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NEWS

Who Is Norm and Why Does He Want to Talk to Your Kids About Vaping?

Plus anti-choice harassers sue, All of Mpls is back, and more Ward 5 tension in today's Flyover.

3:32 PM CDT on April 6, 2023



YouTube | Now that office is RANDOM.

By **Jay Boller**, **Keith Harris**, and **Jessica Armbruster**



Welcome back to The Flyover, your daily digest of what local media outlets and Twitter-ers are gabbing about.

MN Dept. of Health Launches 'Teen-Focused Vape Talk Service'

Look, vaping seems bad and we hope folks of all ages avoid it. To the extent a bureaucracy can *feel* anything, the Minnesota Department of Health feels the same way, specifically about teens. Thus, MDH launched a new advocacy push today intended to curb youth e-cigarette use: [Hey Norm](#), “a creative, relatable marketing campaign intended to engage teens about the issue of vaping,” according to the press release. In practice, that translates as a sweaty, peppy, try-hard character named Norm Davidson who pledges to “confront your friend about vaping for you, so you don't have to be the buzzkill.” Norm’s vibe feels ripped from the *Tim & Eric*, *Between Two Ferns*, and *Napoleon Dynamite* schools of retro, low-budget, muzak-drenched irony, which makes sense considering the copywriters responsible for him are likely pushing 40.

“Holy cow, you actually called. Let me finish my deviled egg...” Norm says when you call his hotline (1-833-HEY-NORM), a resource that allows teens to pass their phones to friends who may or may not want to hear Norm detail the horrors of vaping while quipping up a storm. At least one teen is listening: “Norm helps us have those awkward conversations around vaping and taps into teens’ protective nature, helping us become ambassadors on this issue for our friends,” Madelyn Fisher, an Owatonna high school student, says in the release. And, honestly, who are we to doubt the vision of a department that gifted the world [the endlessly appealing Animals Smoking campaign?](#)

These Fuckin’ People Again...

With Minneapolis gearing up for yet another city council election in 2023, it's time for the shadowy, wealthy org known as All of Mpls to cram your mailbox with glossy, factually iffy fliers and spend multi-millions celebrating their chosen centrists. [Wedge LIVE is on the case](#), noting that "the group that sent a photo of the police chief to your mailbox every week in 2021" and spent \$23 million on that year's election is now boasting that it "helped elect a progressive AND pragmatic city council majority" (someone ask Michael Rainville if he considers himself a progressive) and sending out questionnaires asking for input from voters. Mr. LIVE also peeps into the finances of All of Mpls, discovering, for instance, that the Minneapolis Area Chamber of Commerce donated heavily to a group called Plan for Progress, which in turn funneled money to... you guessed it, All of Mpls. You can read our story of the role All of Mpls played in that election [here](#).

Anti-Abortion Group Sues for the Right to Harass People

As the MN Clinic Defenders explain [in this story](#), folks who seek abortions have to put up with a lot of bullshit from protestors on the street, who have been known to shout Bible verses, threaten damnation, offer medical advice, block driveways, and even get into physical altercations. So when the Minneapolis City Council passed an ordinance banning this type of behavior at Planned Parenthood's Uptown clinic, Pro-Life Action Ministries [filed a challenge in federal court](#), arguing that general harrassment is actually a free speech thing. "The ministry of pro-life sidewalk counseling is a peaceful interaction with pregnant women to convey life-affirming alternatives to abortion," says attorney Erick Kaardal in [an objectively incorrect statement](#) on what actually happens outside of abortion clinics. Meanwhile, Planned Parenthood has plenty of video footage of verbal and physical altercations, and the ministry itself has info on their site about when to call 911 if their "counseling" escalates. Sounds peaceful!

DFL Chair Gets Restraining Order Against Martinez

Tensions are *not* de-escalating in the Minneapolis 5th Ward, [Deena Winter reports in the Minnesota Reformer](#). As you may recall, [the Minneapolis DFL tossed out 358 of council candidate Victor Martinez's 514 delegates](#), saying they'd been entered into the caucus's electronic system incorrectly and could not be validated using paper signup forms. Now the chair of the Minneapolis DFL, Briana Rose Lee, has been granted a temporary restraining order against Martinez. "Victor sent a dangerous person after me," Lee wrote in her request, stating that a Martinez supporter said on Facebook that he picked out a coffin for her and had tweeted out blueprints of her friend's house. "I can't believe she would do this," Martinez said in response. "I've never once called her names. I never once was disrespectful to her at all. Quite the opposite."



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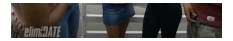
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