

MINNESOTA WOMEN'S PRESS



TRANSFORMATION

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Find our first two Quaranzine issues, "The Cocoon" and "Eco," [here](#).



As we examined in our March “Money” issue, women’s economic power is not what we wish it would be. In times of crisis, which can be chronic for many of us even without a pandemic, women are creative about sustaining themselves and their families in collaboration with community. Yet there is a cycle of fatigue around finances that directs our lives.

The pay gap has not closed, despite decades of conversation. Inequalities are widening, and the numbers of people of all ages who are struggling is increasing quickly. The situation is propelling an increasing number of women into politics. There is a deep need to reallocate priorities in funding and policy in order to rebuild infrastructure.

The pandemic brings that need into even sharper focus. People — especially women of color — have been working for many years to transform the economy. There is no time better than the present to strengthen our vision of a new world.

Using a neighborhood movie theater’s [virtual pass](#), my mother and I recently watched the documentary “Capital in the Twenty-First Century.” As global economy analyst [Rana Foroohor](#) put it in the film, “We have a mythology that what is good for Wall Street is good for Main Street, but that’s never been true.”

The film makes the point that politics shape the way we think about the economy — such as blaming immigrants for taking jobs — and that we can be inspired to make different choices by telling different stories.

The intention of Minnesota Women’s Press this summer was to embark on a listening tour of the state, connecting in conversation with women about the economy and the ecosystem. Instead, we will be working virtually with extended community to talk about how to deepen community-based economies.

We are in the planning stages of a long-term campaign — tentatively called “Douglas to the Green Economy” ([inspired by this Winona LaDuke essay](#)), in order to tell new stories about how we can build a new economy.

In our second Quaranzine issue, “Eco,” we looked at how nature reminds us that borders are figments of mind, not biology. In this “Transformation” issue, we explore how the coronavirus can reset our expectations and capabilities.

It was 400 years ago that the U.S. economy was built on Native land with slave labor. It was 100 years ago that some women finally won the right to vote. It was 50 years ago that pop culture started to focus attention on the environment. In 2020, it is time to acknowledge that a new economic system is possible.

The mission of Minnesota Women’s Press is to amplify the voices and vision of women as community-based journalists and storytellers. The transformation of society will rely on how well we create solidarity around narratives that bring us to a new future. Please join us ([see page 20](#) for more information).

In this Quaranzine we ask: How will we transform together?

PHOTO SARAH WHITTING

Managing With Not Much

written by Tess Montgomery

One of the most widely read stories in the magazine in 2020 so far has been Tess Montgomery's essay about the generational impact of financial trauma, which ran in our March "Money" issue. It was written just before COVID-19 became a household phenomenon in Minnesota. We asked her to write again from the perspective of being in a pandemic world.

The news stories for months now have been consumed with the threats of COVID-19 and the effect this pandemic will have on the stock market, and U.S. and global economies.

When I see these articles, I can't help but think, "What's that got to do with me?" The closest thing I have to a stock is made with beef or chicken.

I cannot tell if I am lucky or not to have no worries about my investments or retirement funds. How can I, when I am only thinking about how I am going to financially make it through another week?

Like many others, I watched cautiously as the threat of COVID-19 grew closer and swarms of people rushed to the grocery store to "prepare-not-panic" shop.

What do you do when a pandemic hits between paychecks? How do you manage being caught up in the hustle of feeling pressured to be prepared, but being financially limited? Suddenly, you are faced with decisions like whether you should buy cleaning wipes — if you can find them — or another pack of chicken breasts.

Mothers are faced with the question of how they are going to feed their children three meals every day of the week — while attempting to work from home, not getting paid at all, or being required to go off to work with kids at home.

We are also reading about how communities of color are at more risk of contracting the virus. Not only because we don't have the discretionary funds to stock up on hand sanitizers, latex gloves, and N95 breathing masks, but because of the already prevalent underlying health issues in our communities.

The people in our communities make up a large percentage of low-wage workers — the “essential jobs” — helping to maintain normalcy, especially for those with higher wages. Grocery store clerks, personal care professionals, and bus drivers are all risking family health every time we step out the door. Pandemics don't stop bills from being due.

We are disproportionately faced with the aspects of financial life that are not within our control. How much paid time off or sick leave is our employer willing to give? How much medical treatment will be covered by health insurance, if we have it?

As if we needed any more reasons, this is exactly why we are overdue in having conversations about how to build equity into our community. We must work together so that those without privilege are able to improve on financial security.

We quickly saw how a crisis can turn into class warfare. Those with privilege hoard essential supplies because they have the money to do so.

I do see a silver lining in times like this, however. I see the humanity in poverty.

Unfortunately, for women of color, we have practiced for this. It isn't new to us. Relying on community support is how we survive even when there is not a pandemic. Food drives, granny daycare, cash advances from close friends and family, are all part of the poor person's savings account.

As I have learned from [“More Than A Single Story”](#) conversations, communities of color are resilient. We are adaptable. As my mother used to say, “We will get through this, just like all the other times.”

Tess Montgomery (she/her) wrote [Financial Trauma](#) in the March 2020 issue of Minnesota Women's Press.





Bo Thao-Urabe (she/her) is Executive and Network Director for the Coalition of Asian American Leaders and a Bush Fellow.

Rebuild By Centering Equity

written by Bo Thao-Urabe

We asked Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL) director Bo Thao-Urabe to offer her perspective on what she would like to see transformed as we move through the COVID-19 crisis.

As I check in on friends, family, colleagues, and community members, it seems like everyone's lives have been turned upside down amidst this pandemic. People have lost jobs, housing, health — the list goes on. They are grieving and mourning, and feeling a growing discomfort with uncertainty. They are worried about the future.

I often hear: When will things return to normal? I'm so over this virus. I can't wait until things are normal again.

While it is understandable to want a return to what we have known and to feel a sense of control over our lives again, I would be lying if I said I want to see things return to what they were before COVID-19.

I don't want things to return to what we call normal — a normal where immigrants and refugees are blamed for America's problems, where systems perpetually exclude the needs and assets of Asian, Black, Indigenous, and Latinx communities (anyone under the BIPOC umbrella), where we pretend racism is history even as it breathes every day in our systems.

If there is a glimmer of hope in all of this chaos, it is that the humanitarian actions those in power had deemed impossible for years suddenly became possible. Evictions were suspended in Minnesota, and we stopped jailing individuals who are not harmful to the community.

I am ready to take this opportunity to reimagine and reconstruct so we can repair all that has been unfair, unjust, and inequitable.



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“Many Americans are now experiencing what poor communities live with daily. We have communities perennially facing lower wages, higher poverty, lack of access to health care, and lack of access to childcare. Shift workers, low-wage workers, agrarian workers, and service workers are now being pushed over the edge. We must be intentional about identifying these challenges and concrete about naming and pursuing the solutions.”

— Stacey Abrams, quoted in [Elle magazine](#)

Co-Creating a Community Economy

written by Mikki Morrissette

When I was a freshman at the University of Minnesota, I did poorly in an economics course I must have been required to take. All I remember from the class was that it was much too early, in a lecture hall much too big, for me to learn from monologues about a topic that held no interest for me. Macro and micro economics, and how the markets of supply and demand kept society aloft, seemed irrelevant to me as an 18-year-old. I wanted to take journalism classes and work at the campus newspaper.

Now, however, I have three books authored by economists Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham, a writing team that formed at a feminist conference in 1992. They wrote under the pen name J.K. Gibson-Graham, and collaborated on a series of books, published by the University of Minnesota Press.

Colorful post-it notes jut out of the pages, teaching me what an inspired economy can be. Part of our storytelling rut, the authors tell me, is that the focus on capitalism as the root of all evil gives too much credit to an economic model that is incomplete. In 1996, Gibson-Graham published “The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It).”

“We are hoping to enable ourselves and others not only to imagine but also to strengthen and build non-capitalist enterprises and spaces,” they wrote. “As we embarked on this collective effort, a comment by Fredric Jameson both spoke to us and provoked us:

‘It seems to be easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than the breakdown of late capitalism. Perhaps that is due to some weakness in our imaginations.’

They formed an academic and community-based collaboration, [Community Economies Collective](#), to look at the challenges of global interdependence.

Gibson-Graham acknowledged that they were “accused” of being overly optimistic, but preferred to consider their work as a beacon of hope — a showcase for possibility in a worldview. Their goal was to co-create from the existing situation something more desirable: a “becoming.”

I skimmed these three books in the second month of being cocooned in my home during the pandemic. Our small North Minneapolis office space has sat mostly empty as we try to figure out how to create a new normal. The books arrived at my doorstep as I used my newly re-arranged time to contemplate ongoing, deeper Minnesota Women’s Press coverage.

Environmental problems brought on by consumption and unchecked development are creating a world in which the intersection of habitats [see “[Silent Spring](#)” from Eco Quarantine] are becoming more dangerous for everyone — yet the writers offered me reasons for optimism.

Post-Capitalism

In “A Postcapitalist Politics,” the authors outline how feminist activists were beginning to get recognition for unpaid household labor, caregiving, and volunteer work that sustains households and communities. This work is equal to 30-50 percent of economic activity in both rich and poor countries. The interdependence of household, community, and market-based economic activities are rarely explored, they pointed out. In a less capital-centric story, non-wage labor is recognized as essential to livelihoods.

As they depicted in a graphic, a small percentage of the economy is derived from wage labor production in capitalist firms. Schools, neighborhoods, family-based businesses, churches, retirees, gifts, self-employment, government employment, volunteerism, bartering, household labor, and cooperatives are vital to our functioning.

If a vision of capitalism is that it is “the last stronghold of unity and singularity in a world of diversity and plurality,” we are tempted to dismiss the actual fragmentation of our economy.



If we could instead “smash capitalism and see it in a thousand pieces,” we would see its unity as a fantasy.

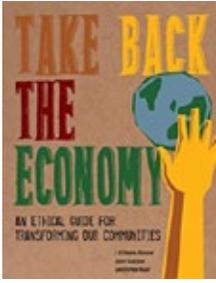
In other words, when we remind ourselves of the totality of economic players, we realize how much energy and political investment go into an inflated economic system that is only a sliver of how our communities actually work.

As Gibson-Graham write, “The Community Economy is necessarily positioned as the ‘other’ to the so-called ‘real economy’ of international markets, competitive dynamics, and agglomerative tendencies that operate at the global scale.”

Transforming Community

The authors also write of “the commons” — land, air, trees, water, and also a public health system, the internet, databases, working roads, communication tools, traditions. The commons are valuable resources that yield the nourishment and support working societies need.

In our own society, Gibson-Graham wrote, “The expropriation of the commons that fueled Western industrialization involved private theft of common lands, restriction of access to resources and culturally meaningful sites, and destruction of traditional and agricultural livelihoods. The success of this expropriation is reflected in the almost total disappearance of the term ‘commons’ from mainstream public discourse in the West.”



“Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities” (2013) equates a successful economy with a successful community garden. How do we care for the commons? What is produced for survival? How do we work alongside others? How is surplus distributed? How is it invested for the future?

The Community Economy is “a space of decision making where we recognize and negotiate our interdependence with other humans, other species, and our environment. In the process of recognizing and negotiating, we become a community.”

Today, on the other hand, “we consume more than we can replace, use surplus inequitably and unsustainably, destroy our commons, and threaten species survival. It has become obvious that our planet garden can no longer support economic systems that ignore environmental restoration and society care.”

The authors indicate that the reason community economies are not as strong as they could be is because we tend to not see ourselves as significant actors in the economy, let alone shapers of it. “In wealthy countries we are told that we are consumers and are asked to increase our consumption to help grow the economy. People’s overall level of prosperity and ‘worth’ is communicated by their consumption.”

However, there are ways that consumers can and do make change happen. The authors cited the banning of battery cages for egg-laying hens in the European Union. “Over the years, what was once seen as an acceptable and efficient farming practice has been reframed as cruel and unwarranted.”

Norway’s country-wide investment fund, fair trade coffee, and social investments in caregiving, green initiatives, democratically owned companies, and ethical trade are other examples.

Pandemic Economics

As the pandemic today proves, we are significant actors in a functioning society.

On one hand, I think of how our communities today are sustained by those who sew face masks for frontline medical workers and nursing homes, distilleries-turned-sanitizer factories, school districts that distribute technology to students for distance learning, entertainers who stream live performances. I think, always, about the small businesses, donors, and subscribers who support this magazine.

It also is important to remember why we have to support ourselves this way in the first place. I read a [New Yorker](#) essay by Jia Tolentino, brought to my attention by our assistant editor, that points out how community needs are the responsibility of funded governments whose rules and policies we should be able to rely on to protect us.

“There’s a certain kind of news story that is presented as heartwarming, but actually evinces the ravages of American inequality under capitalism: the account of an eighth grader who raised money to eliminate his classmates’ lunch debt, or the report on a FedEx employee who walked twelve miles to and from work each day until her co-

workers took up a collection to buy her a car. We can be so moved by the way people come together to overcome hardship that we lose sight of the fact that many of these hardships should not exist at all,” Tolentino wrote.

One day each week I use the car to get business mail and buy groceries. I share the road with Amazon trucks who are delivering continuously from warehouses with workers who continue to protest conditions, while its owner amasses what is now a [\\$144 billion net worth](#) — up 25 percent since the pandemic started.

I notice [in news stories](#) the desperation of some who seek to get us quickly back to same-old methods of operation.

Over the years, I also have seen the growth in Minnesota of [community-supported agriculture](#), including [192 farmer’s markets](#), in what I consider one of the best examples of the Community Economy at work. We are fortunate to have so many co-operative players involved in a sustainable agricultural movement in Minnesota.

I suspect that if Gibson-Graham were writing together today they would remind us that we can rebuild as both the consumers and the workforce that shape our economy.

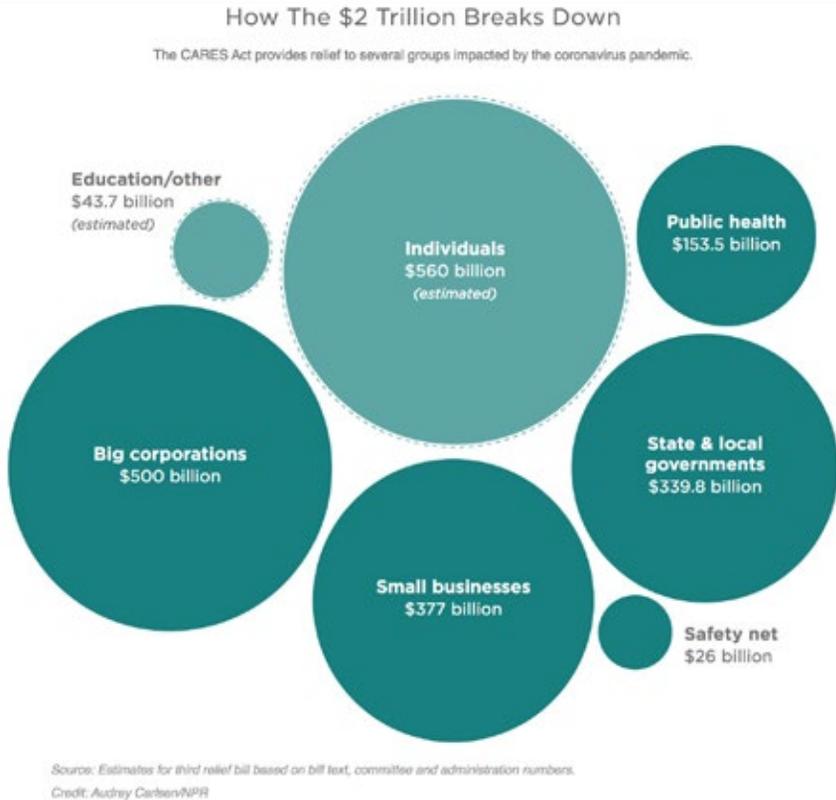
The authors bring home the point that we made in Quarantine #2 “Eco”: “Learning nature’s lesson begins by recognizing that diversity produces resilience. There is no one right answer, there is a diversity of answers.”

Decades after I ignored the lessons of economics in a classroom, I am seeking to learn from and share the storytelling of Community Economies in Minnesota.



As publisher and editor of the Minnesota Women’s Press platform, I ask our readers: Help us share — in virtual forums, in our magazine pages — the stories about community-based economies, green cooperatives, and women-led innovations that are working to truly correct our inequities.

Please use the Comments field at the [bottom of this story](#) on our website to respond to this question: “What community-based economies in Minnesota do you suggest we write about?”



Who CARES?

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) was passed in late March, giving relief to individuals, corporations, small businesses, state and local governments, and public health. The \$500 billion for corporations has a Pandemic Response Accountability Committee attached to it, but watchdogs, media, and legislators are paying attention.

A Huffington Post commentary cautioned: “Nobody has placed meaningful restrictions on how the largest corporations can use their bailout money. They can funnel it to shareholders in the form of stock buybacks or dividends. They can raise executive pay, approve massive bonuses for Wall Street traders, buy up smaller competitors — all while laying off workers, slashing salaries, offshoring jobs, or otherwise running amok as corporate citizens.”

During the 2007-09 recession, as one example, AIG Insurance was given a taxpayer-funded bailout, then paid \$450 million in bonuses to its “top performers.” Tellers, processors, and other employees were fired.

A commentary in Yes! magazine put it this way: “If there’s ever been a sign that we need a national health care program, to provide paid sick leave for all working people, and to implement countless other protections, this is it. The shutdown of the economy has demonstrated — again — that working people, not bankers, keep the economy running.”

Sources: [NPR](#), [Huffington Post](#), [Yes! magazine](#)

Show Me the Money

The Washington Post, The New York Times, Bloomberg, ProPublica and Dow Jones — which publishes The Wall Street Journal are suing the Small Business Administration (SBA) after it refused to release which businesses received money through the \$660 billion Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

According to [NPR](#), more than 200 publicly traded companies were part of a wave that used up the program's first round of money within two weeks.

The [Associated Press](#) found dozens of publicly listed companies — some with market values over \$100 million — collectively received money from the program's first round.

An SBA regional director told the [Star Tribune](#), “Less than 5 percent of the loans that were approved were over \$1 million and 74 percent were under \$150,000.”

The SBA eventually approved access to loans to more small lenders and community financial institutions that disproportionately loan to small female- and minority-headed businesses.

“We are beginning to understand how much we need a government, and a government that actually does things to help people. We don't have one. ... By confusing health and virtue, we've gotten testier, less tolerant and ultimately less capable of confronting the sources of disease that do not lie within our individual control.”

— Barbara Ehrenreich, quoted in a [Washington Post commentary](#)

Stark Viewpoints

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell suggested in April that states get no more help from the federal government, and should instead be forced to declare bankruptcy. The idea was that assistance to states would be a “Blue State Bailout” since it is McConnell's belief that states run by Democrat governors are in most need of assistance.

Similarly, President Trump recently said increased federal funding to help states recover from coronavirus is unfair to Republicans, “because all the states that need help — they're run by Democrats in every case.” He also suggested aid to states should be conditioned on adopting his policy priorities.

The [Washington Post](#), an analysis from the Tax Foundation, and a report published by the Rockefeller Institute of Government show a different story. As New York governor Andrew Cuomo pointed out, his “blue” state sends more in taxes to the federal government than it gets back in federal spending, while McConnell's state of Kentucky is the opposite.

Forbes magazine reported that 19 of the 25 states with the highest average stimulus payouts have voted Republican in every election since 2000. The top five are all red states — Utah, Idaho, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

In Wyoming, for example, there were fewer than 600 positive cases at the time, yet it received \$1.25 billion from the congressional package, equal to 80 percent of its annual general state budget, according to an Associated Press analysis. By contrast, the hardest-hit state, New York, received approximately \$24,000 per positive test.

Sources: [Forbes](#), [Seattle Times](#), [CNBC](#)

Health Insurance Burden

David Wichmann, CEO of the Minnetonka-based insurance giant United Health Group, made upwards of \$52 million last year. Wichmann has been known for his vocal disapproval of Medicare for All, which he claimed would “destabilize the nation’s health system and the inherent cost burden would surely have a severe impact on the economy and jobs — all without fundamentally increasing access to care.” People in the U.S. spend one of every five dollars on health care, the highest ratio in the world. According to Reuters, we currently pay three times what the British do for the world’s 20 most popular drugs.

Sources: [City Pages](#), [Star Tribune](#)

Drug Price Hike Response

Two U.S. Congresswomen urged drugmaker Jaguar Health to reverse recent price hikes on its drug Mytesi, which could be used to alleviate side effects in patients being treated for COVID-19. The letter, signed by House Oversight Committee Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney and U.S. Representative Jackie Speier, criticized Jaguar for what it said was a nearly threefold price increase on the drug, from \$688.52 to \$2,206.52 per bottle of pills, earlier this month. The drug is currently approved for use in addressing diarrhea and other gastrointestinal symptoms in patients being treated for HIV or AIDs with antiretroviral drugs.

Source: [Reuters](#)

Women Leadership

New Zealand, Germany, and Finland have had striking success in fighting the coronavirus. Iceland, Taiwan, and Denmark also have done well. All of them have women leaders.

Plenty of countries with male leaders — Vietnam, the Czech Republic, Greece, Australia — have also done well. But few with female leaders have done badly.

New Zealand’s premier, Jacinda Ardern, has delivered empathetic “stay home, save lives” video messages from her couch and communicated daily through Facebook Live videos. She has urged New Zealanders to look after their neighbors and take care of the vulnerable. Her emphasis on shared responsibility has united the country.

“We do need to be careful about lumping men and women into homogenous categories and keep in mind that the percentage of female national and global leaders is much smaller,” says Kathleen Gersen, a professor of sociology at New York University. “But with that being said, among the countries which have done a better job of handling this pandemic and the spillover effects that it has had, women are disproportionately represented to a rather startling degree.”

Sources: [The Guardian](#), [Women’s Media Center](#), [The Hill](#)

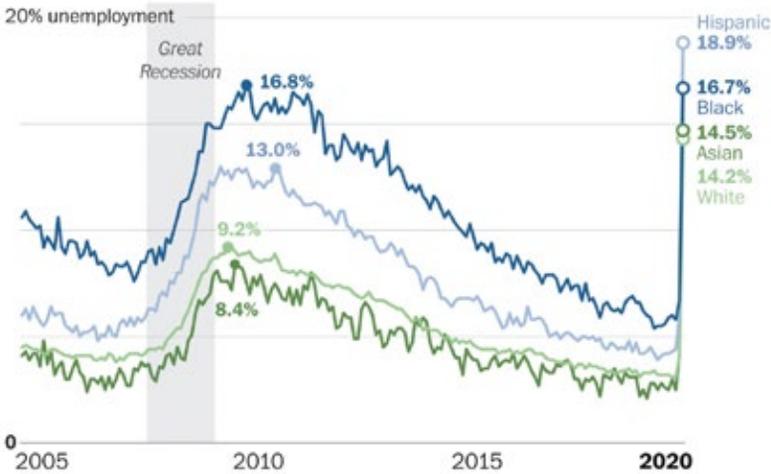


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Unemployment rate by race



Note: For civilian Americans, seasonally adjusted. White, black and Asian categories are not exclusive of Hispanic ethnicity.

Source: Labor Department

THE WASHINGTON POST

The Job Gap

Annie Lowrey, an economics writer for The Atlantic, has written about how COVID-19 shutdowns and the 2008 recession has made the Millennial generation (born 1981-1996) a “lost generation” without economic security — “the first generation in modern American history to end up poorer than their parents.”

Student loan debt, a weakened job market, and lack of security to buy homes and raise families had already created a wide gap. This generation was the first to be wounded by the pandemic shutdown, with jobs largely in restaurants, fitness centers, retail, and other service industries.

In other demographics, as the Washington Post reported on May 9, women have been hit with unemployment at higher rates than men. In February, before the shutdown, 5.8 percent of Blacks, 4.4 percent of Hispanics, 3.1 percent of whites, and 2.5 percent of Asians were unemployed in the U.S. As of April, the unemployment rate for Hispanics was 18.9 percent, 16.7 percent for Blacks, 14.5 percent for Asians, and 14.2 percent for whites. Typically, the Black unemployment rate is double that of whites. Heidi Shierholz, policy director at the Economic Policy Institute, points out that many of the job losses are to undocumented immigrants — often paid under the table — who generally do not have access to food stamps, health care, and subsidized housing; nor are they eligible to receive the \$1,200 stimulus checks.

In an interview with Vox, Lowrey said: “We choose these rates of inequality, this racial wealth gap. We elected it. We could have chosen another system, another world, like other countries have.” Lowrey says programs like universal pre-K for all Americans is popular, but our system of government allows popular vote to be ignored. “There have been people pushing back against this for decades. The key point is that this isn’t merely a market outcome. The world we have has been shaped by policies our government has chosen. That’s so important to remember.”

Proposals included additional stimulus checks and payroll grants, better access to federal loans by small businesses, and a federal jobs guarantee to help citizens get back to work in an equitable way.

Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Vox](#)

Infrastructure Inadequacy

[Ezra Klein](#), the founder of Vox and a former columnist for the Washington Post, wrote a lengthy commentary about why our country does not have strong infrastructure.

“I’ve covered Congress for almost 20 years. The place is littered with proposals to construct universal pre-K and reimagine the health system, to decarbonize the U.S. economy and incentivize drug development through prizes and solve the housing crisis. They just don’t pass. It’s become a running joke in Washington that every week is infrastructure week. But we’re not rebuilding American infrastructure.”

To the question, why, he writes: “The institutions through which Americans build have become biased against action rather than toward it. Too many actors have veto rights over what gets built. ... This is representative democracy at its worst: A democracy that only represents those who know to show up at meetings most people never hear about, and so ends up handing power to special interests.”

The Time Is Right to Prioritize Green

The founder of [Green Biz](#) wrote that this is the right time to talk about climate change, because we will spend the next several years rebooting our economic capabilities. “Isn’t this the time to talk about how to create a robust, resilient and regenerative economy? And shouldn’t we be aligning our investments — and our tax dollars — in those directions?”

Recommendations:

- If we bail out the airline industry, require net-zero emissions by mid-century
- If we prop up agribusinesses, help them adopt climate-friendly technologies
- Support an orderly transition away from fossil fuels while building the next generation of clean energy companies and skilled workers

“What are the stories we will tell once we are not in the midst of this, but at the end? Will we manifest the value of the nurses and farmers and people who delivered us from hunger and want by delivering to us? Will we demand that our social health be measured by something more resilient than stock market figures?”

Perhaps we will not snap back into that old bordered world, where the fiction of containment made a virus in China seem sealed away from us. Our future could do with stories in which it is impossible to sever the economy from ecology, ecology from health, and the health of our individual beings from the beings of others.”

— *Bathsheba Demuth, an environmental historian and author, quoted in [Emergence](#)*

Transformative Ideas

by Siena Iwasaki Milbauer

In this time of isolation, I have been reminded how lucky we are to have books that introduce us to transformative narratives. I have sought out stories in which I am confronted with challenging ideas, new concepts, and ways to see familiar experiences articulated in revelatory ways.

One such narrative is Stephanie Land's "Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive," a memoir of her years working as a domestic cleaner who relied on public assistance programs while a single mom. She depicts the classist stigma, bureaucratic incompetence, and physical and mental toil of low-income living. She tells of the eventual realization of her dream to attend college.

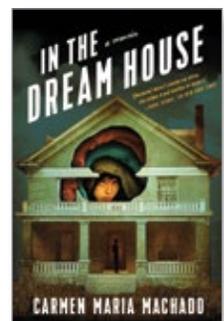
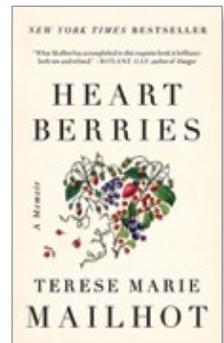
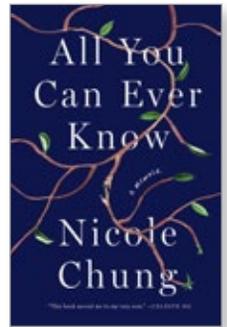
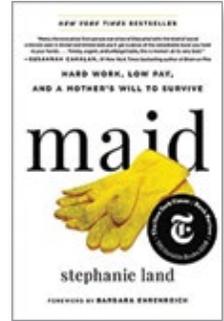
"All You Can Ever Know," by Nicole Chung, also is a powerful memoir. She paints a complex portrait of the realities of interracial adoption. She faced discrimination as an Asian American child adopted by white parents who was raised in a majority white community. The book also reveals Chung's search for her birth parents, and how this journey caused her concept of family to evolve and deepen.

Terese Marie Mailhot began writing "Heart Berries" after committing herself into a mental institution. She is unrelenting in her honesty about details of her childhood and young adulthood on the Seabird Island Indian Reservation in British Columbia. Much of the book is written in the form of letters to her husband Casey, a white man, with the purpose of getting him "to understand my experiences as an Indigenous woman." She writes that in the end she realized she was not simply trying to validate her feelings to him, but "about trying to articulate to the world — that we might appear to have all these stigmas and stereotypes, and we might be burdened by that, but I wanted to show the humanity of my character and who I am."

Another book about claiming space and asserting humanity is Carmen Maria Machado's "In the Dream House," an experimental memoir that is a harrowing recollection of an abusive relationship, a scholarly examination of the form and function of the fairy tale, and an account of the erasure of queer history.

It is not always the book itself that transforms. It can be the experience of reading. One Book | One Minnesota, in partnership with State Library Services, is offering a statewide digital book club. Learn soon about its [summer reading title](#) here.

Whether you are reading a book alongside thousands, with a handful of friends, or happily solo, may you find solace, humor, joy, and perhaps something transformational in its pages.





Implications for the Future

by Priscilla Trinh

COVID-19: Cause of Vast Introspective Deliberation for 19-year-old Me

Admittedly, all this introspection has only enforced some of my former thoughts. For one, these are exciting times. Truly. Beyond this pandemic, being alive in the 21st century is a unique and exciting time.

I can only speak for myself, hailing from a place of relative privilege. I am healthy, I haven't been evicted, and I am more or less financially stable. And yet, my indignation burns quietly.

As governments scramble to keep our GDP-driven world afloat, I am led to wonder whether these solutions are novel or merely mechanisms to maintain the status quo.

From my vantage point, status quo unpleasantness in America runs deeper than the unpleasant realities of this pandemic. These rooted issues have been addressed before, so I will spare the doom and gloom. What excites me is that I have visions for alternative futures.

We have islands of knowledge separated by oceans of nonsense. From misinformed media to the segregation of academic disciplines, a mainstream unifying synthesis has yet to emerge.

I would like to see global economics that are not based on infinite growth and exploitation of people and planet, that are fueled by sustainable energy, and that encourage new models in education.

I would like to see global economics that are not based on infinite growth and exploitation of people and planet, that are fueled by sustainable energy, and that encourage new models in education.

The latter two are things I have actively worked on. I am a sophomore at the University of Minnesota studying Sustainable Systems Management, with double minors in Food Systems and Management. I chose to study these topics because I want to be equipped when traditional supply chains falter.

Vision of the Future

Our globalized world has bred extensive supply chains that are susceptible to shocks, whether it be a tsunami-inspired paint shortage or a pandemic. The toll of soil and habitat degradation coupled with climate change is a major concern of mine. Equally important is comprehension of the massive amounts of fossil fuels that are required for modern agriculture and its transports. So, I am working with others to sustainably cultivate food, mainly in the form of static hydroponics.

My research needs are simple: a bucket of standing water, an inert medium that is not soil, and carrot seeds. A hydroponic system requires no electricity to pump water 24/7, and fits into a 2'x2' foot space — perfect for urban areas.

Alternative ways of being and thriving (not just surviving), are an important defense against the fragility caused by the dominant culture of exploitation.

How many of us know how to grow carrots? I am not suggesting everyone be a farmer, but I would like to see education cultivate practical life skills.

I want a world in which people can sustain themselves outside of task completion — where the standard of living is not merely about monetization. The separation of the human from the biophysical is unnatural.

It was not until late high school that I was introduced to ecology. We are organisms attached to the earth. Trying to convey this to peers, I wrote a book called “Snapcrash: An Indispensable Lens to Reality,” synthesizing human behavior, energy, economics, and the environment. I plan to do more.

It is hard to imagine radical change in the midst of a pandemic, yet the implications of COVID-19 will likely shape policy and attitudes going forward, just as the Great Depression of the 1930s shaped several generations.

My goal is to seek alternative lifestyles to the ones we have been given, and to be prepared for disruptions. I hope others will envision this new future with me.

Priscilla Trinh (she/hers) is an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota. Her mission is to bridge food systems, ecology, and communications in pursuit of a sustainable future.

The Stories We Share

Minnesota Women's Press has been sharing the voice and vision of women since 1985. Gender-based violence, pay inequity, women in politics, equal rights, and ecofeminism have been some of the topics visited again and again in our pages, starting at a time when some thought "women's stories" were meant to be relegated only to the lifestyle sections.

The biweekly newspaper began as a largely women-funded investment, survived the 2009 recession by transitioning into a monthly magazine, and was bought by the current publisher in December 2017 with a business loan and crowdfunding donations.

Since then, the new team has been gathering a diversity of perspectives and networks for solutions-based journalism that responds to issues our community faces.

If you like what you see, please consider any of the following:

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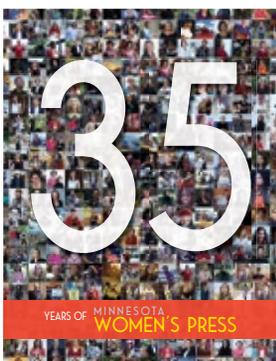
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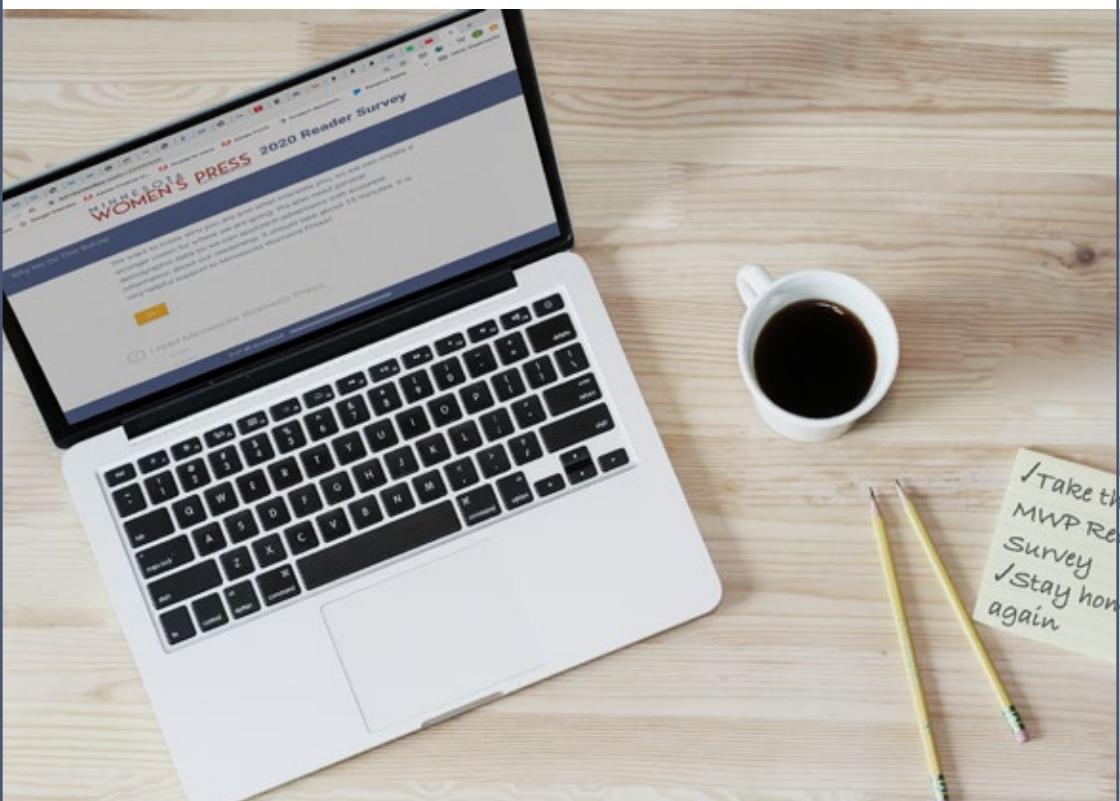
**Using Our Voice
& Vote**



Have You Taken the 2020 Reader Survey Yet?

Our biannual Reader Survey is vital to our decision-making about content direction for the coming year.

Since 1985, Minnesota Women's Press has amplified the voices and vision of women. Our readership is intergenerational and intersectional, and interested in a wide range of topics. What stories should we focus on as we narrow our coverage in the coming year, in order to survive the economic downturn brought about by COVID-19? Now more than ever, we need your feedback from the [2020 Reader Survey](#) to help us plot our direction.



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