

Community Editor Biographies



Leilani Andrews



Wendy Brown-Báez



Colleen Casey

LEILANI ANDREWS is a student at Central Senior High, graduating in 2017. She enjoys performing. She has an older brother, Shaquan, who is her inspiration to work harder, a younger brother who makes her laugh, and a mother who supports her. She enjoys time with her boyfriend, Kevin, creating new experiences and learning together.

WENDY BROWN-BÁEZ is a writer, teacher, performance poet, and installation artist. Wendy is the author of the poetry books *Ceremonies of the Spirit* and *Transparencies of Light*, and she has published poetry and prose in numerous literary journals and anthologies. Wendy received McKnight and Minnesota State Arts Board grants to teach writing workshops for youth in crisis and at nonprofits. She teaches in the Minnesota Prison Writing Workshop and the Care for Caregivers writing workshop at Pathways. Wendy's motto is: "The shortest bridge between us is a story." www.wendybrownbaz.com

COLLEEN CASEY uses language and other arts to facilitate positive transformation. From Bdote and of Mdewakanton Dakota and European American heritages, Colleen sees herself as a person of crosscurrents and confluences. She loves supporting people who are strengthening their voices. She believes we are all related.

ABBY COOPER is a children's book author living in the Lowertown neighborhood of Saint Paul. When she's not working on her novels (*Sticks & Stones*, 2016, Macmillan; *Bubbles*, 2017, Macmillan), she loves walking her dog along the river and discovering new coffee shops and restaurants. Visit Abby online at www.AbbyCooperAuthor.com.



Abby Cooper



Deborah Cooper



Pamela R. Fletcher



IBÉ

DEBORAH COOPER is retired from thirty years of corporate communications and public relations for Twin Cities—area corporations. Now a freelance marketing manager, she has served as a board member and secretary for the nonprofit Rondo Avenue, Inc., which produces the annual Rondo Days Festival. Deborah is currently writing a series of short stories that take place in the former Rondo community.

PAMELA R. FLETCHER works as a writer, editor, teacher, and scholar. She is executive editor for the Saint Paul Almanac and a contributing editor for *Blues Vision: African American Writing from Minnesota* (2015), *The Way We See It: A Fresh Look at Vision Loss* (2014), and *Transforming a Rape Culture* (2005). Her prose and poetry appear in various other publications, and she has earned several literary awards and grants, including a Minnesota State Arts Board Fellowship and the Loft's Creative Nonfiction Residency Award.

IBÉ is a father, husband, writer, and son of Africa. America is “. . .” but also love drives him crazy.

KEMET EGYPT IMHOTEP was conceived in Oklahoma and born in Saint Paul. He was left under the care of his great-uncle and aunt through marriage. His aunt, Willia Mae Johnson, who was born on a plantation in Arkansas in 1918, was a strong believer in faith and trust in the Creator. Kemet says the school system failed him. He was in the class of 1990 at Central High School and finished at the Area Learning Center located in the Uni-Dale Mall. At present he says he is a lost, troubled soul, still finding his way through the quicksand.



Kemet Egypt Imhotep



Ismail Khadar



Abe Levine



Melody Werner Luepke



Damien Mills



Abdirazaq Mohamed

ISMAIL KHADAR: Community editor + raised on the East Side + aspiring anthropologist + devilishly handsome face + a humorous personality + a sweater vest, not vest + a pet turtle named Hidalgo = priceless.

ABE LEVINE is a community-based chef and gardener who is both strange and full of flavor, like an eggplant. His kitchen is his dojo, and you're invited to judo chop!

MELODY WERNER LUEPKE, originally from Cleveland, is now a proud resident of Saint Paul. After moving here to be close to her daughters, she quickly discovered the wealth of activities and venues in Saint Paul and became a live-music junkie. A true believer in online dating, she married her sweetheart, Charlie, after meeting him online. Her writing background consists primarily of poetry and short stories, and her artistic endeavors include jewelry making and photography. Melody is also a massage therapist, choral member, and, most importantly, the grandmother of three youngsters who live in Saint Paul.

DAMIEN MILLS is a young Trans writer of color. She says, "Being a part of the *Saint Paul Almanac* is a great honor. This experience has taught me that there are all kinds of different ways to interpret a piece of writing and ways to write it. It is a wonderful experience that I thoroughly enjoy."

ABDIRAZAQ MOHAMED is a high school student and first-time community editor.

MOHAMED MOHAMED is a student at Higher Ground Academy in Saint Paul. He first took interest in writing and mastered the arts of grammar at the age of eight. He enjoyed writing then and still does as a tenth grader. Currently, he takes English courses and exceeds very well at them.



Mohamed Mohamed



Dr. Sheronda Orridge



Kathryn Pulley



Deb Runyon

DR. SHERONDA ORRIDGE is owner/operator of Loving Spirit Life Coach Academy LLC, Loving Spirit Radio & Publishing, and Worldwide Coaching Connection. As a holistic life coach she specializes in coaching clients with multiple barriers. Dr. Sheronda uses writing and performing as tools to help clients gather their thoughts and express their feelings in healthy and productive ways.

KATHRYN PULLEY has previously defined herself as a high school English teacher with an MA in English. But *Mama* is a world-altering word, with the power to split her heart in two and place half of it outside her body in the form of a toothy-smiled toddler.

DEB RUNYON. Renshi poet. Your turn.

SAGIRAH SHAHID is a Minneapolis-based writer. Primarily a poet, she often seeks to make sense of the complexities surrounding the human experience. A 2015-2016 winner of the Loft Literary Center's Mentor Series Award in poetry, Sagirah has been published or has work forthcoming in *The Journal of Compressed Creative Arts*, *Mizna*, *The Fem*, *Bluestem*, *For Harriet*, *Black Fox*, *Knockout Literary Magazine*, *Switchback*, and *Qu Literary Journal*.

BEN WEAVER is a songwriter, poet, cyclist, and printer. He has released eight studio albums of music and four books of poetry. The bicycle is Ben's vehicle of choice for touring his music. His most recent bicycle-powered tours include tracing 1,500 miles of the Mississippi River from Saint Paul to New Orleans, and circumnavigating Lake Superior.

CLARENCE WHITE is a writer, editor, and publicist living in Saint Paul. He is a master of the personal letter and too many emails for which "send" has been hit with too much haste. He has worked as a writer for the National



Sagirah Shahid



Ben Weaver



Clarence White



Linda White



Sid Carlson White



Alexa Yankton



Lisa Yankton

Farmers Union in Washington, D.C., the international organization Non-violent Peaceforce, and several Twin Cities nonprofits. He is a 2011–2012 Givens Foundation for African American Literature Retreat fellow and was a finalist for the mnartists.org miniStories flash fiction competition in 2008. He is the primary author of The Clarence White Blog and is a veteran of the Central Minnesota Writers' Workshop.

LINDA WHITE is a writer, reader, editor, reviewer, promoter, and teacher. Her writing has appeared in Writer's Block, MNReads, and BookRiot. She runs BookMania and The Publishing Bones, teaches at the Loft, and is part of the Cracked Walnut team. A St. Thomas alum, she is in love with Saint Paul.

SID CARLSON WHITE is a senior at Mounds Park Academy. Despite constant pressure from 99.9 percent of the people around him, he continues to maintain his belief that Saint Paul is better than Minneapolis and that baseball is the greatest game ever invented. He does not write as much as he should, and is more at home at the ballpark or playing quiz bowl.

ALEXA YANKTON is a member of the Spirit Lake Dakota. She is in the ninth grade. She delights in hiking nature trails, riding horseback, visiting museums, sketching, taking photographs, traveling, camping, and being with her family and friends. Alexa is a Pow Wow Princess and water carrier at ceremonials.

LISA YANKTON is member of the Spirit Lake Dakota. She enjoys traveling, learning culinary skills, and pow wow dancing. An award-winning poet and Minnesota Book Awards blogger, Lisa uses her writing and presence to create positive change. She is the mother of two lovely daughters and pet owner of her three-legged yorkiepoo puppy Wampum, aka Houdini.