Getting to know guardianship

As the November election draws near, people with disabilities need to be vigilant about their voting rights. That’s especially true for disabled people who are under guardianship or conservatorship.

An upcoming event with a focus on guardianship is a highlight of this year’s Disability Voting Rights Week. Disability Voting Rights Week is September 12-16. Formerly known as National Disability Voting Registration Week, it is a time to spotlight election issues for people with disabilities.

It is also a time to urge everyone to exercise the right to vote.

Rev UP MN hosts a forum as part of Disability Voting Rights Week. The 2022 Elections, Voting and Accessibility for People with Disabilities forum is 6:30-7:45 p.m. Thursday, September 15 via Zoom. Pre-register at https://arcminnesota.zoom.us/meeting/register/tUueCOCpDrGzC5XV0-CFA9Ok1m5td40EC

Justin Page of the Minnesota Disability Law Center will present information on guardianship and the right to vote. Page will also discuss the history of voting rights laws affecting persons with disabilities, a result of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), tips on how staff can vouch for people on Election Day, accessibility requirements at polling stations and supports like ballot marking machines. Participants will learn how to file a complaint if there are problems at the polls.

Guardianship and conservatorship can raise many questions when voting. What is the difference between the two? Both posts are court-appointed but appointees play different roles for a disabled person.

A guardian can perform duties related to personal care, custody and control, including decisions on medical care and residence. Being under court-ordered status means a person is incompetent to vote. A guardian can perform duties related to personal care, custody and control, including decisions on medical care and residence. Being under court-ordered status means a person is incompetent to vote.

A conservator can make financial decisions, oversee assets, pay bills and perform other tasks, with court approval required for some duties. A guardian can make financial decisions, oversee assets, pay bills and perform other tasks, with court approval required for some duties.

A guardian can perform duties related to personal care, custody and control, including decisions on medical care and residence. Being under court-ordered status means a person is incompetent to vote. A guardian can perform duties related to personal care, custody and control, including decisions on medical care and residence. Being under court-ordered status means a person is incompetent to vote.

In the federal lawsuit, Murphy et al. v. Hbartstad, state officials are accused of isolating disabled people from their home communities and being overly restrictive in living situations. Legal Aid estimates that the settlement will positively affect more than 1,000 Minnesotans with disabilities. It will also affect people going forward.

There are about 13,000 Minnesotans living in group homes at this time. The lawsuit’s plaintiffs are Tenner Murphy, Marrie Bottelson, Dionne Swanson, and others. They filed the suit against DHS, which has changed commissioners over time. Jodi Harpstead

Key legal settlement is a win for living choices in the community

by Jane McClure

After almost six years, a lengthy class action lawsuit centered on living choices is coming to an end. More than 1,000 Minnesotans should be able to move out of group homes and into independent living settings, with the help of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHHS).

A preliminary settlement was announced in late July by the Minnesota Disability Law Center, a division of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. The case goes back to U.S. District Court Judge Donovan Frank on January 4, 2023. Frank is expected to give final approval of the settlement that day.

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Lake County DAC celebrates 50-plus years of progress

by Kitty Mayo, Lake County Press

The Lake County Developmental Activity Center (LCDAC) was finally able to hold a community celebration to commemorate its 50th anniversary of serving Lake County. LCDAC moved to Two Harbors about five years ago seeking more space, after spending 45 years based in Knife River.

The anniversary celebration was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The LCDAC is a private nonprofit organization that provides home and community-based services to adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Michelle McDonald, LCDAC executive director, said the individuals they serve are an integral part of the community and economy as many work in supportive roles at grocery stores, gas stations and assisted living facilities in Two Harbors, Knife River and Duluth.

On-site, some individuals carry on with what McDonald calls their “legacy” services, such as rug weaving from donated fabrics.
The power of synthesized speech took big steps ahead a century ago.

Wolfgang von Kempelen, who in the 1770s created an “acoustic-mechanical speech machine which was operated with bellows. Other ‘speaking machines’ followed with many inventors involved.

One of them was Alexander Graham Bell, who at the same time was working on the development of the electronic hearing aid.

The first full electrical synthesis device was introduced by Stewart in 1922. The synthesizer had a buzzer as an excitation source and a set of circuits to model the acoustic resonances of the vocal tract. The machine was able to generate single static vowel sounds with two lowest formants, but not any consonants or connected utterances.

Interestingly, Stewart did little with speech synthesis after that and had a long career as an astrophysicist at Princeton.

Other developed similar speech devices, including Harvey Fletcher of Bell Telephone Laboratory. In 1924 his device managed to produce a limited vocabulary of sounds, including vowels and words such as ‘mama’ and ‘papa’.

A big breakthrough was patented in 1937, with the VODER or Voice Operation D‘emonstrator. The VODER was a manually operated speech synthesizer invented by Homer Dudley in 1937. The VODER also came out of the Bell Labs.

A history of the VODER states its significance when electronic speech synthesis was attempted by breaking up human speech into its acoustic components and then reproducing the sound patterns electronically. The VODER was first demonstrated at the 1939 New York World Fair. A history states: “The World Fair of 1939 had the most famous robot of the day, and the VODER, which could give every robot a voice! There were 20 trained operators known as ‘girls.’ Mrs. Helen Harper was particularly skilled with the machine and her performance was applauded. The trained operators handled the machine much like a musical instrument such as a piano or an organ, and they managed to successfully produce human speech during the demos. In the New York Fair demonstration, which was repeated frequently, the announcer gave a simple running discussion of the circuit to which the operator replied through the VODER. This was done by manipulating 14 keys with the fingers, a bar with the left wrist, and the mouth with the right foot.”

Other innovations followed, with many devices available today to help with specific disabilities.

The power of synthesized speech is that it can help people who have difficulties with speech. It can be used for educational purposes, such as teaching children how to read and write. It can also be used for entertainment purposes, such as in video games and movies. The technology is still under development, and there is always room for improvement. But already, it has made a significant impact on our lives.
Self-direction means different things to different people, but it’s based on one premise: choice. When an individual with disabilities can self-direct, they can hire the caregivers they want, decide the type of services they need and then design the supports that are best for them. A self-directed plan is based on an individual’s challenges and strengths to help determine the supports that help them reach their unique independent living goals.

Since 1998, MRCI-CDS has worked with families throughout the state to provide self-directed services to individuals and families who choose to self-direct their own services. MRCI-CDS offers 10 different programs under five different waivers. As a Financial Management Services (FMS) for the state of Minnesota, CDS helps support MRCI’s overall mission of providing innovative and genuine opportunities for individuals at home, at work and in the community.

Many people choose to self-direct because they want to hire people they trust – family, friends, and neighbors. They want more control over the services they get and who provides that service. They want to stay in their home and avoid group homes or assisted living/nursing homes. It may be that they want to hire people who speak their language, understand their culture, and cook their native foods. Or perhaps they live in a rural area and cannot find services needed near them.

Here we have mentioned just a few examples of how self-direction can transform a life. MRCI CDS helps individuals and families navigate the complexities of self-directed care by providing Financial Management Service, PCA Choice and 245D Licensed Services.

For more information, please call (800) 829-7110 or visit https://www.mrcicds.org/
In Memoriam Tim Benjamin
Access Press Executive Director and Editor 2001-2020

by Jeff Bangsberg, Editor

Tim Benjamin died this summer. An obituary appeared in the August issue of Access Press, where he served as publisher and editor. Tim was relatively new to the disability community, having spent several years in Arizona before moving to Minnesota's disability community, having spent many years in Arizona.

Before he died of cancer, Charlie Smith, founding editor of Access Press, told me he was turning the newspaper editorship over to Tim. I wondered who Tim was and how he could possibly fill Charlie’s shoes. At the same time, I had immense respect for Charlie and knew that Tim must have all the right qualities to be both a trusted and kind friend.

I finally met Tim in person at an October 2001 print party given by the President of Ireland at Northrop Auditorium. Tim introduced me to his wife, Lynda, in turn, introduced him to my wife, Anita. Our friendship began.

By now, those of you reading this know that Tim was a smart, straight-shooting, no nonsense man with a gentle, soft-spoken approach. Tim was a leader, one who challenged others to take on the role of editor at Access Press. He was not afraid to take a stand, even if it meant losing friends. He stood up for what he believed in and had the courage to do so.

He made sure the newspaper retained its relevance to the disability community, while at the same time bringing a new element of interest. Tim also created a new way to recognize leaders in the disability community. Every year, Access Press honors a few people who have made outstanding contributions to Minnesota’s disabled people.

Tim devoted his energies to many different issues of concern to the disability community. He spent more than a decade serving on the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living (MCIL’s) Board of Directors. When MCIL was in transition as an organization, Tim worked with others to lead that change.

In 2018, Tim convinced me and several others to work on the Personal Care Assistance (PCA) workforce crisis that was becoming more dire each year. Faced with the lack of adequate pay and the lack of people interested and qualified to do the work, we approached the Minnesota Legislature about the urgent need for solutions. We pushed for rate increases, better training and other policy changes to improve PCA care. We developed a second-tier payment structure for PCAs. As caring for people with higher needs who have an especially hard time finding the specialized care they need to continue living independently at home. We called this the “Complex Care” rate. Tim, along with the late Rick Cardenas, secured the backing of Gov. Mark Dayton for this policy, which was later passed by the legislature and is now known as the “Enhanced PCA rate” for people with complex needs.

Tim was a kind and thoughtful friend, and an important leader in the disability community. I will really miss Tim, as will all those who could call him friend. Rest in peace my friend. You certainly deserve it.

His legacy is one of disability-focused journalism

by Jane McClure, Editor

Our community.
Movement to eliminate subminimum wages is sometimes misunderstood

by Jillian Nelson and Andrea Ziebar

Comprehensive

September 2022    Volume 33, Number 9

The recent commentary headlined, “Limited work options for people with disabilities raises equity issues,” portrays widespread misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the work of the Minnesota Task Force on Eliminating Subminimum Wages.

Parent Jean Bender writes, “My son, David, fits the profile of someone who would be funneled into subminimum wage. Instead, he has an individualized program designed to build skills and support community integration. I support eliminating subminimum wage, not to limit choices, but because there are better options for my son and his peers. We can’t seem to discuss those options because those fighting to preserve the outdated subminimum wage programs won’t have the conversation.”

There is a growing movement across the country to end subminimum wages for people with disabilities. Almost 15 states have already ended subminimum wage work, or have plans to do so. To make sure Minnesota is prepared if this happens, the legislature set up the Task Force on Eliminating Subminimum Wages in 2021. Self-advocates—including those who were earning subminimum wage—led the 2021 legislation because they believe phasing out subminimum wage, segregated employment, and other employment-related policies that conventionally are used against people with disabilities will help advance equity, drive social change, and protect human rights.

People with disabilities, the parent of a child with disabilities, service providers, and people who work for government agencies are all serving on the task force and working together.

The task force is not making recommendations on whether Minnesota should end the use of subminimum wages, but working to ensure a smooth transition if subminimum wages are phased out by state or federal policy changes. As part of the task force member solicitation process, applicants acknowledged they understand and agree to support the work of the task force—which is to put together a plan to end subminimum wage, if legislation is passed mandating the end of it. They were not required to be committed to ending subminimum wage.

While the task force was given a clear charge by the legislature that did not include debating the value of subminimum wage, the plan the task force creates can help support healthy debate at the legislature, and in other forums.

The work currently being done will ensure people with disabilities always have the meaningful services and support they need to have belonging, justice, freedom, and citizenship in their communities.

Minnesota Council on Disability honors six of its exceptional advocates

Walz and Flanagan name several appointees to state advisory groups

Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan have announced appointments to the Minnesota Assistive Technology Advisory Council, Minnesota Council on Disability and Ombudsmen Committee for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.

Aaron Arvig, Lonsdale, replaces Abdi Matan on the Minnesota Assistive Technology Advisory Council. The Minnesota Assistive Technology Advisory Council provides the Minnesota STAR Program with consumer-responsive, consumer-driven advice for planning, implementing, and evaluating assistive technology activities. The STAR Program’s mission is to help all Minnesotans with disabilities gain access to and acquire the assistive technology they need to live, learn, work and play.

Cesar Gonzalez, Rochester, was appointed as a doctoral degree licensed psychologist to the Board of Psychology. Gonzales replaces Stephen Walden. Jill Idrizovic, Stillwater, was reappointed to the board as a public member. Salina Remeskey, Falcon Heights, was reappointed as psychology training program representative. The Board of Psychology licenses psychologists, establishes rules of conduct and takes appropriate action against licensees who do not meet and maintain those ethical requirements, establishes or approves programs that qualify for professional psychology continuing education credit, educates the public about licensure requirements and the rules of conduct, and receives and reviews complaints against licensees who may have violated the Psychology Practice Act.

James McKinstra, Moorhead, was appointed to the Minnesota Board on Aging. McKinstra replaces Kay Hendriksen. Christine Mueller, Roseville, replaces John Doan. Both are citizen members.

The Minnesota Board on Aging develops, coordinates, evaluates and administers federal and state funds for programs for the aging; makes grants to seven area agencies on aging and non-profit agencies; and serves as advocate for older persons.

Patricia Siebert, Minneapolis, was appointed to the Ombudsmen Committee for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities. Siebert replaces Felix Montez. Panou Xiong, Minneapolis, replaces Alyssa Greene. Petronelah Thomas-Shaniou, Andover, was reappointed to the committee. The Ombudsmen Committee for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities advises and assists the ombudsman in developing policies, plans, and programs to benefit persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities, chemical dependence, and emotional disturbance.

Tammey Berberi, Morris, was appointed to the Minnesota Council on Disability. Berberi replaces Leigh Lake. The Council on Disability advises and aids the governor, state agencies, and the public on public policy and the administration of programs and services for people with disabilities in Minnesota. It is a legislatively established advisory committee within state government to supplement the efforts of advocacy groups in the private sector and link those who are statutorily responsible for planning and delivering services.

The council advises, provides technical assistance, and collaborates with others, and advocates to expand opportunities, improve the quality of life, and empower all people with disabilities.

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Live your most independent life, follow your path!
IN MEMORIAM

Tomassoni was dedicated lawmaker

Sen. David Tomassoni (I-Chisholm) was a dedicated Iron Range lawmaker who led the way on amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) research funding. He died in August from the disease. Tomassoni was 69 and was in hospice care in Duluth.

One of the veteran lawmaker’s last accomplishments was pushing through a $25 million allocation to support ALS research and caregivers during the 2022 session. By the time the measure was signed into law, Tomassoni was using a wheelchair and speech synthesizer. At the signing ceremony he said, “This bill means hope.”

Many elected leaders paid tribute to Tomassoni after his death. “David was a champion for his constituents, the Iron Range, and all of Minnesota,” said Gov. Tim Walz. “I am honored to have known him and to have worked together to pass millions of dollars in funding for ALS research and caregiver support last session. His legacy will continue to help people in Minnesota for generations.”

He was a lifelong Iron Range resident. Tomassoni spent 16 years playing professional hockey in Italy. He was on Italy’s national team for the 1984 Sarajevo Olympics. He spent 16 years playing professional hockey in Italy. He was on Italy’s national team for the 1984 Sarajevo Olympics.

Tomassoni was dedicated lawmaker best to understand and support people in need to turn his life around. He finally found the therapy and medication he needed to turn his life around. He still worked as a lawyer while pursuing his legal studies. In 1984 he graduated from the University of Minnesota. He struggled with mental illness, sustained a brain injury in a 1965 automobile accident. He took up wheelchair marathon racing and was often a tireless advocate for people facing challenges. Menge died in August after a long illness. She was 79 and lived in St. Paul. Menge worked for many years providing social work care to patients at Walker Methodist and through Fairview Hospice. She was also a conservator and volunteered as a Refrinder.

He is survived by his wife Charlotte, three children and their families, and other family members and friends. Memorials are preferred to the Communications Center at the Minnesota State Services for the Blind. Services have been held.

### Weber served on state court

Gary Weber was not only an accomplished wheelchair racer, he led a life of service to people with disabilities. Weber died in August. He was 76 and lived in St. Paul.

A native of Red Wing, Weber graduated from Red Wing High School and Southwest State University. He loved sales and owned and operated United Supply Company. Travels to Hawaii and classic cars were also favorites. He was a member of the Minnesota Street Rod Association and Red Wing Bearing Burners.

Weber became a paraplegic after a 1968 automobile accident. He took up wheelchair marathon racing and was often seen training around Lake Como in St. Paul. His community service included time on the Minnesota Council on Disability. He is survived by siblings and their families. Memorials are preferred to Courage Kenny. Services have been held.

### Ario spoke of life experiences

Bruce Ario used his life experiences with mental illness and brain injury to help others. Ario died in August after a fall at his home. He was 67 and lived in Minneapolis.

Ario grew up in southwest Minneapolis, and earned a degree in economics from the University of Minnesota. He struggled with mental illness, sustained a brain injury in a motor vehicle accident and was unable to complete law school.

He struggled to find appropriate mental health services and went without effective treatment and medication for five years. He endured bouts of homelessness while pursuing his legal studies. In 1984 he finally found the therapy and medication he needed to turn his life around.

Ario went on to become both a beneficiary and public advocate for Tasks Unlimited. There he led various work teams for the last 35 years of his life. He won multiple awards, including the John K. Trepp Innovator of the Year Award in 2013 for “creative thinking that carries on with the spirit of the Fairweather philosophy to help people reclaim their lives from the limitations of mental illness.”

He was a frequent public speaker for Tasks, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, National Association of Social Workers, law enforcement and other groups on how best to understand and support people with mental illness. Ario wrote novels and poetry, and took part in writers’ workshops and groups. He enjoyed marathon running and was a lay leader and mission trip volunteer at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church.

Ario is survived by three brothers, their families and many friends. Services have been held. Memorials preferred to Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church or Tasks Unlimited.

### His voice was familiar

Benjamin “Benny” James had a voice Radio Talking Book listeners would recognize. James died in August. He was 71 and lived in St. Paul.

He began teaching music in St. Paul in 1969, starting at Mechanic Arts High School, then at the performing arts center at Webster, and Central High School. He retired from St. Paul Public Schools in June of 2003, moving to eight years teaching fine arts at Cretn-Derham Hall. He sang in church choirs.

One of his most cherished uses of his voice talent was as a volunteer reader at Minnesota State Services for the Blind from December 1992 until March 2020. He is survived by his wife Faye, a son and daughter and their families, and other family members and friends. Memorials are preferred to Never Surrender, an ALS charity. Services have been held.
Wheelchair travel changes coming?

Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Pete Buttigieg has promised to work on requiring airlines to allow passengers to stay in their personal wheelchairs when they fly.

“That would be a huge change for countless travelers who have sustained serious injuries to themselves, or had wheelchairs damaged when traveling.

“We know that this won’t happen overnight, but it is a goal that we have to work to fulfill,” Buttigieg said in a YouTube video posted recently by the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

One recent travel story involved wheelchair user John Tischida, former Minnesota disability community leader and current executive director of the Association of University Centers on Disability. His chair was wrecked this summer by Alaska Airlines, upping his schedule.

“What price do you put on a week-long loss of independence while homebound in a wheelchair? As a user of a chair that causes pressure sores?” Tischida said in a social media post. “It’s great that DOT is now quantifying the frequency of how often wheelchairs are damaged. But when the damage will every airline be held accountable for forcing those of us with disabilities to put our lives at risk by holding our chairs.

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) doesn’t require airlines to make it possible for passengers to travel in their personal wheelchairs. But Buttigieg is traditionally typed in on the chair of a chair in the board room into a narrow, airline-owned chair. Once aboard the plane, they are transferred from that chair to a travel chair. A recent National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report delivered at the behest of Congress concluded that personal wheelchair securement is technically feasible on commercial

Sports range to open

A new, fully accessible rifle, pistol and wheelchair range for disabled individuals and people with disabilities will soon be available near McGregor, in north-central Minnesota. It is led by a collaboration between St. Paul’s Metro Deaf students STEAMed up and create shooting lanes for the range. Costs, though, could be substantial -- potentially totaling $1 million per plane or more, even assuming all the wheelchair slots were purchased and the seats removed were economy class.

In a statement, Buttigieg referred to the experience of Marine Corps veteran Charles Brown, president of PVA of Minnesota. ‘Brown, Buttigieg said, was once dropped by an airline employee onto a jet bridge, breaking his tail bone and causing a near-fatal infection.”

(Source : Travel Weekly, Access Press staff)

Handi Medical Supply

In-house captioning lost

A group at the University of Minnesota has been working to protect services for the deaf and hard of hearing community. But in August the university eliminated “in-house captioning,” despite a petition with hundreds of signatures in opposition.

The University of Minnesota has been the University of Minnesota since 2004. “It’s a wonderful place to be,” Hanson, a C-Print captionist, said. Hanson, a C-Print captionist, works as an in-house captionist to help those students and faculty in the deaf and hard of hearing community.

“I go to classes, meetings or events with a laptop and I’m typing all audible information into my laptop, any images and any environmental sounds or context, I’m typing out on a screen and the text is accessible,” Hanson said.

But her time at the university could soon be coming to an end. “This will completely remove a system that provided access that was established for a reason, she said.

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SETTLEMENT

From page 1

is the current commissioner.

The lawsuit became a class action in 2017, allowing more people to join.

“This settlement will ensure a greater opportunity for all class members to live in homes they can call their own, no longer stuck in settings with utter strangers, and provide a more innovative choice to live in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs, as the Supreme Court held many years ago far back in 1999,” said Justin Perl, Legal Aid attorney and lead counsel in the case.

The settlement will provide options for group homes. They have asked to move into homes or apartments of their own, and didn’t get the help they needed to make the move happen.

They contend that disability programs run by DHS rely too heavily on four-person group homes. That over-reliance on one housing option is called out as a violation of the U.S. Supreme Court decision, Olmstead v. L.C. The Olmstead decision stipulates that disabled people have the right to participate in their communities, and live more integrated and independent lives in the community.

Plaintiffs have described that they see as overly rigid group home rules, and being told when they can eat, sleep, have guests, have pets or pursue work and hobbies.

“I am very happy with the result. I hope this case will help other people like myself with getting the services they need to move if they want,” said plaintiff Diane Swanson.

DHS issued a statement after the ruling, saying it works to improve housing access but that it is challenging to find housing for people with disabilities.

There have been more than 170 group home closures in Minnesota in recent months due to staff shortages. Residents have had to move, with some moving in with elderly parents. Other disabled people are moving from independent living to group homes because of staff shortages.

The plaintiffs have sought to change Minnesota’s Medicaid service system. Throughout the case’s history there have been pleas for more access to disability waiver services. More access would allow people to do planning and seek options for moving out of facilities and into the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.

Timeless of services under the Medicaid Act and violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal regulations are also claimed.

State officials have contended over the years that they aren’t relying too heavily on group homes and that people can move into more individualized settings.

The case has had a long and complex path through the court system. A key ruling was made in 2019, that the policies and practices of DHS violated the plaintiffs’ constitutionally protected due process rights. That allowed the case to proceed.

The newly announced settlement agreement requires DHS to take a variety of specific steps to improve access and choice for people with disabilities who want to live in their own homes or apartments. A key piece of the agreement is that DHS must identify everyone living in group homes who said they wanted to look into more individualized housing options. DHS will give each of these individuals information about accessing housing transition services, known as Housing Stabilization Services, a Medicaid benefit announced in 2020.

DHS will also:

• require housing-related trainings for all case managers.
• collect and publish data to measure if people living in group homes are successfully moving into their new homes, and
• make sure that anyone who wants to appeal a denial of Housing Stabilization Services knows how to do it.

Legal Aid encourages all people with disabilities who are receiving services in a group home and who would like to move more into individualized setting to continue to communicate this goal to case managers and in the annual MICH test.

The settlement also provides Legal Aid a $1.2 million dollars for attorney fees and costs. The money lets Legal Aid continue its mission of advancing the rights of Minnesota with disabilities and improving the lives of the most vulnerable members of the community.

Legal Aid worked on this case with partners from Anthony Ostlund Lowvacek Dresen & Boylan P.A. and Nicholas Raster PLLP.

by Jane McClure

Edible products and beverages containing THC are legal in Minnesota, prompting long lines, crowded stores and manufacturers and distributors scrambling to keep up with demand. The legalization, which happened July 1, also has cities throughout Minnesota looking at how they should regulate product sales.

THC products have been used to alleviate pain for people with some forms of disability. THC is an abbreviation for tetrahydrocannabinol. It’s the ingredient in cannabis that causes a person to get “high.”

The availability of THC products is not to be confused with the recent state action to add gummies and other THC-free products to the state’s medical cannabis program. But some people with disabilities note that they have sought the newly legalized THC products as an alternative to the state program, which has requirements for eligibility.

Minnesotans aged 21 or older can now buy edibles and beverages containing up to 5 milligrams of THC per serving and 30 milligrams per package. Packages must be tamper-proof and childproof. Packaging is restricted so that it would not appeal to children, with cartoon characters or logos like packaging for children’s products.

While gummy candies are a popular THC product, breweries have announced that THC product, breweries have announced that THC will not appeal to children, with cartoon characters or logos like packaging for children’s products. THC gummies are a popular product but can be in short supply.

Rep. Heather Edelson has quadrupled its workforce with about 20 workers now. Brown said the company has had to drop same-day delivery as demand greatly exceeds available products. It also paused virtual consultations.

The company is getting more than 500 orders for products each day, said Brown. It is capable of about 200 orders per day. “It’s pretty incredible,” Brown said.

News reports indicate that St. Joseph and Marshall city leaders are among those who have placed moratoriums to halt sale and manufacture of hemp-derived edibles. Waite Park and Prior Lake are among communities considering similar action. Stillwater has had a one-year moratorium in place since November 2021, when legalization of recreational marijuana was being discussed.

“Cities are nimble and working quickly to review and respond to the new law and evaluate the unique needs of their communities,” said League of Minnesota Cities General Counsel Patricia Beety in a statement. “City leaders bring considerable expertise in regulatory considerations to the table, and League staff will be listening to the policymakers in our city halls to help shape the path forward in a way that is thoughtful and timely.”

Beety added that League, city staff members and state lawmakers are working to develop more understanding of THC products, how to best regulate them, and how to provide guidance in the weeks ahead. The League will work with Rep. Heather Edelson (DFL-Duluth), who sponsored the THC bill that was included in the larger health and human services omnibus bill.

Edelson released a statement saying she will seek state-level licensing and other changes during the next legislative session.

Under state law, products must be derived from certified hemp and not marijuana, which is illegal in Minnesota. Hemp contains very small amounts of THC.

The new law doesn’t restrict who can manufacture and sell THC products. There currently are no restrictions stating where THC edibles and beverages can be sold. The only limits are that such products must be tamper-proof and childproof.

Brown, who worked on the new law, would support a bill to limit THC sales. One limit is on places where THC products could be sold.

“I don’t think we want products sold in grocery stores,” he said. Brown suggests sales in places restricted to patrons aged 21 or older, with additional protections on online sales to verify ages of buyers.

Another suggestion he has is that places that manufacture products with THC go through the same code inspections other food and beverage manufacturers must follow.

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Off the Shelf* Monday – Friday 8 p.m. In the dark room, fiction by John Waters, 2022. A hilariously filthy tale of sex, crime, and family dysfunction from the brilliantly twisted master of alt-feminist literary camp, John Waters. Read by Dan Sadow. Eight broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 19. – L, S, V, G

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All times listed are Central Standard Time.

Feedback: Y – violent content; R – racial epithets; L – strong language; S – sexual situation; G – gory descriptions.
LIFE is Better Together

LIFE Mower County is celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2022. The LIFE is Better Together 70th Anniversary Celebration gala is 5 p.m., Sun, Oct. 16, at the Holiday Inn and Austin Conference Center, Austin. The family-friendly event starts with a 5 p.m., social hour with hors d’oeuvres, followed by dinner at 6 p.m. The evening’s activities include entertainment, a cash bar, raffles, a Heads or Tails game, and 70th anniversary presentation and video premiere. Tickets are $35 per couple or $35 per person with an intellectual or developmental disability. Tickets purchased in advance. Sponsorship opportunities are available. Now LIFE Mower County is a privately funded, non-profit organization. FFI: www.lifemowercounty.org/70thanniversarycelebration

Get Up Stand up Social
Get Up Stand up Social 2022 Social fundraiser at 5:30 p.m. Fri, Sept. 23, at the Mpls Club. It is the organization’s most important event of the year. Presale tickets start at $30. Proceeds fund vital research projects and volunteer, fitness, social support groups and educational resources for people coping with spinal cord injury recovery. The social will feature dinner, drinks and exciting silent and live auctions. Tickets include one drink and a chance to win a Cal Expo Carnival Grand Slam. Ticket prices increase after Sept, 9. A presale is on now. FFI: https://www.nami.org/NAMIWalks

NAMI Walks is back in-person
The 16th annual NAMI Walks Minnesota, a 5K walk to raise awareness about mental illnesses and celebrate hope, is 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sat, Sept. 24, at Minnehaha Park, Mpls.

It’s the first in-person walk in two years. NAMIWalks supports the efforts of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Minnesota to provide education, support, and advocacy for children and adults with mental illnesses and their families. Food, music, speakers, mental health resource tables, a 1-mile course, a tree of hope and more are offered. Walkers can also join in their own way to raise awareness in their home communities, with some choosing to bike, run, skate, swim, canoe, post signs, start conversations or walk. FFI: 651-645-2848, nami.org

Made In the Shade Walk, Run and Roll
The Made in the Shade Walk, Run and Roll helps disability service organizations raise money and awareness. The event is a non-competitive fundraiser, which helps Episcopal Group Homes, Homeward Bound, PAI, Partnership Resources Inc., and Family, Positive Psychology, Creating Caring Communities, smoking cessation, a suicide prevention class called QPR — Question, Persuade and Refer, a special QPR class for Agricultural Communities and many more. The classes are designed for family members and caregivers, persons living with a mental illness, service providers, and also the general public. Find a complete listing of these classes and how to join in by going to nami.org and clicking on “Classes” or go straight to https://nami.org/education-public-awareness/classes/scheduled/.

Children, youth and families
PACER workshops
PACER Center offers many useful free or low-cost workshops and other resources for families of children with disabilities. Workshops are online and livestreamed at this time. Advance registration is required for all workshops. At least 48 hours’ notice is needed for interpretation. Check out PACER’s website and link to the newsletter of statewide workshops that allows participants to pick and choose sessions for their needs.

Intro to Assistive Technology: What It Is and How to Try It is 2-3:30 p.m. Tue, Sept. 20. The workshop will explore assistive technology options and their needs of people with disabilities. We will discuss categories of AT, choosing tools to use and the services of the Simon Technology Center.

Tech for Girls Club: Journey through the Stars! Part Two is 10:30 a.m. to noon Sat., Sept. 24. In part two of Journey through the Stars! Participants learn about long journey space travel to learn about the stars. We will build a model of the spacecraft they designed in part one. FFI: PACER, 952-838-9000, 503-877-2237, www.pacer.org

Regional News

From page 8

worked for the past 16 years. These years currently work with 70 percent of our real-time captioning, with the seven-person in-house staff providing the other 30 percent. Video-provided captioning services employ a method (CART) that provides a very near perfect translation of what is spoken. CART providers must complete two years of specialized training in order to use this highly accurate captioning method. DRC staff captionists use a different captioning method that provides a meaning-for-meaning interpretation of what is spoken, rather than a verbatim translation. As I mentioned before, students requesting real-time captioning generally express a preference for the verbatim captioning that is provided by vendors, and our usage stats above reflect that.

To reiterate, this change ensures we’re providing services that fulfill the needs identified by the students, further advancing our objective of advancing access for our community members and meet federal anti-discrimination requirements.

(Source: KSTP-TV)

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• Immediate openings in Worthington and Albert Lea, Minnesota

Housing with Care*
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