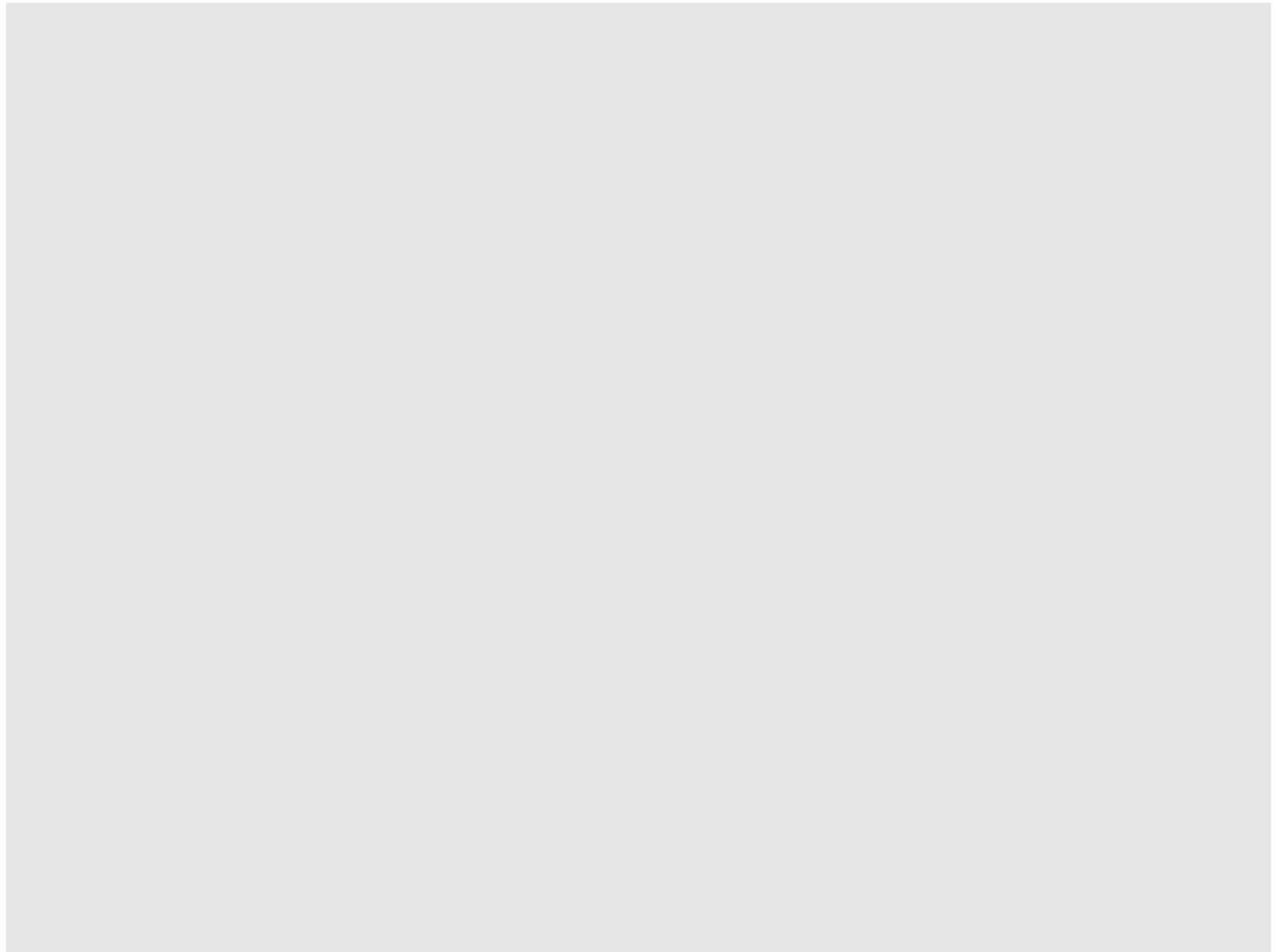


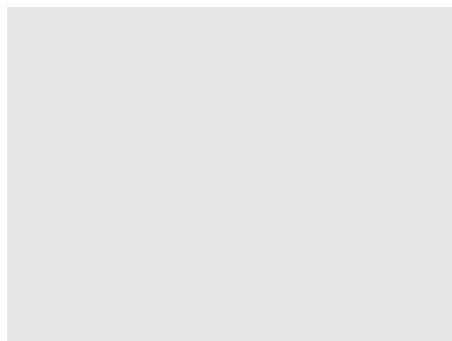
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Make your mark! Deja tu huella! Sidewalk Poetry 2019

By MARK GLEASON and BONNIE JEAN FLOM Guest Columnists Mar 26, 2019



Gleason



Flom

For nine years, the Northfield Arts and Culture Commission (ACC) has sponsored the “Sidewalk Poetry” competition. So far 46 winning Northfield poets, young and old, have “made their mark” on the sidewalks of Northfield, with the help of City workers who have imprinted the poems into new infrastructure sidewalks.

This year, poets also have the opportunity to “Deja Tu Huella,” make their mark in a Spanish-language poem. Funding for the 2019 Sidewalk Poetry competition comes from the Southeast Minnesota Arts Council (SEMAC).

The competition is open until March 29, and guidelines are available through the Sidewalk Poetry link on the ACC page of the City of Northfield website. There is still time for poets to make a “lasting impression” on their community.

Poetry is one of the arts that the ACC promotes as part of an overall arts and culture plan. Thanks especially to the leadership of Northfield Poet Laureate Rob Hardy, and with the ongoing support of the Public Library, language arts programs are reaching a wide range of audiences, including at schools, colleges, bookstores, and community centers. Winners of the Sidewalk Poetry competition will be announced in April, which is National Poetry Month.

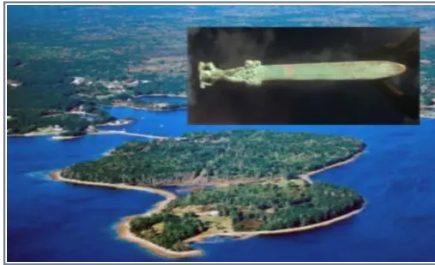
In addition to literary arts, the ACC sponsors programs such as public sculpture (including a high school student sculpture project every other year, installed on Division Street outside the Library), Art in City Hall, and the Living Treasure Award, honoring a Northfield resident who has made outstanding lifetime contributions to the arts. This year the Living Treasure is Donna Paulsen, who has made lifelong contributions to music, including decades of service in musical theater.

ACC aims to help Northfield develop as an “arts town” where the arts contribute to quality of life and to the economic development of the City. On March 19, the City Council unanimously passed a resolution to adopt the Cultural Plan that the ACC, as part of its duties, submitted to the Council. Mayor Pownell has provided ongoing support for this planning: “Our Northfield Arts and Culture Commission has been faithfully working over the past year on an updated Arts and Cultural Plan. Although much of our arts and cultural activity happens through the amazing efforts of individual volunteers or nonprofit organizations, the Arts and Culture Plan is an explicit statement of the City’s commitment to the arts and a recognition of the arts’ crucial role in the health of our community.”

As our local poets prepare to “Make their Mark/Deja Tu Huella,” we want to acknowledge everyone who has helped support the effort, including the Friends and Foundation of the Northfield Public Library, the Streetscape Task Force, the Northfield City Council, and Public Works Department. And we especially acknowledge the support of SEMAC, whose funding is made possible with support from a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, approved by the voters of Minnesota.

Bonnie Jean Flom and Mark Gleason are members of the Arts and Culture Commission

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