Local family’s tree farm celebrates 60 years

By Kristal Leebrick

Once upon a time there was no such thing as a Christmas tree farm in the land of lakes—until University of Minnesota forestry professor Harry Hansen began planting spruces and pines on a tax-delinquent piece of land he purchased in Anoka County in 1952.

Sixty years later, the Hansen Tree Farm is credited as being the first commercial Christmas tree farm in the state. Hansen, a founding member of the Minnesota Christmas Tree Association, started the venture as a means to finance his three sons’ college educations. Now, his two youngest—Mark and Dave—both residents of St. Anthony Park—are literally keeping the (camp)fires burning on that 40-acre plot that has become a holiday destination for many area families.

For the first 10 years after buying the land, Henry and his wife, Charlotte, father-in-law Harry Lindquist (yes, the Harry Lindquist, creator of the famous Christmas Sausage sold at Speedy Market, but that’s another story…) and oldest son Trygg planted trees, transforming the farm field into a managed urban forest.

Trygg, who died two years ago, and his St. Anthony Park friends did much of the work during the summers of their junior and senior high school years, said Dave Hansen. “I think there were about a half-dozen guys who had it as their summer job.”

The Hansen’s began harvesting and selling the trees in the late 1950s and early ’60s. Mark said, supplying metro-area tree lots and allowing visitors to cut their own trees at the farm.

“We spent a lot of time out there,” Mark said. “We didn’t consider it work. My oldest brother, Trygg, he did a lot more. He was in high school and college when most of the planting was done and most of the shearing.”

By the late 1960s, the initial tree farm to 8

Dave and Mark Hansen stand among their trees at the Hansen Tree Farm 60 years after the first seedlings they planted. Inset: A young Mark Hansen plays golf at the farm in 1959 as his brother Dave gets ready to cut down a Scotch pine. Photos courtesy of the Hansen Tree Farm

Fingers crossed for cold weather

53rd annual Langford Park Winter Classic set for Jan. 10 to 13

Winter enthusiasts are keeping their fingers crossed that cold weather will stick around through the second week of January, when the 53rd annual Langford Park Winter Classic is set to begin.

The four-day event—most of which takes place on Langford Park’s outdoor ice rinks—will kick off on Thursday, Jan. 10, with a Squirt hockey tournament that will include teams from Langford Park, Edgerton Recreation Center, City of Lakes in MInneapolis and Prior Lake. A M.Ini-Mite scramble for first-graders and younger will conclude the Classic on Sunday, Jan. 13, with teams from Langford, Edgerton, City of Lakes and Highland taking to the ice.

Hockey isn’t the only game at this St. Anthony Park tradition. A St. Paul Parks and Recreation team basketball tourney will be going on in the building and families can take part in skating contests throughout the weekend, as well as a treasure hunt and concessions.

The Winter Classic is sponsored by the Langford Park Booster Club, which supports youth sports in St. Anthony Park, and St. Paul Parks and Recreation.

Cohen and Hausman to head key state spending committees

By Anne Holzman

With the Democratic Farmer-Labor party back in power in both houses of the Minnesota Legislature as well as the governor’s office, lawmakers from Park Bugle communities will hold some key finance positions as the Legislature convenes in January.

As of early December, Sen. Dick Cohen and Rep. Alice Hausman were already working with the governor’s office and receiving requests from the University of Minnesota, municipalities interested in transit projects and other entities throughout the state eager to claim a piece of the state’s bonding and budget bills this term.

Cohen, whose District 64 crept north to take in part of St. Anthony Park after redistricting last session, will resume chairmanship of the Senate Finance Committee, which he chaired before the 2010 election gave two years of leadership to the Republican Party. The Finance Committee’s job is to propose how the state will spend whatever revenue it collects over the next two years.

Hausman (House District 66A, which extends north of Como Avenue through Falcon Heights and parts of Roseville), resumes her chairmanship of the House Capital Investments Committee, also having held the post to Republicans in 2010. Her committee’s job is to propose a bonding bill that will approve using state credit to fund construction and other physical needs.

Rep. Erin Murphy (House District 67B), a St. Paul Democrat, will chair the House Taxes Committee where the budget will be developed.

Minnnesota Legislature 2013

Crossword puzzle

We have just what you need for those lazy winter days ahead.

Dynamic duo

Two area attorneys have devoted their practice to gender equality.

Family affairs

The third article in our Who Are We? series gets local reaction to the defeat of the marriage amendment.

Page 11
Como Park
The District 10 Como Community Council meets at 7 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month at Como Streetcar Station, 1224 N. Loring Parkway.

Districts 6 and 10 boundary change to be discussed Jan. 9
A neighborhood meeting concerning the boundaries of District 6 Planning Council and District 10 Como Community Council will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 9, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the banquet room at Black Bear Crossing, 1360 N. Loring Parkway.

The councilors received a request from Ward 5 Councilmember Amy Brendmoen to consider changing the service lines, bringing the area west of Dale Street currently being served by District 6 to the District 10 Como Community Council. In November 2012, the district councils also received a memo and a map from the city’s Planning and Economic Development Department regarding the proposed change.

At the Nov. 18 District 10 Community Council meeting, the board of directors voted against the boundary changes. A letter was sent to the city regarding District 10’s position on the issue. The District 6 Planning Council has also voted to leave the boundary lines unchanged.

Newly elected at-large members
The District 10 Community Council elected two at-large board members at its Nov. 18 meeting. Dana Saager and Pete Bolstad. Saager is a new resident to the Como Park neighborhood. He works for the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs and has a background in public administration. Bolstad served as a sub-district 2 board member in 2009-11. He has been active in the community, serving as a coach at Northwest Como Recreation Center and an officer of the center’s booster club. He is a vocational counselor with Hennepin County.

Falcon Heights
The Falcon Heights City Council meets at 7 p.m. the third and fourth Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Falcon Heights City Hall, 2077 W. Larpenteur Ave.

In November, the winning poem of the first annual Falcon Heights Sidewalk Poetry Contest was stamped into a sidewalk at the intersection of Hamline and California Avenues. The poem, by Louella H. Hinch, is printed below:

Walking along,
Gazing around,
Eye the words.
Poetry in motion.

Lauderdales
The Lauderdale City Council meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Lauderdale City Hall, 1891 Walnut St.

Park and Rec guides available
Park and Recreation program guides for Roseville, Falcon Heights and the University of M Innisota are available in the lobby of City Hall, 1891 Walnut St.

Senior exercise class is free
A free senior exercise class is held Thursdays, 2 to 3 p.m., at the City Gables Apartments/Clubhouse, 1811 Pleasant St. The class is sponsored by St. Anthony Park Area Seniors. See Events on page 15 to find other senior exercise classes sponsored by SAPAS.

St. Anthony Park
The District 12 Community Council meets on the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at St. Anthony Park Recreation Center (SSA), 890 Cromwell Ave. The district’s Land Use Committee meets on the first Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at SSA. The Energy Resource Group meets at 7 p.m. the third Thursday of the month. Email engroup@sapcc.org to find out the location each month.

Learn about Transition Towns
St. Anthony Park has a Transition Town? The Community Council’s Energy Resilience Group will start a series of community meetings and films in January to address that question. The first meeting will be held Thursday, Jan. 17, 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Anthony Park United Methodist Church, 2200 Hillside Ave. The film In Transition 2.0 will be shown twice on Saturday, Jan. 12, at 12:30 p.m. at the St. Anthony Park Library, 2245 Como Ave., and on Wednesday, Jan. 9, from 7 p.m. at Joy of the People, 890 Cromwell Ave.

Find out more about the series on page 7.

Represent your neighborhood
The District 12 Community Council is looking for volunteers to participate in the next round of the City’s Capital Improvement Budget Funding process. Committees meet monthly and recommend to the City Council which projects should be funded. This process is intended to finance physical improvements of land and facilities owned by the city.

Email lauren@sapcc.org for more information or to sign up for one of the committees.

In addition, the district is looking for one resident from south St. Anthony Park and three business owners or workers to join our board. Learn more at sapcc.org/board or email lauren@sapcc.org.

Donate your SAP photos
What images do you think represent St. Anthony Park? Send your photos (high-resolution—at least 300 dpi in a .jpg, .tif or .eps format) to the Community Council to be added to a photo library and perhaps selected to help visually represent our community within the Raymond Avenue or Westgate light-rail stations. Photos will become the property of the St. Anthony Park District Council but any use will include photo credit for the photographer. Email your photos to Lauren at lauren@sapcc.org.

Organize a local food event
The Midway Local Food Resource Hub has found that most of its community members live in the Hamline Midway neighborhood. Be a local food hero and recruit your St. Anthony Park neighbors to the Hub by helping organize a community potluck or otherwise promoting the Hub in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood.

Email Faith Krosgaard at faith@hamlinemidway.org if you are interested.

Luther Seminary names Foss as interim president
The Luther Seminary Board of Directors has named Richard J. Foss, interim president of the seminary. Foss will step in for Richard Bliese, who resigned in early December. Bliese had been president at the seminary since 2005.

Foss has been at Luther Seminary since 2008, when he became director of contextual learning. He previously served as bishop for the Eastern North Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), a position he held since 1992.

Foss will assume the responsibilities of interim president on Jan. 1. He will work with Dr. Bill Frame, who is the interim CFO, and others to resolve the short-term fiscal issues and a plan to enhance the seminary’s financial strength and viability.

St. Anthony Park Progressive Dinner will be held Feb. 23
The 27th annual St. Anthony Park Progressive Dinner will be held Saturday, Feb. 23. The fun, food and neighborliness will begin with appetizers at 5:30 p.m. at the St. Anthony Park Library, 2245 Como Ave., and on Wednesday, Jan. 9, from 7 p.m. at Joy of the People, 890 Cromwell Ave.

The schedule for the evening begins with appetizers at 5:30 p.m., salad and dessert courses hosted at the homes of Progressive Dinner participants. After submitting a registration form, one of the coordinating committee members will contact you on or before Feb. 1 to confirm the course and the number of people you will be hosting. Participants can host up to 8 people in their homes for one of the courses (salad, dinner or dessert) or choose to bring appetizers for that number of people to share at the church during the evening and appetizer course.

St. Anthony Park and three business owners are available for Roseville, Falcon Heights and the United Methodists Church, 2200 Hamline Ave., and on Wednesday, Jan. 9, from 7 p.m. at Joy of the People, 890 Cromwell Ave.

Find out more about the series on page 7.

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It’s an amazing opportunity to meet your neighbors, enjoy special meals and have great conversations.

Look for more information on the event and downloadable registration forms at http://sapcc.org/dinner. On the form, you can select the courses you are willing to host. You can also get more information by contacting Jane Leonard at minntwin@comcast.net or 651-303-5263.

After submitting a registration form, one of the coordinating committee members will contact you on or before Feb. 21 to confirm the course and the number of people you will be hosting. Participants can host up to 8 people in their homes for one of the courses (salad, dinner or dessert) or choose to bring appetizers for that number of people to share at the church during the evening and appetizer course.

St. Anthony Park and three business owners are available for Roseville, Falcon Heights and the United Methodists Church, 2200 Hamline Ave., and on Wednesday, Jan. 9, from 7 p.m. at Joy of the People, 890 Cromwell Ave.

The schedule for the evening begins with appetizers at 5:30 p.m., salad and bread at host homes at 6:30 p.m., main course at 7:30 and dessert from 8:45 to 9:45 p.m.
**Marriage amendment reprise**

The 2010 U.S. Census reported that only 2 or 3 percent of the local population are in same-sex relationships, yet more than two-thirds of area voters said no to the November ballot question limiting marriage to heterosexual couples.

By Judy Woodward

In this area, the dominant color of the last election was orange. More common and more prominent than signs for any candidate—including the presidential contenders—the bright orange lawn signs advising passers-by to Vote No on the Marriage Amendment became the visual signature of the election.

Election results bore out the lack of enthusiasm for the amendment that would have enshrined traditional heterosexual marriage in the Minnesota State Constitution. About 47 percent of Minnesotans statewide voted to approve the amendment, but in St. Paul, Falcon Heights and Lauderdale, more than two-thirds of voters opposed the measure. In Legislative District 64A, the no vote was a remarkable 82 percent, outpolling every politician from Barack Obama down to State Rep. Erin Murphy.

Quite a display for an area that, according to the 2010 Census results, contains no more than 2 or 3 percent of households that define themselves as same-sex partnerships.

No one knows how many gay couples and families have lived in the area in the past, since 2010 was the first year that the U.S. Census included a question that allowed same-sex couples to identify themselves as such. The question was probably a case of bureaucracy catching up with reality, since gay couples have lived in the community for many years. Like more than a dozen other communities statewide, both St. Paul and Falcon Heights already maintain domestic partnership registries, which give gay (and straight) couples a symbolic means to declare their relationship publicly. Local gay families differ on the Marriage amendment reprise

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Sara Ford (left) and Kim Klose with their sons, Jeremy and Cullen. Photo by Lori Hamilton

**Como Park Ski Center is open**

The Como Park Ski Center’s regular season hours will begin Wednesday, Dec. 26, with extended holiday hours from Dec. 26 to Jan. 2. Registration for ski and snowboard lessons are being accepted.

Friday Family Night Ski sessions will begin Dec. 28 and run through Feb. 15. Discounted skiing for families will be offered every Friday from 5 to 10 p.m. Fees include downhill ski, cross-country ski or snowboard equipment and a rope-tow ticket. The fee for families (up to five members) is $50. Additional family members cost $5 each.

Regular Como Park Ski Chalet Hours are Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 3 to 9 p.m.; and Fridays, 5 to 10 p.m. The Ski Center is closed on Mondays and Thursdays.

For more information call the chalet at 651-488-9673, or go online to www.stpaul.gov/parks.
**EDITORIAL**

**The end**

For those of you who find the Dec. 21 close of the Mayan calendar a bit disconcerting, remember that doomsdays come and go. We offer this Robert Frost poem for your end-of-the-world musings. It appeared in the December 1932 issue of Harper's Magazine. And in case time doesn’t end this December, we wish you all a happy new year.

— Robert Frost

**Fire and Ice**

Some say the world will end in fire,  
Some say in ice.  

From what I’ve tasted of desire  
I hold with those who favor fire.  

But if it had to perish twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice.

— Robert Frost

**COMMENTARY**

The mysterious who

By Jack Neely

It was going to be one of the most important events in the young lives of Lucy, age 7, and her brother, Daniel, age 4: the marriage of their father, Sean, to Andrea, a woman they had come to appreciate as a stepmother-to-be.

Sean and Andrea had met online and soon that line would bind them all. They were to be officially married in a whole house presentation, so the children pitched in with little prompting, cleaning the whole house.

They swept the steps, dusted the windows, doors, TV and oven. Then, they swept the steps and walk to greet these most important visitors.

Wayne and Ann, Andrea’s parents, anticipated their first grandchildren with great joy. Family gatherings for holidays, birthday parties, picnics and art projects now would be brightened with two delightful and energetic children.

The day of mystery was at hand, and Lucy and Daniel had long given up trying to pry information from the adults. That was OK, for very important people were about to arrive at their home. This was going to be better than a surprise birthday party, or maybe even Christmas.

When the visitors arrived, the couple exited the car at the curb and Lucy and Daniel ran to greet them. Then, they came to a sudden stop not far from their guests. Daniel’s shoulders drooped as he looked up at his sister. Lucy’s excitement dimmed as she looked down and said, trying not to show her great disappointment, “Oh, it’s you. We thought the O-bamas were coming.”

There stood Anne and Wayne with a fun art project for the children, a macaroni and cheese casserole, vanilla and chocolate shakes, and a Dr. Pepper cream cake with “Lucy and Daniel U R Special” decorated in purple.

Love and the Park Bugle

Join the Park Bugle the week before Valentine’s Day to explore love at the broad (broad) category of “Love” and “Love of the Written Word.”

Owner Hans Weyandt, who will talk about 25 recent books that fall into the (broad) category of “Love” and “Love of the Written Word.”

And in case time doesn’t end this December, we wish you all a happy new year.
Thank you for supporting the Park Bugle

If you haven't contributed to the fund drive, there still is time. You can donate online at www.parkbugle.org. Click the green DONATE NOW button at the top of the right-hand column. Or send a check to Park Bugle, P.O. Box 8126, St. Paul, MN 55108.

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JANUARY 2013  ■  PARK BUGLE 5

NOWELL & JULIA LIETZKE
DOROTHY LINDHOLM
MARY LILLEY
ELIZABETH JOHNSTON

Nowell & Julia Lietzke
Dorothy Lindholm
Mary Lilley
Elizabeth Johnston
Legislature from 1
District 64A was selected as H.ouse majority leader, the second in command in the chamber. She too will figure prominently in money matters, on the revenue side as well as on spending. She will be a key player in negotiating within and between houses and with Gov. Mark Dayton’s staff.

Sen. John M.argett, whose district now takes in much of St. Anthony Park, will chair the Senate Environment Committee. District 66B Rep. John Leech, who serves the Como Park area, will chair the House Civil Law Committee.

Hausmann noted that in the Senate, many Democrats taking Republican seats are freshmen, an unusual situation for her party. “We have a pretty junior caucus in the Senate for the first time in decades,” Cohen said.

Both Cohen and Hausmann said the DFL sweep at the capitol gives them hope that conflict will be minimized and processes can be streamlined this year.

Hausman sees this as an opportunity to launch a new model for state government. M.innesotans have been asking for years why budget fights always seem to come down to the last day of the session or even require extra days, she said.

In her capacity as Capital Investments chair, she has a plan to move things along. “The way I’m going to test whether we are a different body this year,” she said, “is to suggest we pass the bonding bill early.”

“The budget will be a huge challenge this year,” Hausman said, because there talk about major structural shifts, involving tax proposals to respond to ongoing deficits. “But what I would like to argue is, ‘don’t hold everything hostage to that.’”

Both Hausman and Cohen expressed hope that the conference process toward the end of each major bill will be smoother with all-DFL and -DFL teams.

Hausman had hoped to see bonding requests from the University of M.innesota and a proposed new Bell Museum at the Duluth Campus.

The U has, in past years, repeatedly requested bond money to build a new home for the Bell museum at the southwest corner of Larpeurt and Cleveland avenues, but did not put the museum on the Duluth reource center in its request this year.

Their reason given was that they had advanced these several times and were not successful, Hausman said. “I pointed out that it was a Republican governor who vetoed it or a Republican chair who did not include it [in the bonding bill]. We now have other people in place. I was very clear that it was not pleased and certainly have not given up on either. I strongly believe both projects are the right thing to do for this state.”

Hausman met with the M.innesota State Colleges and Universities (M.NSCU) staff in late November to receive their requests. “The major portion of the bonding bill is always higher education,” Hausman said.

Another major area for bonding funds, she said, is environmental infrastructure, including parks and trails.

“The big issue for me is wetland restoration,” she said. “As we deal with flooding, the old way to do it was flood mitigation, dikes and so on. Over time, that doesn’t work. We see the need for more money this year into Rainwater in M.innesota, an ongoing fund that draws a federal match and can be used for wetlands restoration. "One of the years I was writing the bill, we captured more money for restoring wetlands than any other state," she said.

When the Legislature convenes on Jan. 8, Hausmann’s committee will start on the H.ouse bonding bill, while Cohen’s Senate committee will dig right into the budget.

Cohen’s not inclined to wait for the February quarterly state finance forecast, he said. “I have come up his sleeves as the N.umber one item came in. ‘I’ll be very surprised if there is a big difference in the February forecast,’ Cohen said.

Budget requests this year will likely include a ”major workforce development effort” from M.NSCU, Cohen said. He also expects to take a close look at local government aid (LGA), a tool to balance the means and resources of municipalities around the state, which has been cut dramatically in recent years.

While his committee does not directly deal with taxes, it may look for ways to affect the balance of revenue, he said. “Property taxes have increased a substantial amount, and folks in our area have been the brunt of that.”

He expects significant changes in the 2014-15 budget to come out of the 2013 session. “The governor’s made it clear: we’re done borrowing money,” Cohen said, noting the late school payments and other mechanisms used to balance the budget in previous seasons. “We’re going to try to put together a structurally balanced budget.”
Transition Town

District 12 to explore becoming part of global movement that encourages energy independence and greater community resilience

By Michael Russelle

The impacts of global climate change are stunning. They fill the news. According to climatologist and meteorologist Mark Seeley, “For those who doubt or wish to dismiss the evidence that climate is changing, please consider that Minnesota data (measurements in our own backyard) indicate it is happening and already resulting in consequences. As responsible citizens, it is clearly poor judgment to ignore this.”

In response, the St. Anthony Park Community Council is planning to explore with District 12 residents and businesses whether the district should become part of the global Transition Town movement. The council will host a series of meetings, films and speakers in the month of January, all of which showcase how Transition Towns around the world have begun realizing their visions, will be shown on Wednesday, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m. at South St. Anthony Recreation Center (now Joy of the People), 890 Cromwell Ave., and on Saturday, Jan. 12, at 12:30 p.m. at the St. Anthony Park Library, 2245 Como Ave.

Find out more about the Transition Town movement at www.transitionnetwork.org.

Michael Russelle is a member of the District 12 Energy Resilience Group and Environment Committee.

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**Family Concerts 2013**

Ross Sutter & Friends • February 22
Elias String Quartet • March 22
Lau Hawaiian Collective • April 12
Details at schubert.org/family/
trees had become overgrown and the Hansen boys had entered their “rebellious teen and independent adult” years and began to lose interest, Dave said.

“The farm basically went to seed and became overgrown,” he said. It was after a trip to Europe in 1980, where Dave saw the well-managed European forests, that he began to “feel guilty of how we were neglecting ours.”

The next spring, Dave, Mark and Henry began plans to renew the farm.

“It took about 20 years to bring it to what we envisioned and it has become even better since then,” Dave said.

Now, the farm is a year-round hobby, said Mark, who keeps a quarter-time job with the U.S. Forest Service on the U of M’s St. Paul campus after retiring two years ago. Dave, a photographer with the university’s Extension Service, and Mark spend two or three spring weekends planting trees each year. In the summer, “it’s weed control and shearing and shaping the trees and maintaining the irrigation system,” Mark said.

Come fall, they thin the trees, continue weed control and work to maintain the buildings on the site, which include a barn that’s used as a gift gallery and warming house. Once the sale season starts, they are out there every weekend “sun up to sun down—or a little longer,” Mark said.

Mark’s three sons—Kip, Per and Trygve—and Dave’s two children—Britta and Kell—grew up working on the farm. And so have many neighborhood kids.

“For most of them, it was their first job,” Dave said. Many returning college students ask to work over Thanksgiving weekend and when they return home for winter break.

“They enjoy the work, reuniting with their co-workers and just being out there,” he said.

The Hansen Tree Farm celebrated its 60th anniversary this year by introducing horse-drawn sleigh rides the first three weekends of the season. You can still visit the farm if you get there by Saturday, Dec. 22.

To find out more, go to hansentreefarm.com.

Henry Hansen, who died in 2005, is credited with starting the first commercial Christmas tree farm in Minnesota. Harry is shown here in 1975 helping a customer load a large red pine.
**Crossword puzzle**

By Dave Healy

Well print the answers to the puzzle in the next issue of the Park Bugle. If you can’t wait, you can find them online at www.parkbugle.org

We’ll print the answers to the puzzle in the next issue of the Park Bugle. If you can’t wait, you can find them online at www.parkbugle.org

It was their singing that got them into trouble. Well, not really into trouble, but their beautiful song led some people to start keeping them as pets, and that led to the species spreading across the eastern United States.

I’m talking about the house finch whose song is a long, wailed collection of short notes that lasts about three seconds and often ends with an upward or downward slur.

House finches were native to the United States and Mexico, where they thrived in hot, dry habitats and in the lower elevation of mountain ranges. In the 1930s, despite federal laws prohibiting the capture and sale of migratory birds, some house finches were captured, caged and brought east, where they were sold in pet stores as “Hollywood finches.”

In 1939, as law enforcement began to investigate pet stores selling these finches on Long Island, N.Y., one store owner opened the cage doors and set 20 house finches free. What’s a Western bird supposedly do to in New York City? Flourish, or what? Within a few years, house finches were discovered nesting in the New York City area. From there, they have gradually spread west, north and south and now their ranges cover nearly the entire United States. They’ve done well since their unceremonious release on Long Island.

Despite their proven adaptive skills, house finches suffered a setback in their territorial expansion when they began to contract mycoplasmal conjunctivitis in the winter of 1993-94. The disease is quite serious, a respiratory infection that can kill the bird. Even a mite infected with a white lump on its stomach, crusty eyes that can impede respiratory function, can spread this disease. Fifty years later, when the disease began to peak, it showed a reddish rump when it flies off. The rest of the bird was brown.

The female is very plain. There is no red on the head or chest. It’s a mottled gray-brown overall. Even the rump when it flies off. The rest of the bird is brown. The female is very plain. There is no red on the head or chest. It’s a mottled gray-brown overall. Even the rump when it flies off. The rest of the bird is brown.

Back in December 1990, a house finch was found at a bird feeder in St. Paul’s Highland Park neighborhood. It was such a remarkable sighting that it was posted on the Minnesota Ornithologists’ Union’s website and birders were calling each other to make sure they had heard the news. I was participating in St. Paul Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count on that day and we made a slow drive through the alley behind that house to get a glimpse of this (at the time) rare bird. We found it.

My notes from the day indicate it was -6°F. With a -51°F wind chill.

The house finch is about the size of the ubiquitous English House sparrow at 6 inches long. It’s long tail has a shallow notch, shallower than most other finches.

The male has a red forehead and chest with distinct brown streaking along the sides and the stomach. It also shows a reddish rump when it flies off. The rest of the bird is brown.

The female is very plain. There is no red on the head or chest. It’s gray-brown overall. Even the rump when it flies off. The rest of the bird is brown.

To learn more about house finches, and to hear a sample of their song, go to www.allaboutbirds.org and search for “house finch.” You’ll find a “sound” tab on the housefinch page.

And it’s a good bet you’ll be hearing them sing again this spring and summer.

Clay Christensen

**Birdman of Lauderdale**

By Clay Christensen

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**House finch had a little human help in its eastern expansion**

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**The Birdman of Lauderdale**

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He didn’t know it at the time, but a strike by the U.S. Postal Service got Tom Betz started on a hobby that would bring him enjoyment for the next 40 years.

The Falcon Heights resident is a creator and collector of “local stamps,” an offshoot of philately that he and a few hundred other enthusiasts pursue worldwide.

Local stamps can relate to the actual delivery of mail and have a face value; however, Betz and fellow members of the Local Post Collectors Society produce and issue stamps that are more like collectible labels. A monetary amount may be shown, but its only function is as a design element.

“In 1970, I was working for a company in downtown St. Paul when postal workers went on strike,” Betz recalls. “Our employer assigned several of us to hand-deliver company mail in the downtown loop district.”

As a lark, Betz designed a few of his own stamps to adorn the envelopes, not knowing that he was participating in a tradition that dated back to the beginning of the republic.

He gradually learned that there were other people involved in the activity and was delighted to hear from a person who had acquired one of his stamped envelopes at a sale in another state.

Some local stamps resemble conventional postage, but Betz’ are closer to folk art. He starts with ink drawings and then hand carves individual stamp elements, as one would do with a woodcut. It is most complex designs have taken, literally, thousands of impressions to produce.

When a member of the Local Post Collectors Society has a stamp that he or she wants to “issue,” an announcement is made in the society’s newsletter. Those interested will send the issuer a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The issuer affixes the new stamp to the envelope and sends it back, creating a collectible in the process.

In Betz’ case, he also cancels the stamp, using his postmaster-approved personal cancellation.

A variety of organizations—churches, even a group of inmates in a Massachusetts prison—have used local stamps to raise funds for good causes. One example: creating special stamps to put on Christmas cards.

“I putzed around a little with conventional stamp collecting,” says Betz, “but I find this a lot more satisfying. The personal involvement is what I like the best and the interchange with other collectors is quite gratifying.”

Want to know how to get started in local stamp collecting? Go to www.localcollectorspost.org.
Gender Justice

Dynamic duo fights discrimination

Lisa Stratton, Jill Gaulding and their nonprofit, Gender Justice, were named Changemakers in December by the Minnesota Women’s Press.

By Anne Hamre

You never know where a Google search might lead. Several years ago, attorney Jill Gaulding moved to the Twin Cities from Iowa. Seeking her niche, she plugged some words into the search engine.

“Lisa [Stratton] popped up immediately,” said Gaulding. “I thought, ‘I have so much in common with this person; I need to meet her.’”

Gaulding doesn’t recall the exact search words, but says, “They were probably something like ‘discrimination,’ ‘employment’ and ‘gender.’”

A few years later, Gender Justice was born. Stratton, a resident of St. Anthony Park, and Gaulding co-founded the nonprofit in 2010 with a mission to address the causes and consequences of gender inequality through impact litigation, policy work, and public education and training.

Upon finishing law school nearly 20 years ago, Stratton dreamed of starting something like Gender Justice. After exploring the concept, she decided to gain litigation experience first—and hasn’t regretted it. Her clients included blue-collar women subjected to hostile workplaces.

“Part of what it took was having the right partner,” said Stratton of the gap between the Gender Justice dream and its fruition. “I’m not a lone wolf—I like to collaborate.”

Gaulding’s background, meanwhile, combines law and cognitive science—crucial expertise in understanding and addressing bias and discrimination.

When choosing cases, Gender Justice prioritizes clients who traditionally have had difficulty accessing justice, for example, low-income or immigrant workers. Beyond that, they seek cases that not only serve the individual plaintiff but that illuminate a broader problem and bring systemic changes.

One such case that was recently settled involved the alleged workplace rape of Leticia, an undocumented immigrant employed by a national housekeeping services company as a housekeeper at Ridgedale Center in Minnetonka.

Grammar vs. sentiment

Somebody’s sidewalk sentiment was edited. This photo by Jerry Sedgewick was taken on a nearby bike trail. The photo is part of the Photos for Thought series by Sedgewick, a commercial photographer who lives in St. Anthony Park. The series finds contrasts to make social commentary. Sedgewick’s work is on display at St. Paul’s Claddagh Coffee, 459 W. Seventh St., through December.
NEW STUDIO LOCATION...SAME BEAUTIFUL BLOOMS

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L I V E S L I V E D

The Park Bugle print obituaries are free of charge as a service to our communities. Send information about area deaths to M Arly M argenthal at many@engeral@conac.net or call 651-644-1650.

Elcie Bauer
Elcie Helen Bauer, 92, former longtime St. Anthony Park resident, died peacefully at her home in Roseville on Nov. 28.

Elcie was born Feb. 15, 1920, in Wakefield, Mich. She was the daughter of Finnish immigrants who came to Homesteads to the United States. Following high school, Elcie went to Chicago and earned a nursing degree.

She married Edwin John Bauer in 1943. Ed and Elcie moved to St. Paul and lived for 42 years on Como Street in St. Anthony Park.

Elcie was a talented seamstress and tailor, loved languages, music, fashion and design. She was active in the community and in church life.

She volunteered for KTCHA, served as a leader in the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, tutored at St. Anthony Park Elementary School, taught Sunday school and was a member of the Pheasants at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church. Elcie also worked as a home-care nurse for close neighbors.


She is survived by her children, John, M ar (Chiyi), Leslie (Leland) Whitney, Paul (Catherine Brandal) and Laurie Bauer; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Her funeral service was held Dec. 3 at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, with internment at Rose Lawn Cemetery.

Carol Brewe
Carol A. Brewe, 72, died recently. She is survived by her husband, Bob; daughter, Tracy; sons, Bobby and Brett. She was a sister, aunt, and grandmother. A memorial service was held Nov. 30 at the Roseau American Legion in Roseville, with burial at Hillside Cemetery.

Maureen Crowley
Maureen “Reenie” Crowley, 64, of Hopkins, died Nov. 21. She was a pastor, once a member at the University of M innnesota Medical Center.

She was preceded in death by her brother David C. Crowley. She is survived by siblings Forest Crowley Jr. (M itzi), Dolores Appel, John Crowley (Lynn), Kathy Bakke (Larry) and Susan Ryan (Jim).

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Dec. 1 at the Church of St. Ceclia in St. Anthony Park.

Kaia Emily Halvorson
Kaia Emily Halvorson, 98, formerly of St. Anthony Park, died Nov. 17. She was born in Bridgely, Minn. She attended grade school, the University of St. Thomas, and graduated from high school in Blue Earth, Minn. She attended Augustana College in Sioux Falls, S.D., graduating with a degree in teaching.

Her first teaching job was at Howard High School in Howard, S.D., and then at Sioux Falls High School in Sioux Falls, 1936–40. She met her husband, Arndt Halvorson, at Augustana College, and they married in 1940, after Arndt graduated from Lutheran Seminary in St. Paul.

Arndt and Emily served Lutheran parishes in Cape, Wyo.; West Hempstead, N.Y.; Forest City, Iowa; Minneapolisc, and Prescott, Ariz. In 1958, they moved to St. Paul, where Emily worked at Lutheran Nurses Guild, 1962-65, and as a librarian at Mounds Midway School of Nursing and Midway Hospital, 1966-79.

Emily was preceded in death by her husband; a son, Richard; a daughter, Karen Hedland; three brothers, Benjamin, Victor and Arnold Enevold; and two sisters, Adelia Mundale and Sally Olson.

She is survived by two daughters, Gretchen Mannix, Sara Johnson (Randy) and Martha Knutsen (Richard); a son, Leonard Halvorson (Karen); a daughter-in-law, MaryAnn Solomonson (All); a son-in-law, John Hedland; 17 grandchildren; and 24 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Nov. 20 at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, with interment at Rose Lawn Cemetery.
**Name these plants**

Garden club launches plant-identification contest at Como Avenue Post Office

By Mary Maguire Lerman

On a late-November afternoon, St. Anthony Park Garden Club members quickly changed the concrete facade at the Como Avenue U.S. Post Office into a winter garden. Using fruits, seeds and other parts of woody plants, grasses, sedges, ferns, forbs and perennial flowers, they designed a display that will attract songbirds throughout the winter months. The Post Office staff has said many customers are also attracted to the “winter garden.”

The garden club is also sponsoring a contest to encourage neighbors to learn more about plants. Beginning Feb. 1, you can pick up a contest form at the Como Avenue Post Office. The form will ask you to give the common or Latin name of the plants in the winter garden.

Participants are encouraged to use books from the nearby St. Anthony Park Branch Library to help with the contest. Careful, there are some “trick” plants. While most of the material in the garden came from nearby yards, some of the pods were donated by a garden club member who was visiting in the southern United States. So there are plants in the winter garden that are not native to Minnesota.

Participants in each age category who correctly name the most plants in the winter garden will receive a prize. Prizes may include a one-year membership in the St. Anthony Park Garden Club, gift certificates from local nurseries and garden centers, consultations with local gardeners and garden designers, garden ornaments and more.

**Correction**

An article in the December issue of the Park Bugle incorrectly identified the new limestone landscaping at the St. Anthony Park Branch Library as a project of the St. Anthony Park Garden Club. The project was initiated and paid for by the St. Anthony Park Library Board.
THE CONNECTIVE POWER OF DANCE

TU Dance Center offers dance classes for youth and up training for professionals and pre-professionals, a variety of open classes and workshops for all ages and levels. Modern, Balinese and African dance.

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An Evening with MPR's Krista Tippett

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or limerick@luthersem.edu
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Gender Justice from 11

Although the settlement is largely confidential, Stratton cited with pride the two changes that resulted. These include training in sexual harassment and providing workers with the company’s human resources contact information so workers know where to bring complaints. Leticia did not have the employer’s contact information; her only point of contact was her direct supervisor—and he was her accused rapist.

In September, Gender Justice filed a federal sex discrimination lawsuit against the two limo companies: Limo.com and T.H. Limo. The two companies had to adopt new policies. The defendants settled out of court.

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Edina Realty

PARK BUGLE ■ JANUARY 2013

Marriage amendment from 3

importance they attach to the defeat of the marriage amendment, but most agree that the no vote represented a milestone in the political life of the area.

It changes things tremendously,” said Sara Ford, an academic union official who lives with her partner, county planner Kim Klose, and their children in the Como Park neighborhood. “On a grand level, this makes it a better state to live in. I wasn’t aware of how much detail felt until it was over.”

Klose adds that she worried about the impact the measure might have had on their sons, who attend fourth and fifth grade in St. Paul Public Schools. “If it were to pass it would [have] sent the message that some families were of lesser value,” she said. “We didn’t want our sons to hear that message.”

Both Klose and Ford had campaigned actively against the marriage amendment, but they let their sons choose whether or not to participate in their mother’s cause. Cullen, who turns 10 this month, responded in his own fashion. During the State Fair, Cullen set up a Vote No pop stand in the front yard to attract passing foot traffic.

Karen Duke and her mother, Joan Duke, took out their baking banana bread and soothing Karen’s cranky 2-year-old, Luca, to talk about their reactions to the vote. Duke, 45, the principal of the Randolph Heights Elementary School, lives with her partner, Deseire Kempke, 31, an orthopedic surgeon, as well as Luca and their daughter, Naomi, 6, in St. Anthony Park. Karen’s mother and stepfather live a few blocks away.

Gender Justice from 11

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JANUARY 2013 ■ PARK BUGLE

Events

Venue information is listed at the end of the calendar. Send your events to calendar@parkbugle.org by Jan. 16 to be included in the February 2013 issue.

1 TUESDAY
New Year’s Day; Public libraries are closed.

2 WEDNESDAY
Free blood pressure screening, first Wednesday of the month, 11:15 a.m., Blomberg Pharmacy. Sponsored by Como Park Falcon Heights Living at Home Block Nurse Program.

3 WEDNESDAY
“1962: An American Dream,” Joy of the People, 7-8:30 p.m., St. Anthony Park library, 6-8:30 p.m.

5 WEDNESDAY
English as a second language class. Also on Jan. 14 and 20, St. Anthony Park library, 1-2:30 p.m. Call 651-642-0411 to register.

6 SATURDAY
Something New will close Dec. 24. Owner Sue Rohricht thanks the community for supporting the store.

7 MONDAY
Info on the Screen, “In Transition 2.0,” St. Anthony Park library, 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

8 MONDAY
SAP United Methodist Church, 2200 H Inlisle Ave., is a drop-off site for the ReCyce Your Holidays recycling program, sponsored by the Recycling Association of M innesota.

9 MONDAY
Anxiety support group in Midway
The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of M innesota sponsors a free Open Door Door Anxiety and Panic support group on the second and fourth Thursday of the month from 630 to 8 p.m. at Goodwill-Easter Seals, 553 N. Fairview Ave., Room 123. Call 651-645-2948 for more information.

10 TUESDAY
Grafton with Ken and Carla, Driftwood Community Arts, 4:30 p.m. Two sessions, ages 10-13. Cost is $25.

11 TUESDAY
Lake Park Winter Classic begins and runs through Sunday, Jan. 13, Lake Park Recreation Center

12 SATURDAY
Green on the Screen, “In Transition 2.0,” St. Anthony Park library, 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

13 TUESDAY
Baby lap sit storytime, birth-2 years, St. Anthony Park library, 10:30-11 a.m.

14 TUESDAY
Drawing 101, Driftwood Community Arts, 4:30-6 p.m. Two sessions, ages 13-17. Cost is $65.

15 WEDNESDAY
Abstract Art, Driftwood Community Arts, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Two sessions, ages 15+. Cost is $65.

16 WEDNESDAY
Art classes for kids during break
Libraries to host storytelling workshops for kids during break. The St. Paul Public Library will host collaborative storytelling workshops for grade-school children during winter break. Artist M. Aaron Carlson will lead participants on an adventure where everyone works together to tell a story. As the story unfolds, Carlson will create the main character out of clay (with group guidance, of course). What color hair will the character have? What does he look like? The answer will be different every time.

The workshops are open to children in grades 1-6. The workshops will be held in Bugle-area branch libraries on Friday, Dec. 28. The locations and times are:

Hamline Academy, 2555 W. M Inrshave Ave., 651-642-0293, 12:30 p.m.;
M arriam Park, 1831 Marshall Ave., 651-642-0385, 2:30 p.m.; and St. Anthony Park, 2245 Como Ave., 651-642-0411, 4:30 p.m.

17 THURSDAY
Let’s Make All St. Anthony Park a Transition Town (ASAP Transition), the first of a series of community meetings hosted by the District 12 Energy Resilience Group, St. Anthony Park United Methodist Church.

Learn about adopting children who live in foster care, CHSFS, 6-8 p.m.

18 FRIDAY
Sing, Play, Learn with MacPhail: Spring 2013 Session begins.

19 SATURDAY
The St. Paul Public Library will host collaborative storytelling workshops for grade-school children during winter break. The St. Paul Public Library will host collaborative storytelling workshops for grade-school children during winter break. Artist M. Aaron Carlson will lead participants on an adventure where everyone works together to tell a story. As the story unfolds, Carlson will create the main character out of clay (with group guidance, of course). What color hair will the character have? What does he look like? The answer will be different every time.

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19 SATURDAY
The next deadline is Wednesday, Jan. 16.

20 SUNDAY
International & Domestic Adoption Information Session, CHSFS, 9-11 a.m.

21 FRIDAY
Behind the Scenes: Park Square Theatre’s “Johnny Baseball,” St. Anthony Park library, 7-8:30 p.m. Join the director and cast for an intimate conversation about the new play.

22 SATURDAY
St. Anthony Park Area Seniors block nurse exercise classes meet at these times and places:

Tuesdays & Fridays, St. Anthony Park library, 2245 Como Ave., 1-2 p.m.

23 SATURDAY
St. Anthony Park United Methodist Church, 2200 H Inlisle Ave., 6-8:30 p.m.

24 SATURDAY
Langford Park Recreation Center, 30 Langford Park, 651-298-5763.

25 SATURDAY
St. Anthony Park Branch Library, 2245 Como Ave., 651-642-0411.

26 SATURDAY
Langford Park United Methodist Church, 2200 H Inlisle Ave., 6-8:30 p.m.

27 SATURDAY
St. Anthony Park Area Seniors block nurse exercise classes meet at these times and places:

Tuesdays & Fridays, St. Anthony Park library, 2245 Como Ave., 1-2 p.m.
Brimhall Elementary School recently trained a group of enthusiastic sixth-graders to be peer mediators.

The peer-mediation process guides disputants through the steps of problem-solving, allowing them to tell their stories and their feelings and then search for solutions to the problem.

Along the way, they learn good communication and listening skills that can be used throughout their lives.

There are 25 peer mediators at the school who take turns helping younger students resolve conflicts.

The goals of mediation are to understand and respect differing views, to open and improve communication, to develop cooperation in solving a common problem, to conduct a joint process of problem solving and to reach an agreement that benefits both sides.

Less garbage in 2013
The Brimhall breakfast and lunch programs will implement additional food-waste recycling beginning Jan. 7. Discarded food will be made available to livestock farmers instead of going to a landfill.

The program, sponsored by Ramsey County Rethinking Recycling, has several benefits: students learn responsibility for their community and environment, and trash-hauling fees are potentially reduced.

Como Park Senior High
740 Rose Ave., 651-293-8800
www.comor.sp.org

Visit Como to learn more about it...Daring the months of January and February, prospective students and their families are invited to visit Como Park Senior High School to learn about the school, its curriculum and Advanced Placement courses, extra-curricular activities and comprehensive athletic program.

Tours for parents and students are offered on Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 8 a.m. Students may shadow a current ninth-grader on Tuesdays through mid-February.

Call the guidance office, 651-744-5455, to schedule a tour or shadow day.

Como Showcase is Jan. 24
The schoolwide Como Showcase will be held Thursday, Jan. 24, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. This event is a perfect time to see the entire school in action. The band and orchestra will be performing, clubs and activities will have displays throughout the building, academic departments will present overviews of their courses, student athletes will be on hand, and the counseling staff will be ready to assist with enrollment questions.

Debaters were finalists in tournay
Senior Ian Johnson and freshman Liam Anderson were quarter-finalists at the December Novice/JV State Debate Tournament in Eagan. There were 70 teams competing in their division.

Pottery sale benefits food shelf
Ceramic students sold 250 bowls worth of bowls at the parent-teacher conferences in November. Proceeds from the sale went to Second H ave food shelf. Thermomomy was sent in to Give to the M all as a xay, as Como ceramic students’ donation was doubled to $500.

Meet Evelin Quiceno
New to Como Park Senior High School this year is Medellin, Colombia, native Evelin Quiceno. Quiceno, 23, attended and graduated from college in Medellin and is staying with a Como Park family while teaching Spanish classes at the Como Park School this year.

When she first came to the United States, she was surprised by the differences between Colombian and United States food and high school. In Colombia, school starts at 6:30 a.m. and senior year is the hardest year of school.

Quiceno’s favorite things about the United States so far are working at school and spending time at the Mall of America.

Murray Junior High
2200 Buford Ave., 651-293-8740
www.murray.spps.org

Shakespeare, anyone?
English-elect Drama classes studied “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” and went to Park Square Theatre to see the performance. The students also had a chance to attend a behind-the-scenes experience where they learned about stage makeup, stage combat, improvisation, using Shakespearean insults and performing Shakespeare.

Murray fall sports wrap-up
Girls’ basketball and co-ed wrestling began their defense on their city conference championships Nov. 20. Murray and all St. Paul City Conference schools are available on the Parent Portal. Parents and students can sign up for notifications.

Murray band students worked with the Como Park Senior High School students in November, when the high-schoolers came to Murray to mentor and collaborate. The Como jazz band and members of the orchestra also played in Murray’s Dec. 13 concert.

After-school program
Starting Jan. 7, students after-school class schedules and attendance information are available on the Parent Portal. Parents and guardians may also look up a student’s class schedule and bus information on Murray’s website under the After School Activities link. Session 2 will begin Jan. 14 and end March 20.

It’s never too late to register. If you have any questions or comments, please email H. Liu, the program coordinator, at hui.liu@spps.org.

Science fair judges needed
Murray’s seventh and eighth-graders will present their science projects to three judges on Tuesday, Jan. 15, in hopes of moving on to the regional science fair.

Judges are needed for the school fair: judging runs from 6 to 9 p.m., and the school provides a light refreshment. Orientation begins at 5:45 p.m.

If you would like to judge a school fair, contact Gen Nakashiki at 651-744-5206 or gen.nakashiki@spps.org.

Winter break
St. Paul Public Schools are on break from Friday, Dec. 27, through Wednesday, Jan. 2. The schools will be back in session on Thursday, Jan. 3.

St. Anthony Park Elementary
2180 Knapp St., 651-293-8735
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Community supports school
St. Anthony Park Elementary School thanks the community for its support. Fundraising by the parent organization, SAPSA, is a year-round activity at the school. It begins each fall with wrapping paper sales, Chinook book sales, and the Fall Festival and silent auction.

The school also receives support from the St. Anthony Park Community Foundation and neighboring businesses. Most recently, Micawber’s Books on Carter Avenue presented its annual fundraiser event for the school on Dec. 1, donating a portion of sales that day to the school.

Due to this generous support, the school is able to enrich learning opportunities, and that includes the artist-in-residence program.

This winter’s artist-in-residence program includes T. Mychael Rambo, Kenne Sarge and In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and M a Theatre. Other enrichment opportunities at the school include environmental education, such as field trips to Belvoir Nature Center and Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center. In addition, the foundation helps support the Music in the Park series, which brings musical performances into the school.

Volunteers donate many hours organizing fundraisers, escorting students on field trips and building a sense of community by attending SAPSA and site council meetings.

The school also welcomes volunteer tutors who help out either in the class or after school.

If you are interested in tutoring, contact the school’s Believe Achieve tutoring coordinator, Molly Hottman, at mollyhottman@spsfoundation.org.

Parent Information Fair is Jan. 12
St. Anthony Park Elementary School will be one of many schools with a booth at the 2013 Parent Information Fair, which will take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sat., Jan. 12, at St. Paul Rivercentre, 175 W. Kellogg Blvd.

School applications for all grade levels in St. Paul Public Schools are due on Feb. 1.

Take a tour
Tours for families interested in St. Anthony Park Elementary School are available. Please call 651-293-8735 to make an appointment.
Murray Junior High School gets ready for middle school

By Kristal Leebrick
Since Thanksgiving, fifth- and sixth-graders have been en masse to the halls of Murray Junior High School, 2200 Buford Ave., to spend time checking out classrooms and shadowing older students. Those crowds of young faces are a harbinger of the change happening at the school next fall when it moves from a seventh- and eighth-grade junior high school to a middle school that will include sixth grade.

The 2013-14 school year marks the second year of St. Paul Public Schools’ new enrollment plan, Strong Schools, Strong Communities. Come fall, the district’s community elementary schools will transition to grades K-5, sixth-graders will move to middle schools and the new boundaries will take effect for elementary and middle schools, many of which will have a magnet status and districtwide transportation.

Schools in Como Park and St. Anthony Park are part of Area E, and that includes Chelsea Heights, Como Park, Galtier, Hennepin-Hamline and St. Anthony Park elementary schools. Students at those schools will feed into Murray Middle School.

Having two grades of students coming from five elementary schools prompted Murray principal Tim Williams to streamline the touring and shadowing process at the school. “We contacted all five schools to set up a day where all the students from each grade would come to spend a day,” he said.

When school resumes in January after winter break, the school will open tours and shadowing days to students outside the attendance area. “We still have a fair amount of requests from kids who live outside our attendance area,” Williams said. “I don’t know if they will get in necessarily, but we will set up a couple of days for students who live outside the area.”

“Moving a mass amount of preadolescents through the school before winter break is the beginning of many changes the school will see in the coming year,” Williams said. “To accommodate another age group of students, Williams said the school is planning to reorganize classrooms and curriculum.

“arooms will be turned into teaching, working with the students and developing curriculum, Williams said. Students will leave the area for elective classes.

“One-hundred-and-thirty-five kids is a lower number than what our teachers have now,” he said. “It should help with the relationship in band, foreign languages and other electives at the school.”

Murray’s current curriculum provides accelerated classes in its core subjects for students who need the challenge. Williams is not sure how the accelerated classes will be handled within each teaching team, he said, “we are committed to offering accelerated classes in all of our cores.”

Space at the school will be tight in September. Enrollment projections for next year are 270 students in both sixth and seventh grades. Current seventh-graders, whether they live in Area E or not, are grandfathered in, so the eighth-grade population is projected at 370. Murray’s current population is 770 students.

Murray will hold a showcase on Feb. 7, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. for prospective students and their parents. That showcase comes one week before the Feb. 15 deadline for applications to the school district’s Placement Center.

To find out more about visiting Murray, call 651-651-293-8740. To find out more about enrollment options in St. Paul Public Schools, visit the 2013 Parent Information Fair on Saturday, Jan. 12, from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., at St. Paul RiverCentre, 175 W. Kellogg Blvd. Families also can get one-on-one help from the St. Paul Public Schools Student Placement Center staff regarding the school choice process and how to complete an application.

Call 651-622-5760 for more information.

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Murray Principal Timothy Williams (top row, second from left) and teacher Tim Chase (second row from top at right) pose with students selected for the new Wolf Ridge course at Murray Junior High School.

Teacher sees Wolf Ridge-Murray class as potential life-changer for students

By Natalie Zett

Tim Chase begins each school year by telling his students at Murray Junior High School how his "failed sales career" lost him to his true calling as a science teacher.

"I grew up in southern Wisconsin, got a business degree and left for the Twin Cities to make my fame and fortune, and it wasn't going well," he explained. "My girlfriend, Donna, who later became my wife, suggested that I quit and do something I love." Chase, who has been teaching at M urray for 15 years, returned to school and became a science teacher.

"I really wanted to teach junior high school kids," he said. "They're young enough to be silly, but old enough to think critically, and science offers a lot of things to do and to be involved in."

So when Peter Smerud, the executive director of Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center in Finland, M inn., approached Chase about a concept for a new science elective course, Chase was all ears.

Next fall, Murray will offer Ecology Inquiry Immersion: A Wolf Ridge Elective (EII) in partnership with Wolf Ridge. The course will combine chemistry, biology and earth science and culminate with a two-week summer trip to the environmental camp. The course is aimed at eighth-graders who were in grade-level science classes in seventh grade but are ready to move into a more challenging curriculum.

Wolf Ridge and M urray have a long history of working together. For the past 30 years, groups of M urray students have traveled to Wolf Ridge in November to take environmental classes. "We call it our "leadership retreat," an environmental retreat where students lead other students into team-building activities and problem-solving," Chase said.

The retreat also takes a look at the variety of cultures represented at M urray. "Because we are a diverse school, we have student leaders teach about the different cultures that are represented in our school. This brings home that all these students, and all these cultures, live in St. Paul," he said. "Our theme for the week is "We are more alike than different."

Wolf Ridge has a program where high school students take extra science classes after school and then come to Wolf Ridge for two weeks in the summer to work on individual projects and learn more about ecology. "They wanted to expand this program into junior high, and Peter reached out to us," Chase said. "[Smerud] said, 'M urray has a diverse population, and you celebrate it, and we want to reach out to students of color.'"

Chase and Tim Williams, principal of M urray, worked together to create the EII program. "It's a two-trimester course where the students will get additional exposure to chemistry, biology and earth science," Chase said.

The EII program would open the door for students. "Students who may have missed out during that seventh-grade decision-making process will now have this on-ramp to this challenge pathway," he said.

Chase introduced the new course to current seventh-graders at M urray, who had to apply to be in the class. "I went to all of the earth science classes and had them contact me if interested," he said. "I then contacted parents to see if they were O.K. with their child enrolling in the class and spending two weeks at Wolf Ridge during the summer."

Twenty-two students enrolled in the class.

Chase hopes this will be a life-changing experience for the students. "They can go into high school and skip that ninth-grade science curriculum because they'll get four years of science. This will open more electives for them for whatever their interests are, whether it's art, science, social sciences and so on."

EII consists of two experiences at Wolf Ridge: a weekend orientation in May and then students will return for two weeks in July.

"During that time, students will do individual environmental inquiry where they'll look at nature and see how something has an effect on something else," Chase said. "For example, how does the tree canopy affect the types of plants growing underneath it? These are typical questions that a student might experiment with and collect data on. They will learn the process of science."

The St. Anthony Park Community Foundation has played a big role in helping bring this class to fruition, Chase said. "The foundation sees the extreme value in this program and is willing to lend..."
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support for our students.” The foundation is helping find funding from several sources, said Jon Schumacher, the foundation’s executive director.

“Since many of the students will be going on to Como Park Senior High School, Chase hopes Murray will be able to monitor EII’s success. “We’ll know how many of these students, after completing this program, will go into that 10th-grade biology class,” Chase said, “and we’ll see how many of them are successful in it.”

“The big dream is to get more students involved in these fast tracks.”

Chase believes the outside world is his classroom. “Once students are studying outside,” he said, “they can make inferences from direct observation. It’s a powerful way to understand the world we live in.”

Natalie Zett has been writing for the Park Bugle since the early 1990s. Her work has appeared in a number of Twin Cities publications, including Metro Lutheran, American Jewish News, and Minnesota Monthly.

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A house in a day

It took a couple of semi-trailers and a crane to bring Eric Hansen’s and Jeannine Duncan’s new house to its new home on Ludlow Avenue in St. Anthony Park on Dec. 11. The house is a “weed house,” a line of prefabricated contemporary homes designed by architect Geoffrey Warner, founder of Alchemy Architects on Raymond Avenue in St. Anthony Park. The Hansen-Duncan house came in two rectangular box-like sections that were set onto its foundation that afternoon. The couple hopes to move into the house by the end of February. The daylong event attracted a number of spectators. By twilight, the crowd, crane and trucks were gone, and the house was ready for the finishing work. Photos by Kristal Leebrick