

EDITORIAL

Back to school means learning letters and numbers: IEP and 504 Plan

Back-to-school time can be exciting. Different teachers, fresh school supplies and friends old and new are waiting. For students with a wide range of disabilities, going back to class can also be challenging and stressful. The change in routine alone can be chaotic for the entire family.

For parents of students with disabilities, and for students themselves, this can be a difficult time of year. Will teachers understand neurodiverse behaviors? Can specific learning styles be accommodated? Will it be easy to get on and off of the school bus? Will there be bullying? It can mean so much more planning – and so much more anxiety.

The COVID-19 pandemic wreaked utter havoc on students of and education for all ages. Admittedly, some students thrived with virtual learning. Pivoting back and forth between online and in-person learning was difficult for many other students who needed in-person attention and the socialization schools provide. The loss of continuity set many students back. Some are still catching up.

Another potential obstacle is the high turnover many school districts are seeing in the ranks of teachers, paraprofessionals and other support staff. When we hear of school districts forced to hire education staff members with little or educational background, we worry about all students and the quality of education they will receive. We worry about new bus drivers who may not be used to unique behaviors.

That's why it's so important for parents to understand their students' rights and what can be done to provide the very best

For students with disabilities, these [specialized education and accommodation] plans are the cornerstone of a quality education. Plans are to be designed with the individual student in mind. It's not a cookie-cutter approach.

learning experience possible. Parents need to know what their options are under federal law, including the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a federal anti-discrimination law.

Every public school student who receives special education and related services should have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 plan. The plans have differences and school professionals will direct families to one or the other.

Specialized education and accommodation plans are to provide the means for students, parents or guardians, teachers, school administrators and other school staff to work together to improve the student's educational outcomes. For students with disabilities, these plans are the cornerstone of a quality education.

Plans are to be designed with the individual student in mind. It's not a cookie-cutter approach. Plans are also living

documents that can change over time.

There are key difference between the two plans that parents and guardians should educate themselves on. A student may not qualify for an IEP but would receive services under a 504 plan. School professionals can guide families through that.

One significant difference between an IEP and a 504 plan is that while both plans provide for accommodations, an IEP provides for specialized instruction for students in grades K–12, while a 504 plan can serve students at both the K–12 and college levels.

Parents, teachers, other school staff--and often the student—are to partner together on plans to understand the student's unique needs and plan for how to best accommodate those. What is to emerge is an education roadmap to help the student be involved in, and make progress in, a curriculum. Plans gets reviewed at least

once a year.

Be aware of difference between states and even school districts. For example, IDEA requires that specific information be included in each student's IEP. But states and local school systems can and do call for additional information, typically to document that they have met federal and state laws. That can be confusing for parents who move children from one school district to another.

Going through the process of developing or updating a plan can be an overwhelming experience for a parent, especially parents who have so much going on in their lives. Many parents must go it alone, and juggle responsibility for several children, their work and even aging family members.

We encourage parents to not be afraid to seek help. Parents need to feel comfortable reaching out to their peers. We've seen some great Facebook support groups for families with disabled children or teens, where parents can reach out for advice, ask questions or just vent.

Many advocacy organizations focused on specific disabilities stand ready to help, too.

Most importantly, parents need to not be afraid to speak up for what is best for their students, yet also be able to listen to and respect professional advice. Education plans are a two-way street, in terms of how they are shaped by input. But parents need to be assertive with school professionals to get what is best for a student.

Every student should be able to fit in and be successful, regardless of abilities. Every student deserves a good educational plan.

HISTORY NOTE

The power of synthesized speech took big steps ahead a century ago

The power of speech is something no one should take for granted. Yet for centuries, people with disabilities were at a great disadvantage.

In 2022 the centennial of the first all-electrical speech synthesis device is marked. Anyone who has waited at an airport, taken a bus or train trip, or used an automated phone voice system is familiar with speech synthesis or the artificial production of human speech, using specialized computers. Many of us with disabilities use speech synthesis devices.

Countless advances in speech assistive technology have been made over the past century. It's also worth recalling the efforts before 1922 to develop ways to help people speak and to provide artificial voices. The applications didn't just aid people with disabilities.

Creating a machine that could talk is a focus in early literature. Many people tried to build machines, called "brazen heads," to emulate human speech and even answer questions. One early legend of such a device is tied to a man who later became Pope Sylvester II.

Another innovator was Hungarian

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 developing technology that led to the development of the electronic hearing aid.

One history states, "The first full electrical synthesis device was introduced by Stewart in 1922. The synthesizer had a buzzer as excitation and two resonant 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.

Others 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 DEMonstratoR. 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 use marked the first time that 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 the '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 a foot pedal with the right foot."

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

Want to know more about speech synthesis and other assistive technology milestones? One interesting timeline is at <https://www.sutori.com/en/story/assistive-technology-timeline--pngkrT3q4uNp6oU2CE7Bfmoj>

See a picture of the VODER and read about it at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/meet-pedro-voder-first-electronic-machine-talk-180963516/>

Or learn more about the VODER at https://www.specialtyansweringervice.net/wp-content/uploads/resources_papers/what-is-the-voder/The-Voder.pdf

The History Note is a monthly column produced in cooperation with the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. Past History Notes and other disability history may be found at www.mnddc.org



MINNESOTA'S DISABILITY COMMUNITY NEWS SOURCE

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What does self-direction mean to you?

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/>



For 28-year-old Dalton, self-direction means the opportunity to ride “Big Mable” right alongside his cousin on a family camping trip.



Why is self-direction important to the family of 13-year-old Keagen? It means he can enjoy one of his favorite treats while on a bike ride with two of his brothers in his cargo bike.



Or you might find five-year-old Daisy, who likes feeding duck and geese at the local park. One goose loved Daisy so much that it stayed around her and would just watch her. Here she is waving at her new goose friend.



Eleven-year-old Oscar is another CDS client. His family was able to use waiver funds to purchase an adaptive tandem bike. Oscar is now able to enjoy biking with the family!



For six-year-old Cara, self-direction means she gets to enjoy riding her scooter and going to summer camp! Her camp allowed her to make new friends and her parents couldn't be happier for her.



In the community is where you can find 16-year-old Guy, who loves to visit water parks and splash pads



■■■ FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Tim Benjamin: Paying tribute to a trusted, kind and thoughtful friend

Editor's note: Former Access Press Executive Director Tim Benjamin died this summer. An obituary appeared in the August edition.

by Jeff Bangsberg

More than 20 years ago, I met Tim Benjamin, who later became my close friend. Not much was known about Tim at that time. He was relatively new to Minnesota's disability community, having lived for 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 if Charlie was entrusting him with his life's work.

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

By now, those of you reading this know what a fine person Tim was. A smart, straight-shooting, no nonsense man with a gentle, soft-spoken approach, Tim rose to the challenge of taking over Charlie's duties at *Access Press*. No one could replace Charlie, but Tim was able to put his own stamp on *Access Press* and keep it running through good times and bad. 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* would host a fundraising banquet where an individual was recognized for outstanding contributions to Minnesota's disability community.

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's (MCIL's) Board of Directors. When MCIL was in transition as an organization, Tim worked with others to lead that change.

In 2015, 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 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 came to know him. Rest in peace my friend. You certainly deserve it

His legacy is one of disability-focused journalism

by Jane McClure, Editor

Tim never liked writing obituaries for *Access Press*. When we'd lose a valued disability community member he'd sadly remark about shortened life expectancies for our community and his own time on earth. I thought about that when writing his obituary this summer.

Tim really loved the life he had with wife Lynda Milne, other family members and friends, and at *Access Press*. He wanted to do as much as he could in the time that he had.

Tim and I had a solid working relationship for more than a decade. We'd sometimes go back and forth about things, which is what work in a newsroom is about.

Coverage of our issues is often from a pity focus or "gee whiz, this new device will change your lives." We know that's not reality.

Tim really disliked news stories that had a pity angle or featured what we call "inspiration porn" and we'd debate the merits of these with other staff. After a long back-and-forth over a new Mattel doll, our code phrase for such "news" became "Barbie in a wheelchair."

He didn't want woe is me stories, but he also wanted the unvarnished truth. When a now-defunct disability blog was running a sunshine and roses disability pregnancy journal, we sought out our

friend Mai Thor to write about her reality of being pregnant and disabled. It was unflinchingly honest and at times very funny. It was how our lives as disabled people are.

As people with disabilities, limitations are always there to overcome. One day I heard a steady stream of very mild expletives coming from Tim's office. Perhaps his head-mouse or voice-activated software acted up. I finally stuck my head in his office and joked, "Lassie! Get help! Timmy fell down the well again!" We laughed and laughed. We always could laugh about this kind of thing.

We also had to have a sense of humor as we dealt with too many people who treated us as objects of pity or, as we'd put it, the slow kids. We often hosted office guests who were surprised to find two articulate people with disabilities who could speak clearly and eloquently about their lives and work.

There are so many other stories – our ambivalence with the complicated logistics of the annual *Access Press* Charlie Smith Award banquet, heading off to the capitol, working with writers and talking at length about the issues affecting our readers. I miss all of that.

As a journalist who lives with disabilities, *Access Press* has been a life-changing experience for me as it was for Tim. Too many of us don't get hired, even

now. We have to fight for accommodations and how those could make our work easier. Yet we are the best at telling our stories and presenting our issues.

If Tim should be remembered by readers for anything it is this: Looking at what is now a catastrophe with direct support staff in our community, Tim was our canary in a coal mine. He sounded the alarm before most news media realized we even had a staffing crisis brewing. It was his lived experience.

When I began working at *Access Press*, I knew all of Tim's staff. I knew who had children, who held two jobs, who was studying for a medical trade and on and on.

That wasn't true over time. I didn't know if we'd get the on-the-ball fellow or the one who would steal the office vacuum cleaner. I didn't know when Tim would be able to show up at work or even get out of bed. He didn't have consistent care and that affected his quality of life greatly.

One of Tim's legacies is this: We Minnesotans with disabilities need to be ever vigilant. We need to defend and protect everything that adds to the quality of our lives. That's what he would want us to do.

Donations to *Access Press* can be made in Tim's memory, at <https://accesspress.org/donate-now/>



Thank you for the gifts in memory of Tim Benjamin

Jeff Bangsberg and Anita Boucher
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If you would like to make a gift, please call Holly Anderson at 651-644-2133 or email holly@accesspress.org. Thank you.

In Memoriam Tim Benjamin
Access Press Executive Director
and Editor 2001-2020

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We welcome your letters and commentary

Access Press welcomes letters to the editor and commentary pieces from readers, on topics of interest to Minnesota's disability community. Letters should be no more than 500 words, with 750 words per commentary. Ask the editors if more space is needed.

Letters and guest commentaries must be signed by the authors or authors. With letters, a writer's hometown is published but not a street address. Please send contact information, in the form of a phone number or email, in case the editor has questions about a letter or commentary. Contact information isn't published unless the writer specifically requests that the newspaper do so.

Pictures of the author or content subject matter can be published with a guest commentary but aren't required.

Access Press asks that letters and guest commentaries be specifically written for the newspaper. Letters must have a focus on disability issues and ideally, a focus on those issues as they affect Minnesotans. Form letters will not be published.

Here's an important reminder during an election year. Because *Access Press* is a non-profit publication and must follow regulations on political partisanship, political endorsement letters are not published. That is true for candidates' endorsements as well as for ballot questions.

Before making a submission, writers are always encouraged to contact the newspaper to discuss ideas or to ask questions about From Our Community submissions, at 651-644-2133 or access@accesspress.org.

Let the newspaper staff know if accommodations are needed to submit a letter or commentary, and we will help you.

Letters and commentaries reflect the view of the authors and not the views of the staff and board of directors of *Access Press*.

Deadline for the print edition of the newspaper is the 15th of each month, with publication the following month.

COMMENTARY

Movement to eliminate subminimum wages is sometimes misunderstood

by Jillian Nelson and Andrea Zuber, co-Chairs of the Minnesota Task Force on Eliminating Subminimum Wages

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

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 discriminate 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 is creating can help support healthy debate at the legislature, and in other forums.

The task force’s purpose is to support people with disabilities, especially those with concerns about what a phase-out would mean for them.

The task force is conducting extensive engagement and outreach, seeking input especially from those who have disabilities, their families, and trusted supporters. The engagement plan summary shows how the task force is reaching out to people who would be affected if subminimum wage is phased out. A survey was completed in August.

The work of the task force is crucial in helping ensure more people have access to jobs that build on their skills, support personal wellbeing and increase economic growth. That work must be strategic and thoughtful so people in our community – especially those with the most significant support needs - are not left behind. With the right plan and approach, we can ensure that people with disabilities who want to work can work, and that people have meaningful ways to spend their time.

Parent Larissa Beck writes, “One of the most important things to my son, who has an intellectual and developmental

disability, is that everything be fair and equitable. As his mom, I can’t imagine trying to explain how having a disability makes it ‘ok’ for him to be paid less than minimum wage. To him, that would mean that he is less than the minimum, and less than human, which is not fair nor equitable. As his mom, I will always advocate for him to be fully included in all aspects of his life. I want everyone, including my son, to have a fair chance and I hope that with the work of the task force, we can come up with a good plan to do it well.”

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.

Find more information about the task force on the Minnesota Department of Human Services website, at <https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/news-initiatives-reports-workgroups/long-term-services-and-supports/task-force-on-eliminating-subminimum-wages/>.



PROGRESS

From page 1

and confidential document shredding for community members. “It is a wonderful way to invite people in visit us at our building, and when people buy the rugs they go on to tell a story. They may end up in someone’s kitchen, and the owner may remember and share who made it,” said McDonald.

Other activities the LCDAC coordinates include volunteering at the library, school, and food shelf, along with the communication club and other activities.

“We quietly turned 50 last fall, and now this is our opportunity to thank the community and everyone who has supported us,” said McDonald.

Lake County DAC timeline

*Mid-1950s A small group of parents meets at Bethlehem House in Two Harbors to provide activities for their three children. There were no services for adults with disabilities in Lake County.

*1963 The Minnesota Legislature takes action allowing for formation of day activity centers, launching organization of the Lake/ Cook County Association for Retarded Citizens.

*September 1970 A \$60 gift to the ARC funds the first adult programs under direction of then-President Delores Johnson.

*December 1970 The first Lake County DAC board of directors is formed.

*1971 the DAC is incorporated. An executive director is hired. The former Knife River school house is acquired though

state grants and the center officially opens on September 13 with six participants.

1970s Daily programming is provided, on a schedule coinciding with the Lake County school system.

*1980s Programs include a vocational component to meet the Minnesota definition of a day training program. The name is changed to Lake County Developmental Achievement Center, Inc.

*1980s Institutions that housed people with development disabilities close and are replaced by smaller residential programs. More people return to their communities, needing jobs and services. Advertising buttons and badges, and flags for in-ground utility work are created.

*1985 The DAC Chore Crew starts providing lawn care and snow removal services.

*1986 DAC workers are employed at the new Arrowhead Recycling Center in Two Harbors.

*1990s Outside and in-house work are supplemented through Minnesota Community Integration Association training to provide community supported employment. More job opportunities are provided, including with Duluth-area agencies Pinewood, Inc. and UDAC, Inc.

*2000s A growing number of aging clients means starting the “alternative to work” program, offering a wide variety of daily activities along with needed medical therapies.

*2016 A new location opens in Two Harbors.

Information for this story is also from the Lake County DAC web site.

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(for developmentally disabled individuals)			
Diamond Hill Townhomes	Minneapolis	612-736-9341	2 & 3 BR
Elliot Park Apartments	Minneapolis	612-338-3106	2 BR
Franklin Lane Apartments	Anoka	763-427-7650	1 & 2 BR
Hanover Townhomes	St. Paul	651-292-8497	1 BR
Hilltop Manor	Eveleth	218-744-5169	1 BR
Hopkins Village Apartments	Hopkins	952-938-5787	1 & 2 BR
Lincoln Place Apartments	Mahtomedi	651-653-0640	2 BR
Olson Towne Homes	Minneapolis	612-377-9015	1 BR
Park Plaza Apartments	Minneapolis	612-377-3650	1 & 2 BR
Prairie Meadows	Eden Prairie	952-941-5544	2 & 3 BR
Raspberry Ridge	Hopkins	952-933-3260	1 BR
Slater Square Apartments	Minneapolis	612-340-1264	EFF & 1BR
Spirit on Lake	Minneapolis	612-724-3029	1 & 2 BR
Talmage Green	Minneapolis	612-623-0247	2 BR
Trinity Apartments	Minneapolis	612-721-2252	1 BR (sr)
Unity Place	Brooklyn Center	763-560-7563	2 BR
Vadnais Highlands	Vadnais Heights	651-653-0640	3 BR
Visitation Place	St. Paul	651-647-2550	1, 2, 3 BR
Willow Apartments	Little Falls	320-632-0980	1 BR
Woodland Court Apartments	Park Rapids	888-332-9312	1 BR

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IN MEMORIAM

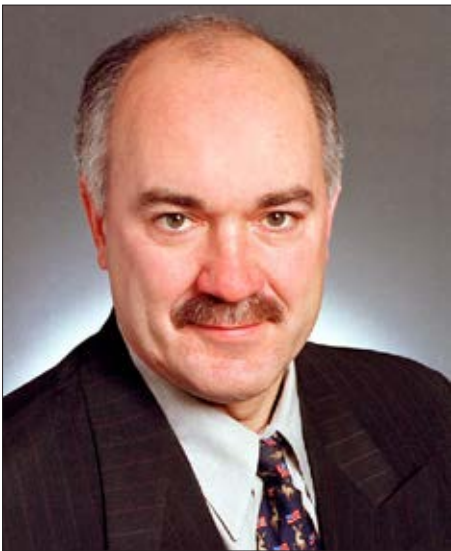
Tomassoni was dedicated lawmaker

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, Tomassini 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.



Sen. David Tomassoni

Elected to the House in 1992 and the Senate in 2000, Tomassoni led on Iron Range and northern Minnesota interests. He and fellow Iron Ranger, Sen. Tom Bakk, split with Senate Democrats in 2020 to focus on the economic concerns of their region.



Tomassoni watched as Gov. Tim Walz signed ALS-related legislation.

He is survived by his wife Charlotte, three children and their families, and other family members and friends.

Memorials are preferred to Never Surrender, an ALS charity. Services have been held.

Weber served on state council

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 75 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 1965 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.



Gary Weber

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 2001, moving to eight years teaching fine arts at Cretin-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 the Communications Center at the Minnesota State Services for the Blind. Services have been held.

Menge honored for her work

Sandra Anne Sorensen Menge was 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 also was a conservator and volunteered as a Befriender.

She was a longtime board member with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Minnesota, receiving a NAMI Lifetime Achievement Award.

She is survived by her husband Peter, two sons and their families, and many other relatives and friends. Memorials preferred to NAMI Minnesota. 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 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

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REGIONAL NEWS



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 welcome news 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 traveler with wheelchair woes is John Tschida, 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, upending his schedule.

“What price do you put on a week-long loss of independence while homebound in an ill-fitting loaner wheelchair that causes pressure sores?” Tschida said in a social media post. “It's great that DOT is now quantifying the frequency of how often wheelchairs are damaged, but when will every airline be held accountable for forcing those of us with disabilities to put our lives on hold when they severely damage our chairs?”

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) doesn't require airlines to make it possible for passengers to travel in their personal wheelchairs. Instead, flyers are typically transferred from their own chair in the boarding area into a narrow, airline-owned chair. Once aboard the plane, they are transferred from that chair into the standard airline seat.

A recent National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report delivered at the behest of Congress concluded that personal wheelchair securement is technically feasible on commercial



ISTOCK/CUNAPLUS M. FABIA

narrowbody aircraft such as Boeing 737s and Airbus A320s, provided that two successive rows of seats are removed on one side of the aisle.

The report did not explore the financial impact to airlines of removing two rows of seats and replacing them with one row for wheelchair access. Costs, though, could be substantial -- potentially totaling \$1 million per plane or more, even assuming all the wheelchair slots were purchased and that the seats removed were economy class.

In his statement, Buttigieg referred to the experience of Marine Corps veteran Charles Brown, president of PVA. 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)

Sports range to open

A new, fully accessible rifle, pistol and archery range designed for veterans and people with disabilities will soon be available near McGregor, in north-central Minnesota. It is led by Forgotten Heroes Ranges and Retreat, a nonprofit formed in memory of Chuck Evancevich. He was an Air Force veteran who spent the final 12 years of his life in a wheelchair after a diagnosis of primary progressive multiple sclerosis.

Ground for the project was broken this summer. Evancevich was an active athlete and avid outdoorsman, playing hockey at the Air Force Academy and being recruited by the Minnesota Twins and Cincinnati Reds.

Evancevich's family members built tools to help him enjoy his favorite hunting and fishing activities. They also worked on his dream of an accessible hunting retreat so disabled veterans could still get outside and enjoy nature, Brenda said. After his death in 2020, family and friends set out to make his dream a reality -- a retreat with the addition of the shooting range made just for disabled individuals and veterans.

Bret Sample, who is also a disabled veteran, is president of Forgotten Heroes Ranges and Retreat. He purchased 35 acres and signed the land over to Forgotten Heroes Ranges and Retreat. After more than 9,000 volunteer hours and more than a dozen filled 40-yard dumpsters, the site of the former dump is 95 percent cleared, Sample said. The next step of the project is to dig ponds to build berms and create shooting lanes for the range. Forgotten Heroes Ranges and Retreat has been working closely with Aitkin County Planning and Zoning, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and National Rifle Association for design input and specifications.

(Source: Duluth News Tribune)

Metro Deaf students STEAMed up

It all starts with play and discovery. That's the ultimate goal of the collaboration between St. Paul's Metro Deaf School and the University of St. Thomas' Playful Learning Lab, which brings STEAM outreach to the children.

“The kids really enjoy it. They learn from doing, from being,” said Susan Outlaw, Metro Deaf School's executive director.

She works with the team from the Playful Learning Lab and Professor AnnMarie Thomas to find creative and

engaging ways to interest students in computer science. “This could be working with circuses to teach physics or designing a way to sculpt electrical circuits or working with the rock band “OK Go” to use their music videos to create lesson plans for teachers around the world,” said Thomas.

Now Google is expanding the opportunities with a \$110,000 grant.

One of the goals is to broaden participation and research in computational thinking and computer science in the K-12 education systems.

Another goal is to provide stipends to Metro Deaf School teachers and staff working at night and taking extra classes and workshops. “Teachers are my heroes, so thanks to this grant we're able to compensate teachers for the extra work that it takes to train and to learn these different programming languages and robotics tools, and then create custom class exercises and lesson plans that they'll bring to Metro Deaf School,” said Thomas.

Bringing in children who experience the world a little differently could mean a brighter future for everyone. “Someday, you know I [will] see at St. Thomas, in my engineering classes, some of the folks who might have been kindergartners in the coding class a decade ago. That's the dream,” said Thomas.

(Source: KARE 11 News)

Hiring is state's focus

Summer is a busy time at the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority garage in Eagan. It's the time of year that the buses turn off their commuter routes for an annual deep cleaning. But with the state's unemployment rate at a record-low 1.8 percent in June, the company that services those buses wasn't sure it could find anybody to do it.

Enter Asher Tholl, Stefan Evers, John Jamer and Parker Leagjeld — four guys looking for work and now climbing daily onto the commuter buses to shine the windows, clean the air filters, scrub off graffiti and spiff up the floors, and earning \$16 an hour. Tholl and his colleagues are among 140 teens and adults with disabilities who work with Great Work, an employment assistance agency in Lakeville. And they're part of the solution to a critically tight labor market.

In June, Minnesota had the lowest state unemployment rate ever recorded in the U.S. Workers are harder than ever to find. Harder — but not impossible. Minnesota

Department of Employment and Economic Development Steve Grove's visit to the MVTA garage was part of his agency's "Summer of Jobs" push to encourage employers to dig a little deeper into the labor market.

Grove said the disabled community offers another opportunity for employers in Minnesota who are struggling to find workers, with nearly three job openings for every person looking for a job. Grove said nearly 10 percent of Minnesotans report having at least one disability, and employers can find real value among them.

People with disabilities come with a lot of abilities, actually, and when you look at the loyalty, the problem-solving ability, just the hard work ethic that you see in this community — we think more employers that should be aware that there are actually a lot of people with disabilities in our economy that can do great work,” he said.

State officials also said that the booming economy offers an unprecedented opportunity to spread economic benefits and address some of the disparities in employment among communities like disabled Minnesotans, who have a higher unemployment rate than the rest of the workforce. The state also offers training and recruiting assistance to disabled workers, which can help make those matches, said Dee Torgerson, director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services with DEED.

“It's definitely an untapped labor pool. We'd love to make more connections with employers around the state,” Torgerson said.

(Source: Minnesota Public Radio)

In-house captioning lost

A group at the University of Minnesota has been working to protect some 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.

Sina Hanson has been at the University of Minnesota since 2004. “It's a wonderful place to be,” Hanson, a C-Print captionist, said. Hanson currently 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 so anything someone says and any environmental sounds or context, I'm typing out on a screen and the text is scrolling,” Hanson said.

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

Hanson received word from the university that she and six of her colleagues would be out of a job later this month because the U of M is moving to the full use of outside vendors for captioning.

“It's the difference between being able to engage and have equitable access and basically experiencing discrimination,” Hanson said.

The University of Minnesota calls this a “difficult” decision but added, “it's the Disability Resource Center's experience that students generally prefer this verbatim captioning provided by vendors.”

The union representing these employees, AFSCME Local 3937, argues it's all about money.

“They told us about how much money they're going to save,” Mary Austin, president of AFSCME Local 3937, said.

The University of Minnesota acknowledged the cost savings but stressed that these vendors already provide 70 percent of their real-time captioning and believe the further transition will result in “highly accurate captioning services.”

Hanson disagrees, saying the service will most certainly take a hit.

“If the provider misses it, they are not captioning that information, then the captioning user is having a different experience than everyone else in the room,” Hanson said.

The U of M provided the following statement to KSTP-TV:

“While it was a very difficult decision to transition to full use of vendor-provided real-time captioning services, starting on August 15, it's the DRC's experience that students generally prefer this verbatim captioning provided by vendors. This transition will not only meet the service expectations of these students going forward, it will result in highly accurate captioning services and in cost savings that will enable the reallocation of resources to programs that proactively promote accessibility, programs supporting: inclusive teaching, accessible classrooms and workplaces, digital accessibility, and other high impact strategies to promote inclusive access—priorities that make the DRC the gold standard in this space.

“The University will continue to work with the same vendors for real-time captioning, including a local firm we have

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Availability of THC products is welcomed but brings challenges

by Jane McClure

Edible products and beverages containing THC are now 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 chews 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.

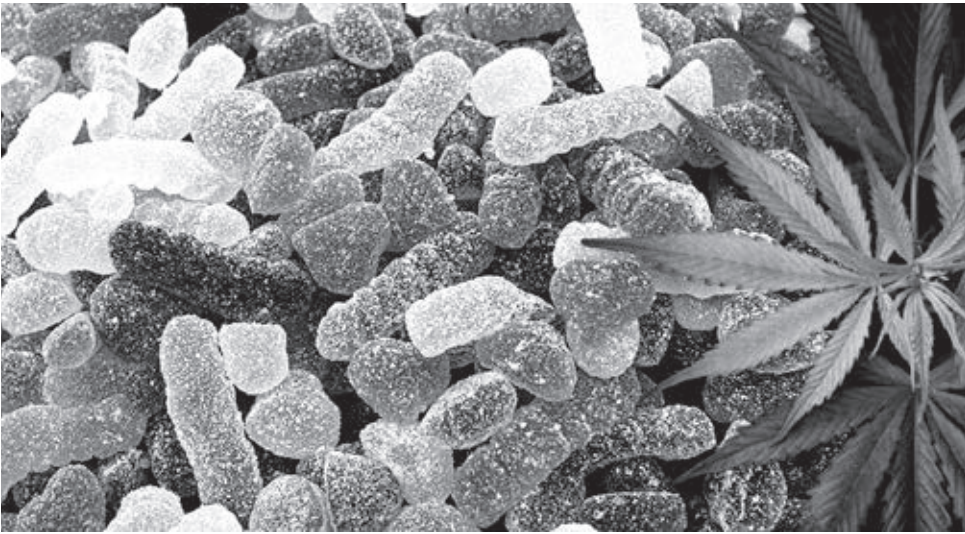
Minnesotans aged 21 or older can now buy edibles and beverages containing up to 5 milligrams of THC per serving and 50 milligrams per package. Packages must be tamper-proof and childproof. Packaging is restricted so that it would not appeal to children, with cartoon characters or look like packaging for children's products.

While gummy candies are a popular THC product, breweries have announced that they will produce seltzers with THC.

Nothing But Hemp, 844 Grand Ave., and its sister stores in four other Minnesota cities, have seen a steady flow of customers wanting the new products. "It really hasn't stopped," said CEO Steven Brown. "We can't keep up with the demand."

Nothing But Hemp sells an array of hemp products, ranging from CBD oils to clothing made of hemp. The company has a dozen franchise stores and delivery hubs in Minnesota and Florida.

The Grand Avenue store, which is moving to larger quarters soon,



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. Its capacity is about 200 orders per day.

"It's pretty incredible," Brown said.

News that THC-infused products are legal sparked some controversy. House Democrats said they pushed legislation through quietly, so that it wouldn't be blocked by the republican-controlled Senate.

But the upshot of that is a law with fairly few restrictions. The League of Minnesota Cities and individual cities are looking at how to regulate products on a local basis.

Some cities are already pausing THC sales, at least temporarily. 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 sales issues, and hope to provide more guidance in the weeks ahead. The League will work with Rep. Heather Edelson (DFL- Edina). Edelson authorized 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 2023 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 or sell THC products. There currently are no restrictions stating where THC edibles and beverages can be sold. The law also has no limit on how much product someone can buy.

Brown, who worked on the new law, would like to see additional restrictions. 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 and 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.

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 U.S. Supreme Court required as far back as 1999," said Justin Perl, Legal Aid attorney and lead counsel in the case.

The plaintiffs live or have lived in group homes. They have asked to move into homes or apartments of their own, but 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 fully participate in their communities, and live more integrated and independent lives in the community.

Plaintiffs have described what 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 Dionne 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. Timeliness 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 to other residential 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 opportunities for disabled people 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 track the people identified and make sure they get support from their case managers and get access to such services

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 into a more individualized setting to continue to communicate this goal to case managers and in the annual MnCHOICES assessment.

The settlement also provides Legal Aid \$1.138 million dollars for attorneys' fees and costs. The money lets Legal Aid continue its mission of advancing the rights of Minnesotans 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 Louwagie Dressen & Boylan P.A. and Nichols Kaster PLLP.

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New books coming
Seventeen new books premiere this month and four rebroadcasts. The Radio Talking Book staff thank everyone for their patience, as a backlog buffer of all-new books is created. Listeners are urged to get in touch about current books they'd like to hear.

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Chautauqua*
Monday – Friday 6 a.m.
Being You, nonfiction by Anil Seth, 2021. A quest to understand the biological basis of conscious experience. Read by Stevie Ray. 12 broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 5.

The End of Bias, nonfiction by Jessica Nordell, 2021. A transformative and groundbreaking exploration of how to eradicate unintentional bias and discrimination. Read by Jack Rossmann. 13 broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 21. – L

Past is Prologue*
Monday – Friday 11 a.m.
Stalin's Library, nonfiction by Geoffrey Roberts, 2022. This engaging life of the twentieth century's most self-consciously learned dictator explores the books Stalin read, how he read them, and what they taught him. Read by Robb Empson. 12 broadcasts; begins Thu, Sept. 15.

Bookworm*
Monday – Friday 12 p.m.
A Tip For the Hangman, fiction by Allison Epstein, 2021. An Elizabethan espionage thriller in which playwright Christopher Marlowe spies on Mary, Queen of Scots while navigating the perils of politics, theater, romance—and murder. Read by Joseph Papke. 13 broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 19. – L, S

The Writer's Voice*
Monday – Friday 1 p.m.
Shoot Like a Girl (rebroadcast), nonfiction by Mary Jennings Hegar, 2017. A decorated Air Force veteran fights the military policy that keeps women out of combat roles. Read by Andrea Bell. Nine broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 5.

Go Back Where You Came From, nonfiction by Wajahat Ali, 2022. A deeply personal and keenly perceptive memoir of an American immigrant experience. Read by Brenda Powell. 11 broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 19.

Choice Reading*
Monday – Friday 2 p.m.
Men in My Situation, fiction by Per Petterson, 2021. Arvid Jansen is in a tailspin, unable to

process the grief of losing his parents and brothers in a tragic ferry accident. In this moment of faltering hope and despair, Arvid's daughter has a crisis of her own. Read by Greg Olson. Eight broadcasts; begins Tue, Sept. 13. – L

The Fell, fiction by Sarah Moss, 2021. A riveting novel of mutual responsibility, personal freedom, and the ever-nearness of disaster. Read by Parichay Rudina. Six broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 26.

Afternoon Report*
Monday – Friday 4 p.m.
True Story, nonfiction by Danielle J. Lindemann, 2022. A sociological study of reality TV that explores its rise as a culture-dominating medium—and what the genre reveals about our attitudes toward race, gender, class, and sexuality. Read by Michele Potts. Nine broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 5.

The Violence Project, nonfiction by Jillian Peterson & James Densley, 2021. An examination of the phenomenon of mass shootings in America and an urgent call to implement evidence-based strategies to stop these tragedies. Read by Stevie Ray. Nine broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 19.

Night Journey*
Monday – Friday 7 p.m.
The Christie Affair, fiction by Nina de Gramont, 2022. A wonderfully clever take on Agatha Christie's mysterious real-life disappearance in 1926. Read by Pat Kovel-Jarboe. 12 broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 5.
Reckless Girls, fiction by Rachel Hawkins, 2021. Six 20-somethings follow on a dangerous spiral of discovery on a desolate spot in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Read by Pat Kovel-Jarboe. Eight broadcasts; begins Wed, Sept. 21. – L

Off the Shelf*
Monday – Friday 8 p.m.
Liarmouth, fiction by John Waters, 2022. A hilariously filthy tale of sex, crime, and family dysfunction from the brilliantly twisted mind of legendary filmmaker, John Waters. Read by Dan Sadoff. Eight broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 19. – L, S, V, G

Potpourri*
Monday – Friday 9 p.m.
The Nineties, nonfiction by Chuck Klosterman, 2022. A wise and funny reckoning with the decade that gave us slacker/grunge irony about the sin of trying too hard, during the

All times listed are Central Standard Time.
Abbreviations V – violent content R – racial epithets L – strong language S – sexual situation G – gory descriptions

greatest shift in human consciousness of any decade in American history. Read by Jack Rossmann. 14 broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 5.
Out of Office, nonfiction by Charlie Warzel and Anne Helen Petersen, 2021. A deeply researched tour through America's broken work landscape and a vision of what a better future might look like. Read by Holly Sylvester. 10 broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 26.

Good Night Owl*
Monday – Friday 10 p.m.
Sex with Presidents, nonfiction by Eleanor Herman, 2020. A work of popular history that uncovers the bedroom secrets of American presidents and explores the surprising ways voters have reacted to their leaders' sex scandals. Read by Diane Dahm. 14 broadcasts; begins Mon, Sept. 12. – S

RTB After Hours*
Monday – Friday 11 p.m.
The Dating Playbook, fiction by Farrah Rochon, 2021. When a personal trainer agrees to fake date her client, all rules are out the window in this fun romantic comedy. Read by Pat Muir. 11 broadcasts; begins Tue, Sept. 6. – L, S
Echo, fiction by Thomas Olde Heuvelt, 2022. A thrilling descent into madness and obsession as one man confronts nature—and something even more ancient and evil answers back. Read by Tom Speich. 18 broadcasts; begins Wed, Sept. 21. – L

Weekend Program Books
Your Personal World, 1 p.m. Sat, presents *Good Anxiety* by Dr. Wendy Suzuki, read by Beverly Burchett.

For the Younger Set, 11 a.m. Sun, presents *Pony* by R. J. Palacio, read by John Schmidt.

Poetic Reflections, noon Sun, presents *frank: sonnets* by Diane Seuss, read by Jim Ahrens, followed by *Postcolonial Love Poem* by Natalie Diaz, read by Mary Knatterud.

The Great North, 4 p.m. Sun, presents *Minnesota's Geologist* by Sue Leaf, read by Tony Lopez, followed by *Diesel Heart* by Melvin Whitfield Carter Jr., read by John Mandeville – L, V, S, R.

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LIFE is Better Together
LIFE Mower County is celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2022. The LIFE is Better Together 70th Anniversary Celebration 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 \$52 per person 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 hosts its 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, adaptive fitness scholarships, monthly peer group sessions 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 secure parking in the Mpls Club ramp. Ticket prices increase after Sept. 9. A presale is on now. FFI: <https://www.gusu2cure.org/>

NAMIWalks is back in-person
The 16th annual NAMIWalks 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.



Sit! Stay! At the Woofaroo
The Can Do Canines Woofaroo 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sat, Sept. 24, with live music, a dog costume contest, an assistance dog demonstration, campus tours and more. The one-mile fundraising walk starts at 10 a.m. Music, dog-centric vendors and much more are planned for well-behaved dogs and their people. Money raised allows the nonprofit train and place more assistance dogs with people who need them. Registration for the walk is underway. The event is held at the Can Do Canines campus, 9440 Science Center Drive, New Hope. Individuals can register on their own or as part of a team. Collect pledges and donations toward this fundraiser. The proceeds make it possible for Can Do Canines to match assistance dogs with people with disabilities. It costs about \$45,000 to raise and train an assistance dog, but Can Do Canines provides them free of charge. FFI: <https://candowoofaroo2022.causevox.com/>

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 t-shirt contest, 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: 651-645-2948, namimn.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.,

Phoenix Residence, TSE and Wingspan Life Resources. The 2022 event is 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Sat., Sept. 17 at Thomas Beach, Bde Maka Ska, 3700 Thomas Ave., Mpls. People can participate in-person or virtually. The event starts with a program, then the walk, and then a celebration for all. Enjoy music, food and fun with friends from the disability community. Register solo or as a team to raise funds. Register through a participating organization, all of which are being featured in Facebook. FFI: <https://www.facebook.com/madeintheshade5k/>

Open Flow Forum
The Artists with Disabilities Alliance meets via Zoom 7-9 p.m. the first Thu of the month. Upcoming dates Sept. 1 and Oct. 6. Virtually join artists with disabilities and supporters to share visual art, writing, music, theater and artistic efforts or disability concerns. Facilitators are Tara Innmon, Kip Shane and Springboard for the Arts. The gatherings are fully accessible. Anyone needing special accommodations should contact Andy Sturdevant at host organization Springboard for the Arts. Funding is available for access needs. FFI: 651-294-0907, resources@springboardforthearts.org

Less to Enjoy!
The Enjoy listings are for arts events as well as banquets and fundraisers for disability services organizations. Schedules may be subject to change. Some venues still may have mask and vaccine requirements. Please check with a venue or organization before making plans. See what is available through the Minnesota Access Alliance and its calendar, at <https://mnaccess.org/>

OPPORTUNITIES

Info & Assistance
Free programs offered
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Minnesota offers a free program for family members and friends of someone living with a mental illness this fall. Family to Family workshops are a transformative opportunity in which participants learn about mental illnesses, the brain, treatment, and resources. Participants will also build communication skills, reduce stress, find support, and discover the common stages of emotional responses when supporting someone with a mental illness. The class meets weekly for eight weeks, 6:30-9 p.m. Some classes will be virtual using the Zoom format. Some will be in person. Persons joining a virtual class will need a computer or tablet with a camera and high-speed internet to attend. Before starting any of the sessions, short interview is needed prior to the class's start. Start dates are: Mon, Sept. 12 via Zoom.

FFI: Sue, 612-618-9011, suejohnsonemail@gmail.com. Tue, Sept. 20 via Zoom. FFI: Pam, 612-419-6659, Elizabeth, 612-432-0471. Thu, Sept. 29 in-person, in Dakota County. FFI: Joan, 612-205-7080

Vision loss group offers activities
Vision Loss Resources offers an audio activities line. To listen to the audio version of the calendar, call 612-235-3654. The calendar is also available on the website. Ask about virtual support groups, events, distance learning and no-contact grocery shopping and reading support. FFI: 612-843-3439, 612-871-2222, info@visionloss-resources.org

Many classes available
NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) has set up a wide variety of free and in-person online mental health classes. Choices include Hope for Recovery, Transitions, Ending the Silence, Understanding Early Episode Psychosis for Families, In Our Own Voice, Family

to 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 namimn.org and clicking on "Classes" or go straight to <https://namimn.org/education-public-awareness/classes/scheduled/>.

Children, youth and families
PACER workshops sampling
PACER Center offers many useful free or low-cost workshops and other resources for families of children with any 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 designed 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 to support the 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 use what they learned about long journey space travel to build a model of the spacecraft they designed in part one. FFI: PACER, 952-838-9000, 800-537-2237, www.pacer.org

REGIONAL NEWS
From page 8
worked with for the past 16 years. These vendors currently provide 70 percent of our real-time captioning, with the seven-person in-house staff providing the other 30 percent. Vendor-provided captioning

services employ a method (CART) that provides a nearly verbatim 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 service users, further our objective of advancing access for all of our community members and meet federal anti-discrimination requirements.”

(Source: KSTP-TV)

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