Nomination Committee members Jon Miskowski or Mary Czyszczak-Lyne.

I have found serving on the RNA Board very rewarding, meeting neighbors and participating on committees for the betterment of our neighborhood. We encourage you to consider joining the RNA Board.

The open Board seats are: President, President-Elect, Communications Chair, School Relations Chair, Development and Preservation Chair, Festival Chair, and five Board members-at-large.

Thank you to our current Board members for their work and commitment, making the Regent neighborhood the best neighborhood in the city (I admit, I am biased.) And thanks also to Betsy Repaske, our previous president, who stepped down due to moving out of the area. The Board appointed me to serve as President until RNA elections take place.

We look forward to seeing you at the Fall membership meeting. Please refer to the RNA website for any updates or cancellations.

Best regards and be safe,

Mary



RNA Board President
Mary Czyszczak-Lyne

Join the RNA Google Group —

groups.google.com/group/regentneighborhoodassn

Fourth of July Memories of the Rag Tag Band

by Polly Kuelbs

Every year for longer than I can remember, I would take out my piccolo on the last week of June. We had gotten the call that the Rag Tag Band was assembling. The Fourth of July was almost upon us and it was time to run through those Sousa Marches.

Margaret Stedman, our conductor, was a lovely woman who led the band for many years. Pot covers was her instrument of choice. She could play them as well as any cymbalist you ever heard. Instrumentalists seemed to come out of the woodwork. There has never been a shortage of musicians. Friends, family, and others who heard about the band by word of mouth would come to play. All were and are welcome.

The era of Margaret has passed. We were lucky to have many other fine directors. Presently our director is Marli Johnson, Margaret's grand-daughter. Marli has brought the Rag Tag Band to a new level. We have played at the Farmers' Market in addition to marching around the block and jamming on the Fourth. It's just plain fun. No competition, lots of laughs, even some new music after a long, long time.

I have out lived my instrument. D-flat piccolos aren't made anymore. No worries, we can transpose the new music and still love to play.



The Rag Tag Band directed by Marli Johnson on July 4, 2019
(photo by Sandy Witkauskas)

With the cancellation of this year's picnic and parade it is a lonely time. Playing with other musicians in the Rag Tag Band was an annual delight. Music-making with old friends and especially meeting new ones is part of us. We have the music, we have our music stands, plenty of clothes pins, in case of wind, water bottles and sun screen. Just say the word and we will return. ■

RNA Membership and Scholarship Fund

Enclosed you will find a membership form. Proceeds from RNA membership contributions pay for our quarterly newsletter and support neighborhood projects such as the pollinator garden, the West High Escalera program, and Franklin and Randall school improvements. Thank you for making this investment in our neighborhood.



Also consider making a contribution to the RNA Scholarship Fund created with the purpose of acknowledging and celebrating the diversity, the energy, and the enthusiasm that the West High School students add to our neighborhood. Two \$2,500 needs-based awards are given to graduating seniors who have demonstrated engagement in multicultural activities both in school and in the Madison community while demonstrating a commitment to academic pursuits.

Make your gift to help us reach our \$5,000 goal. You can join, renew and contribute **online** at **donorbox.org/rna-membership-2020** Thanks! ■

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Greetings from Randall!

Well, I'm not actually at Randall. I'm hunkered down at home like most of you, still adjusting to the ever-changing times. It's a work in progress for all of us.

As you know, we completed our last days of school virtually. I have always found amazing insight through the privilege of being a guest in people's homes. The intimacy provides a greater understanding and appreciation of who folks are. In recent months, I've been under the roofs of staff and students daily. Of course, the visits have not been the kind where the host has to worry about someone seeing a half-eaten plate of spaghetti left under a couch.

I've witnessed our students and my grandchildren blossom right before my eyes. I am thankful for the comfort that the virtual world has afforded us. I have experienced the joy of some actual Raccoon sightings. One event that presented me with this precious gift was our Randall Staff Parade. We began our course at Olive Jones Park and rolled through all the neighborhoods. Amidst cheers and tears, we were reunited with our children and their families who gathered on porches, in yards and along sidewalks.



Our Randall doors are now closed for the summer. Still, all hands are on deck as our school district fashions plans for our return in the fall. Each of us has chiseled a new reality. Lessons learned guide our next steps, ever employing our moral compass. The present thinking is around a hybrid model that includes both virtual and face-to-face learning. I do sense that among the changes will be my trading in my bow ties for pajamas to meet the new norm.

Go Raccoons!

John Wallace, Principal ■

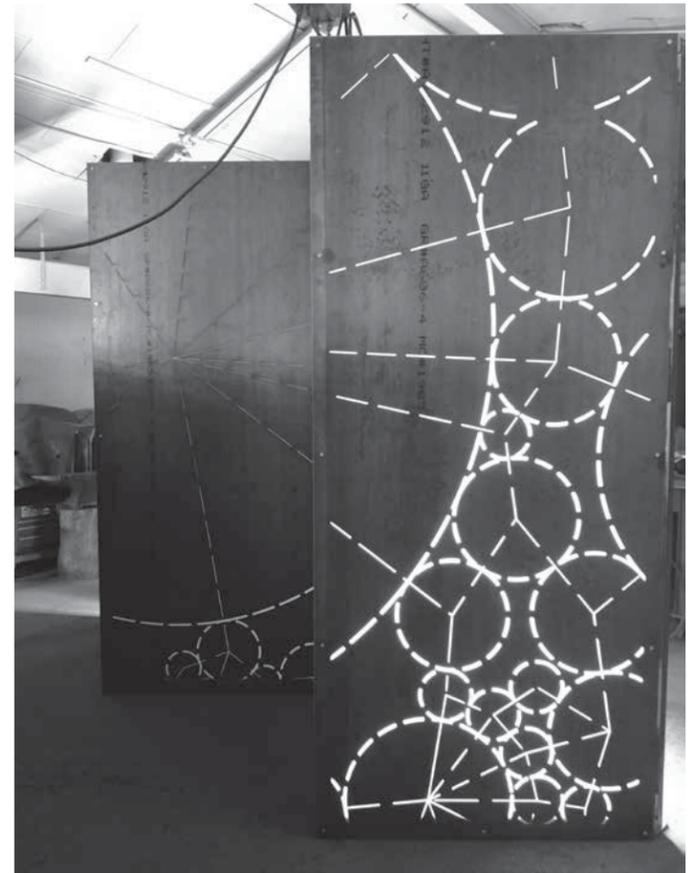
Highland Avenue Underpass Project Update

The Regent Neighborhood's efforts to build a mural at the Highland Avenue Underpass will now move forward thanks to neighborhood support and a finishing grant from the City of Madison.

The mural project was inspired by the community discussions informing the University Avenue Corridor plan and was advanced by a class project of UW-Madison Professor Sam Dennis. His Landscape Architecture class created more than a dozen design concepts and the Regent Neighborhood Association hosted community conversations reviewing the options. From those conversations the neighborhood prioritized Julia Schilling's SHIFT design.

Julia describes her design as an artistic expression inspired by the legacy of scientific discovery at UW-Madison and as "an experimental gateway between Regent Neighborhood and UW-Madison. The accordion-style lenticular walls emphasize the energy and movement of Highland Avenue through interaction of two shifting images. The eight-foot-tall walls address aspects of aesthetics and safety. LED lights provide a dramatic, welcoming nighttime experience that illuminate patterns created with circle packing algorithms. The choice of generative imagery walks the line between science and natural experience, choice and chance."

The RNA will continue to communicate about the progress of construction. Thank you to neighbors who contributed to the project and continue to



Follow the project: facebook.com/shiftunderpassart/

support the RNA. Your membership dollars support good work in our neighborhood and community. ■

From the West High Principal, Karen Boran

The Spring of 2020 will last in memory for a thousand reasons—great tragedies, great challenges, and great opportunities.

I know that what I see from my role at West High School is sometimes a different perspective than what others see. For example, I saw West's faculty and staff rise to the occasion of online instruction with one week of planning, virtually no training (or, I could say literally no virtual training), all set against the struggles and challenges they were experiencing in their own lives. As parents or caretakers of others, many of us found ourselves in a position where we were working more hours, juggling more challenges, at a time when we were in true isolation from others. I saw our students struggle to make these adjustments as well. Not easy.

And then there was graduation. I think the challenge of addressing the social, emotional, and academic needs of our seniors and their families with respect

to the traditions of senior year were many. The day the high school principals decided to cancel prom will stay with me forever, because it was then that I realized that the world was not just going to shift back in place by summer, that we were not only facing the loss of spring sport, capstone school events, and graduation—these highly social events may look different for a significant period of time.

As we look to next year, I can state clearly that our teachers and staff are rising to the occasion again to address issues of systemic (continued on page 15)

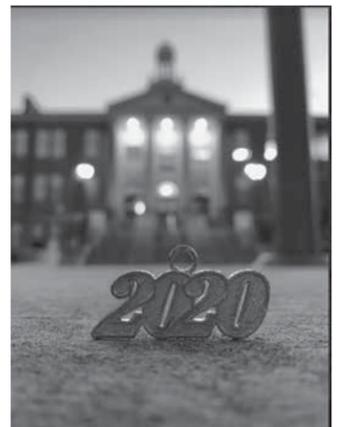


Photo by Henry R. Affeldt, West High student

Dane County Board Report — District 10

The Dane County Board has become virtual, as one of multiple actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing and minimizing travel can have a major impact in delaying the epidemic. Dane County is encouraging people to conduct business with County Departments via phone and email, where possible.



Supervisor Jeremy Levin

As Dane County experiences community spread of COVID-19, the County received funds through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Dane County was provided with a \$95 million payment from the United States Treasury as part of the \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund to governmental entities.

The Board approved two items to provide an additional \$10,550,000 for a recently established small business assistance grant being administered by Dane Buy Local. The aim was to help small businesses with rent and costs they are incurring with revenue decreased from the pandemic.

The demand at Dane County food pantries has increased dramatically as well. The County Board is providing \$1 million per month to Second Harvest Food Bank in May, June, and July to purchase food to distribute to local food pantries.

The Board also approved a \$3.5 million contract with Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C) to provide one-time grants to approximately 500 childcare providers in Dane County. Child care centers are struggling to keep their doors open due to lack of child care needed as parents work from home, have been laid-off, or are underemployed. The funds for this contract will come from the CARES funds the County received from the federal government.

Additionally, Dane County Criminal Justice Council has also established a partnership with Professor John Eason, UW-Madison, to determine the impact of jail population reduction on the incidence of COVID-19 in the jail, as well as a projection of COVID-19 infection if the reduction had not occurred.

On some non-COVID-19 actions, the County's Alliant Energy Center Redevelopment Committee continues to plan for a larger and enhanced expo hall that features more space and greater functionality. Plans will also improve aesthetics and connectivity with ameni-

ties. The schematic designs are necessary to conceptualize the project and understand its budgetary needs. They make it possible to continue the process toward construction plans when the time is right.

Additionally, I hope you all had a chance to complete your census. Four years ago the County Board created a nonpartisan Citizen Redistricting Commission to redraw maps following the release of the 2020 Census. The Citizen Redistricting Commission includes 11 members who are not affiliated with any political party, lobbying group, labor union or other entities with a vested interest in drawing voting boundaries.

Should you or your family have an interest in specific Dane County projects or initiatives, please contact me at levin.jeremy@co.dane.wi.us or call me at 608.577.9335. ■

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Alder Report — District 5

Dear Neighbors,

History is unfolding before our eyes. The last many days have galvanized our city. The time is now for all of us to join in the anti-racist movement and to end anti-Black violence. We must center our focus and actions on the most critical issue before us: how do we create a city where Black lives matter, a city where we put an end to the racist systems and structures that perpetuate inequities. In order for us to do so we all need to go beyond statements of allyship, to be willing to step out of our comfort zone, shift our priorities and focus on our communities of color. I am committed to do all I can as your alder to dismantle the systems that continue to perpetuate racism. I have heard from many of you who have said “I want to be part of the solution.” We do, indeed, all need to be part of the solution.

Specifically, the City has important work ahead in implementing the recommendations of our Madison Police Department Policies & Procedures Ad Hoc Committee. I along with a number of fellow alders led the formation of this committee five years ago. They submitted their final recommendations



Alder Shiva Bidar

to the City Council in December 2019. You can find the full report here: cityofmadison.com/sites/default/files/city-of-madison/clerk/documents/PFCfinalMPDReport20191018.pdf

Their key recommendation was the creation of an MPD Independent Monitor position and a Civilian Oversight Board. The City Council is taking up these items at its June 16 meeting. I would like to see the Civilian Oversight Board in place by the Fall. In addition, as we approach a very challenging budget for 2021 due to COVID-19, it is going to be critical to prioritize investments that address racial inequities.

I am honored to be your alder. Thank you for your continued involvement in neighborhood and city issues. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with any comments, questions, and/or concerns. I can be reached at district5@cityofmadison.com or (608) 220-6986. ■

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Message from an Essential Business

Evan Gruzis of The Heights, a restaurant at 11 N. Allen Street

THANK YOU. I wanted to begin with the two most important words I could write at the moment. We are incredibly lucky to be situated in a community as generous and involved as this one, and your support and patience through this time has been tremendous.

The Heights, in restaurant terms, is still very young. In normal times, we would be finding our way and adapting. This year there has been more to adapt to than anyone could have imagined. Since March, we have shifted our days of operation to Wednesday through Sunday, created a rotating selection of pre-ordered dinners, revised our day menu, begun offering produce directly from farmers, and built an online store (theheightskitchen.com) that can accommodate all of this through contactless transaction. Challenging, yes, but the positive thing about being a young business is we are agile enough to go with the flow.

We've also used this time to bolster groups and efforts, like the Pay It FRWRD Scholarship Fund at Madison College started by our former employee Tyler Krohn, that are fighting for equity and justice. We continue to focus support on our local farmers,



Evan Gruzis of The Heights

who are greatly affected by a shifting economy. Of course, cafes not only deliver nourishment, but a space for people to meet and enjoy themselves, and we miss that energy. Fortunately, our patio is open day and night, and we'll be rolling out indoor dining carefully, with our attention fixed on what lies ahead.

What's next? Keep on keepin' on. We're going to throw you a party after all this is over. Until then, thank you. ■

A Regent Neighborhood Rainbow Hunt

by Heather Huang, MD

We are several months into our COVID-19 pandemic now, but I vividly remember the first few weeks of Madison's stay-at-home journey. It was mid-March and Wisconsin wasn't done with its snowfall or endless cloudy days yet. As uncertain as I was about when the next sunny day was going to be, I was equally uncertain about what COVID-19 was going to bring. That uncertainty, as well as the anxiety, was palpable all around me—anxiety that we had yet to feel, didn't know if we should be feeling, and were already feeling.

Two people who weren't feeling that anxiety were my young children. All they wanted to know was how it could possibly be Spring if there was snow on the ground and not a flower in sight, and whether or not there really was a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. From there, the whimsical musings of a four- and six-year old, the idea of a rainbow hunt was born.

I had heard that people were putting rainbows in their windows to indicate solidarity and hope during stay-at-home and sheltering in place. So I reached out to the Regent Neighborhood, asking if anyone would be interested in creating a rainbow hunt for neighborhood kids. Within hours, 20 people put up rainbows. Within days, we had hundreds. And once the rainbow hunt map was put together we went out, in spite of the rain, to hunt for rainbows. Not only did we find rainbows but we found you, our



A Rainbow Treasure Hunt map

neighbors, telling us to be strong and to hang in there. You told us that through the colors shining bright through your windows. We saw you across the street laughing, and we joined in when we realized you were out hunting rainbows too! We smiled and pointed the way to the next rainbow, to the double rainbow, and to the Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired rainbow. You told us about the rainbow with a pig. We couldn't believe how many rainbows you had found, and we vowed to ride our bikes next time.

From our family to yours, we send a heart-felt thank you for keeping your rainbows and hope up for all to see. ■



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Messages from Non-Essential Businesses

Amy Kahl of Susan Sez, a women's clothing store at 2421 University Avenue



It is with a heavy heart that I type this knowing what is going on in our society. Susan Sez was closed for two months during this pandemic. I have loved being part of the Regent neighborhood, talking and greeting those of you

who walk by. It hurts to reflect on these last few months. As a small business owner in the area, Susan Sez has struggled to keep our doors open. During the pandemic, I have increased my Facebook and newsletter presence. This change has tripled my work hours with less in return. Overall, I have had a 90% decrease in sales during my store closure. My store relies on foot traffic and the opportunity for customers to physically enter my store.

It was a relief when I was able to open my doors in mid-May. What I did not anticipate was people were reluctant to venture out. Yet, the added expense of making sure my customers and staff felt safe by purchasing sanitizing and protective supplies and equipment such as a UV wand was unexpected.

Something that people may not be aware of is I have had to change my inventory to meet the current season having lost sales of my spring merchandise.

Overall, this has been a hard time for all businesses but the support of my customers and the Regent Neighborhood has been uplifting. It is nice that people have stopped in to say, "Hi," and I look forward to more of that. (susan-sez.com)

Heidi and Tom Notbohm, Innkeepers, The Buckingham Inn Bed & Breakfast, 1615 Summit Avenue



The inn was temporarily closed while we all stayed Safer at Home. While we missed hosting guests visiting Madison and the UW campus, we did have extra time to complete necessary projects replacing porch windows, touching

up exterior paint, and sprucing up our landscape plantings. On a personal note, we were thrilled to take care of our two-year-old grandson for a few hours most days while his parents worked at home. Many times we leisurely walked him back from Summit Avenue to his Monroe Street residence, enjoying the many beautiful homes and greeting our Regent/Monroe neighbors along the way. Now that we have re-opened, we look forward to hosting your visiting relatives and friends. (buckinghaminn.com) ■

In Times of Crisis, Poetry Can Be the Bridge that Connects Us

From the editor: I was reading The Guardian the other day, an article by Hong Kong Chinese-British poet Mary Jean Chan. In mid-March she wrote: "Something about the specificity of poetry allows it to crystalize experience, as if one were pausing time. The brevity of a poem and its precision help us tune out the world and its excesses, so we might return, if only momentarily, to ourselves." Chan, the daughter of a rheumatologist, lived through the SARS epidemic as a child in 2003. She recalls, "I declared to my parents that I wanted to be a writer. My father replied: "As a doctor, you can cure one person at a time; as a writer, you can heal a whole society.'"

So, here are two poems from two of our neighborhood's own—Ron Wallace, Professor Emeritus, UW-Madison Department of English, and author of more than ten books of poetry, short stories and anthology. And Amaud Jamaul Johnson, Halls Bascom Professor of English and Director of the MFA Program in Creative Writing at UW, author of three poetry collections, including his most recent, *Imperial Liquor*. With Ron's poem, written before COVID-19, the last words of each line, read vertically top to bottom, form a haiku by Japanese poet Kobayashi Issa (1763 – 1828).

Song of Myself *

by Ron Wallace

after Issa

I think it's enough just to sit and meditate, heedless of the needs of others close to us and of their perpetual demands that seem to sap the strength from us. My doorway and the morning dew are all I need to make my day, and that is where I'll plan to be. And if that marks me misanthropic, if that threatens to end our relationship, I say that is not my problem, closing my door. Thoreau knew how to spend the day alone with his peas and beans and ledgers, and we can do the same. So much for the ties that bind. "We must find our occasions in ourselves," said self-reliant Thoreau. And so I'm going to sing to myself. And the birds. And you. And one or two others.

*From *For Dear Life*, University of Pittsburgh Press (2015). Reprinted with permission of the author.

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L.A. Police Chief Daryl Gates Dead at 83

by **Amaud Jamaul Johnson***

“We were the finest,” Gates

So the parents blamed the children,
 and the children marched barefoot
 through the alleys, spray-painting
 their age. And the preacher introduced
 the word lascivious and accused
 the congregation of not tithing
 when the daughter died.
 And the deacon board smoked.
 And the economists saluted Reagan.
 And the police called it an economy of dust.
 Our meteorologist predicted
 a low-pressure system in the abdomen.
 And the junkies swore perfume rung the air.
 The grocer had his union; the butcher couldn't
 outrun his quarter of spoiled blood.
 And the girls wore extra rings
 and caked their skin with Vaseline.
 And the men slept the afternoon,
 growing childishly morose as they dreamed.
 And I think I thought we'd burn then,
 when the refinery blew, and rust began
 to bleed through the whitewashed fence,
 when the lawns were done, and the schoolyard
 darkened, and the side streets began to split.

*From *Imperial Liquor*, University of Pittsburgh Press (2020).
Reprinted with permission of the author. ■

Regent Market Co-op—Your Neighborhood Store

by **Jordan Tucker, RMC Board Member**

In the middle of March, as the neighborhood began to prepare for an impending stay-at-home order, sales at the store had been rising steadily. Then, on March 26, the store made the decision to move to delivery and curbside pick-up only for the safety of shoppers and staff. What happened next? Sales continued to rise, so did memberships.

The Co-op exists to serve our community, and our community trusts and relies on the Co-op. The pandemic we've all found ourselves grappling with has only deepened that relationship. I want to thank all of you that shopped and most importantly, John and the rest of the staff who showed how truly essential they are to all of us.

As of June 1st, we are now offering in store shopping again while continuing curbside pick-up and delivery (call 608-233-4329). To keep everyone safe, we limit shoppers in the store and masks are required. Also, our new adjusted hours are 9am-8pm, 7 days a week.

As a reminder, the store stays viable only through your patronage, and we are asking you all to continue the increased level of support we've seen in the past few months. Our (now virtual) annual members' meeting will soon be announced and we'd love for you all to attend to hear where we're at financially and listen to your feedback.



The list of how you can help the store remains the same...

- Think of the store less as a convenience store and buy a full cart of groceries (if you can)
- Pay with cash or check, not plastic
- Deposit cash in your store account (“pay forward”)
- Become a Co-op member, if you aren't already
- Tell your friends/neighbors why they should join and shop at the Co-op
- Volunteer to help with quarterly inventory, leafleting, or any services you can offer
- If you're a bond holder: extend the payback years or other terms of your bond

If you have questions or think you can help—contact me, jordan_tucker@hotmail.com ■



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Words from the "Word" House at 1924 Kendall Avenue

by **Ken DeLisle**

There are people all over the world singing on-line, clapping every night at 7 p.m. in honor of health care workers, etc. So in these stressful times, I wanted to do a little something along those lines. My hope was to cheer people up or maybe put a brief smile on their face. For some reason I focused on words with Os in them, e.g. 'HOPE', 'LOVE', 'JOY'. I found that creating the letters and words was very cathartic and calming for me, too. I found myself spending hours in my basement workshop, which fit in perfectly with sheltering in place. I also found it to be quite addictive. I have several different versions of those words in the backyard and inside my house.



Then, to appease/feed my addiction, I started to think of other positive words and phrases. The rest, as they say, is history. One of my daughters isn't particularly fond of them, but she also says that the point of 'art' is to allow for different interpretations/critiques. From inside, it is fun to watch people's reactions as they go by. Most of them appear to be

positive. It also is a great conversation starter if I happen to be outside. One lady walking by with two small children said that her oldest one calls it the 'Word' house. I couldn't disagree. Be Safe, Be Well, Be Kind. ■

West High (continued from page 5)

racism at West—currently, we're looking at grading practices and aligning our standards to address what we are told will be a significant learning loss from this spring for all students—and what decisions we can make as a school community to ensure that

we are not just avowing to be an anti-racist school in mission, but becoming one in fact.

We know we will have your support as we work with you, our students, our teachers and staff, as we bring the events of Spring 2020 into focus. ■

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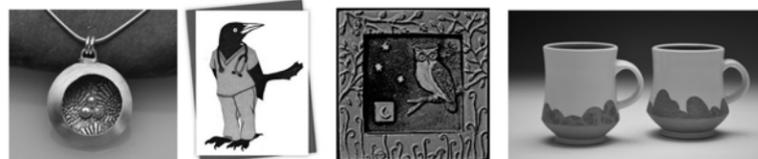


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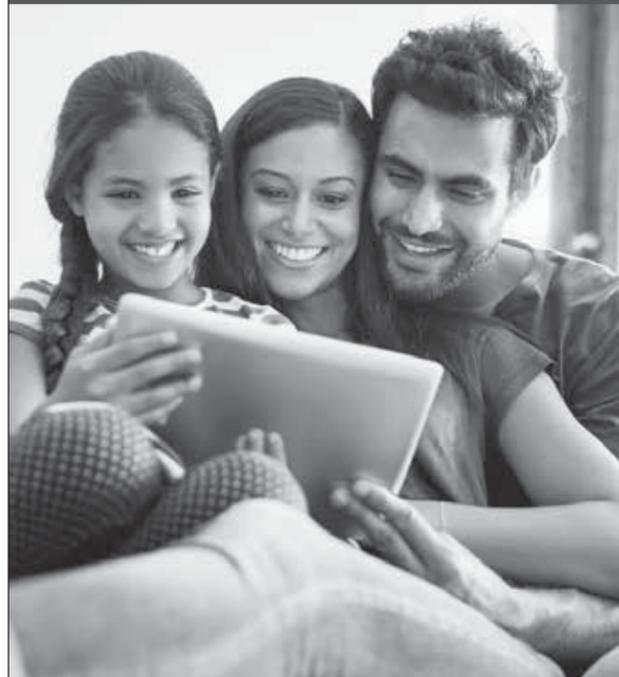
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A Message From Representative Shelia Stubbs

The past couple of months have been some of the most difficult and unprecedented. From COVID-19 to the death of George Floyd (may he rest in peace), our lives have been turned upside down.

As I write this, Public Health Madison & Dane County, Dane County and the City of Madison officially entered into Phase 2 in the Forward Dane Phased Reopening Plan for Dane County during the COVID-19 Pandemic. As businesses and restaurants open up to allow 50% capacity in their stores, indoor gatherings increase from 10 people to 50 people or fewer allowed with physical distancing, and as playgrounds open please remember to protect yourselves by wearing masks, washing your hands thoroughly and often, and staying at least six feet away from others.

George Floyd's death, along with the passing of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and now Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta, brings back memories of our own losses. Most prominently the loss of Tony Robinson on March 6th, 2015. We continue to march for justice and police reform even as our hearts weigh heavy with these tremendous losses.

It is time for the legislature to come together and pass bills addressing police reform; these have been sitting in committees. The Wisconsin Legislative Black Caucus has called for a special session of the legislature to take place on June 19th, and Assembly Democratic Leadership joins us in that call. In this special session we wish to discuss and enact pertinent legislation aimed at reforming our justice system at the state level.

The bills I've authored regarding criminal justice reform include: 2019 Assembly Bill 930, which decriminalizes small possessions of marijuana up



Representative Shelia Stubbs

to 28g and prohibits establishing probable cause for arrest based on odor; 2019 Assembly Bill 933, which aims to keep young people who've committed nonviolent crimes out of jails and prisons through community restorative courts; and 2019 Assembly Bill 920, the "End Racial Profiling in Wisconsin Bill," which creates a civil cause of action for racially-motivated police calls. I introduced 2019 Assembly Bill 768, which creates a Council for Equity and Inclusion. Additionally, I introduced 2019 Assembly Bill 384, which prohibits the consideration of a job applicant's conviction record. These bills aim to reduce the disproportionate number of Black Americans incarcerated for small, nonviolent crimes, and to bring racial equity to our criminal justice system.

Here are additional bills that help us address criminal justice reform: Assembly Bill 1012, Assembly Bill 1013, Assembly Bill 1014, and Senate Bill 829.

I am proud to serve as your representative to the legislature. I am grateful for your leadership, your activism, and for the ways in which you work together as a neighborhood to keep all of us safe.

I love receiving your phone calls, emails and letters—especially about bill ideas and of course any concerns that you may have. Always feel free to contact my office by phone, (608) 266-3784 or by email at Rep.Stubbs@legis.wisconsin.gov.

Please stay safe, and stay healthy. We will get through this—together. ■



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Fault Lines and Solace

by Jacob Blasczyk

Here's a recent excerpt from Jacob (Jake) Blasczyk's blog, "Prospect Gardens: Experiences and Reflections." (gardensprospect.blogspot.com) Jake's the driver behind this neighborhood gardening effort staffed by volunteers and financially supported by both Regent and Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Associations. It's located along the Southwest Commuter Bike and Pedestrian Path, where Prospect Avenue crosses the trail. Jake's posts, a gentle even inspirational mix of seasonal gardening observations, poetry and photos, are enjoyed by many. Volunteers, referred to as caretakers, are welcome. Contact Jake at jblasczyk13@gmail.com

In my last entry I reflected on regaining balance. Now balance is even more difficult because coping with the COVID-19 pandemic has merged with tumultuous forces unleashed by the death of George Floyd and other Black Americans. Singed in my mind is this Black man, face down on the pavement with the knee of a white policeman on his neck, calling out "I can't breathe." After nearly nine minutes, George dies as other policemen stand by. A tidal wave of protest against police brutality and racial injustice amidst the pandemic swept across the country and continues.

The poem, "Fault Line," by Robert Walsh gives me solace as I once again seek balance in mind and body. uuwestport.org/fault-line/ from Noisy Stones: A Meditation Manual, Skinner House Books, 1992

As I cope with the fault lines and the now "fractured order," tending Prospect Gardens, along with my neighbors and Ann, my wife, also provides solace because I feel the "tensile strands of love" while experiencing the "web of life." Plus, tending the Gardens gives me hope that there will be another spring, summer and fall. A few days ago I planted wild geraniums that hopefully will survive and bloom during the spring of 2021. That same day I finished planting another new bed of prairie plants, some that will bloom next year. A final example of



Message on the boarded-up window of a Monroe St. business

hope is a pussy willow shrub, donated anonymously, that I found near the Fox Avenue stairs. A note was attached. I planted it in anticipation that the shrub will bloom next spring while understanding that there are no guarantees...

While I find solace in tending Prospect Gardens, escape from feeling the fault lines of the pandemic and from the brutal death of George Floyd is impossible. Both now mean we have a "fractured order." Returning to the so called "normal" is also impossible. Instead we must summon courage to accept our "losses" and strengthen the "tensile strands of love that bend and stretch to hold" us within "the web of life that's often torn but always healing." To me this now means intentionally and vigorously addressing inequality, poverty and our long history of racial injustice.

A first small step we can all take is heeding a message on the boarded up window of a Monroe Street business: Listen. This includes voices we may not like to hear asking us to look deeply into our own beliefs, attitudes and how our society perpetuates inequalities and racism.

May you experience solace and peace during these times of worldwide suffering. ■

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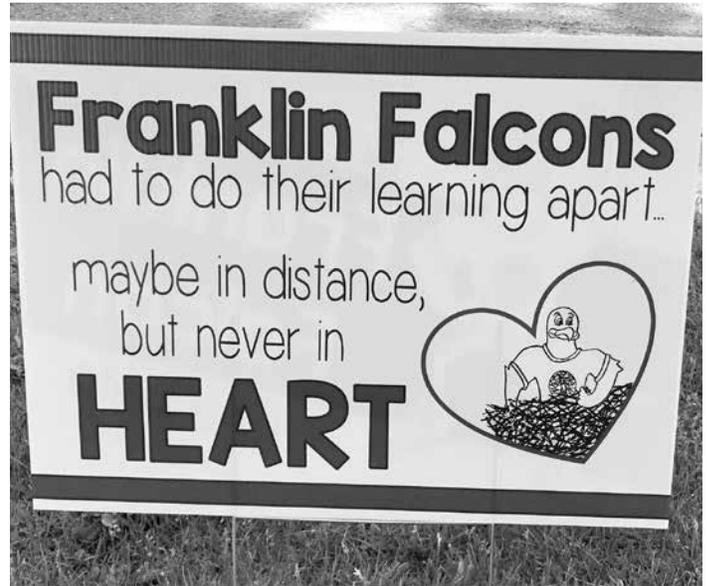
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