

World's Fair?

It's not such a novel idea.

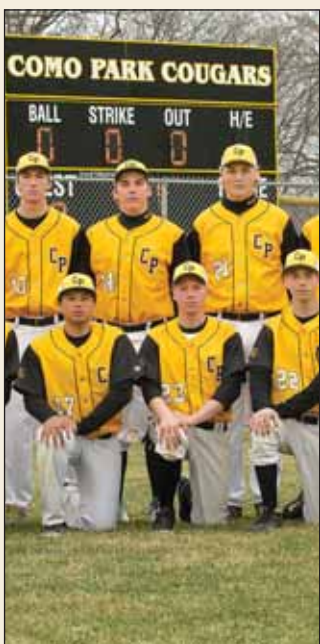
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Grow your own

Local business aims to show clients just how to do that.

Page 8



Batter up!

School baseball season is underway at Como.

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Park Bugle

St. Anthony Park / Falcon Heights
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May 2015

Victorian-style garden returns to Como Park

By Roger Bergerson

The first in a series of formal gardens to be established around the Visitor Center and the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory in Como Regional Park will open early this summer.

The Centennial Garden will serve as a focal point for observances to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the conservatory and pay tribute to those who worked to get it built and subsequently become a Twin Cities landmark.

"The design of the Centennial Garden harkens back to several legacy gardens in Como's past," explained Michelle Furrer, director and campus manager of the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory.

These included "garden rooms" near the conservatory that featured fountains, arbors and plantings. It was a style of garden, Furrer said, that was representative of the English Victorian era that the conservatory evoked.

Horace Cleveland, the renowned landscape architect who shaped the early park, favored the concept of a "landscape park" as an escape from city life.

Frederick Nussbaumer, early park superintendent, also was a disciple of the school of picturesque landscaping, but recognized the importance of recreational facilities and tried to balance the two concepts.

Furrer noted that the construction of the Visitor Center about 10 years ago eliminated the McKnight Garden near the conservatory. While plans called for formal gardens to be established on what became lawn areas, funding did not become available until recently.

Support for the Centennial Garden included \$272,000 from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, as well as a \$168,000 contribution from Como Friends, a nonprofit organization.

The garden will provide a



The Centennial Garden is the first element of a plan to bring back botanical features that park visitors would have seen at the time the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory was built 100 years ago.

natural gathering place for daily visitors, as well as a relaxing setting for after-hours events, Furrer said.

Observances of the Conservatory centennial will kick off

on June 19 and continue through Nov. 8.

Roger Bergerson writes about community news and history regularly in the Bugle.

Murray Middle School hits its stride

Parents and staff of former junior high say school's second year with grades 6-8 is calmer and less crowded

By Alex Lodner

It is well-documented that the 2013-14 school year did not go well for Murray Middle School. After a year of weathering what some perceived as chaos created by the school district's implementation of too many changes in one year, a number of teachers and Murray families left

the school, and the district.

Last year, nearly 900 students were enrolled at the school as it transitioned from a grade 7-8 junior high school to a 6-8 middle school. Classrooms were overcrowded and a new disciplinary policy established districtwide left teachers feeling unsupported and families worrying about their children's safety and

negative academic experience.

But for those who stuck it out and returned in fall 2014, the year has gone better than expected.

"We got off to a great start this year," said Murray Principal Stacy Theien-Collins. "We did a lot of work last year. We did a lot of listening, learning and collaborating with families, students, teachers and administrators. We got a lot of input."

A 200-student drop in enrollment—due in part to the graduation of a large class of eighth graders who were grandfathered in after the district changed attendance boundaries in 2013—and a \$2 million remodeling project that created a new wing for the sixth grade created more elbow room in the building.

But one of the biggest changes this year is a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to issues, according to Theien-Collins. "We are now driving where we want the school climate to go," she said. In the 2014-15 school year, the school has implemented policies that support staff and help those students who struggle most, Theien-Collins said.

New support staff has been added to help counselors and

teachers with student behavior issues, one of the biggest concerns families had last year. The additional staffing enables counselors to spend more one-on-one time with each student, and while special education specialists once worked separately from classroom teachers, they are now teamed with each grade and have a better grasp of what each grade's specific needs are.

"Last year, 20 percent of students had two or more behavior-based referrals. As of midyear, that number was closer to 7 percent," Theien-Collins said. "Students who have between two and five referrals are placed in Tier 2, which allows them to receive more support."

Fall semester data shows the improvements. Dismissals have seen a 55 percent reduction and suspensions have seen 32 percent fewer students being suspended.

"Last year, we didn't have enough resources to help those students and it became a cycle of being sent back to the classroom before their needs were met, further disrupting the classroom," Theien-Collins said. This was a common complaint from teachers last year as well: having disruptive students



A sure sign of spring

That flash of yellow in the trees? It means the yellow-rumped warbler has arrived in Minnesota and spring is here. Clay Christensen will tell you all about it on page 11. *Photo by Harris Mallory*

C I T Y F I L E S

Como Park

The District 10 Como Community Council meets at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month at the Historic Streetcar Station, 1224 N. Lexington Parkway. Contact 651-644-3889 or www.district10comopark.org.

District 10 chair reflects on his two terms on the district council

I took over as chair of District 10 in February 2010. Immediately, there were pressing organizational needs



Jon Knox

involving the staffing model and general operational health. I was fortunate to have a board full of members willing to step forward to help make difficult decisions and take the steps needed to regain organizational stability and the trust of the community at large.

By the end of 2010, we instituted a new more efficient staffing model and completely updated our employee handbook, which brought it up to current standards. These efforts dominated my first calendar year as chair of District 10. However, with all of this going on I am proud to say we still had strong work being done by our committees, dealing with issues from permit parking to the developing situation at Lexington and Larpenteur avenues with MGM Liquor and Walgreen's. The District 10 Environment Committee also stayed active during this transitional

period.

What I learned during my first year with District 10 is that it is easy to underestimate the important role district councils have in our communities, and I think it is vital we recognize that and promote membership in the community councils as valuable volunteer work. I also learned to a new degree what individuals working as a team could accomplish.

I am blessed to have worked with many great volunteers and staff over my five years, but perhaps most blessed to have worked with Marcy Micek. Marcy served as the District 10 treasurer for four years. Marcy served her community with exuberance and vigor and yet in a quiet humble manner. Beyond a great volunteer for the Como neighborhood, Marcy was a great friend. Marcy Micek passed away on February 15, 2012. Marcy was the type of volunteer who helps define all that is good about district councils.

As my second full term and time as chair ends, I am thankful for the opportunity to have served District 10. I hope that in leaving my time is remembered for fostering mutual respect among individuals and community members. My takeaway will be the friends I made along the way and the laughs we have shared. I know that I leave District 10 in good hands, but make no mistake—I will be watching. — *Jon Knox, District 10 board chair*

District 10 Sunday Series: Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom

Meet at the Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom Sunday, May 3, at 1:30 p.m., and learn about the history and future of this 17-acre natural area in the heart of St. Paul.

St. Paul Public Schools environmental educator Josh Leonard will talk about how this little-known gem of Como Park can be used for educational purposes. St. Paul Parks and Recreation environmental coordinator Adam Robbins will discuss the management of the different habitats found in the woodland.

The 90-minute presentation will include a tour (weather permitting). Please be prepared to be outdoors. Meet at the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Fireplace, just west of the Como Pool. Rain location: Midway Picnic Pavilion.

For more information, call District 10 office, 651-644-3889

Falcon Heights and Lauderdale

The Falcon Heights City Council meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7 p.m. in Falcon Heights City Hall, 2077 W. Larpenteur Ave. Contact 651-792-7600 or www.falconheights.org.

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

St. Contact www.ci.lauderdale.mn.us or 651-792-7650.

Learn about Bell Museum's move

The cities of Falcon Heights and Lauderdale, along with the Falcon Heights-Lauderdale Lions Club, will sponsor an evening with Dr. Susan Weller, executive director of the University of Minnesota's Bell Museum of Natural History, on Monday, April 27, at 7 p.m. at Falcon Heights City Hall.

Weller will discuss the museum's move to the St. Paul campus on the southwest corner of Larpenteur and Cleveland avenues.

Lauderdale garage sale is May 16

Lauderdale's citywide garage sale will be held Saturday, May 16. Lauderdale residents must call City Hall 651-792-7650 by May 8 to register your sale location and let organizers know if you have items of special interest to list. There is no charge to register and the city does the promotion. A list of garage sale locations will be available at City Hall the week before the event. If you are having a garage sale, don't forget to put a garage sale sign in your yard.

Sales may begin at 8 a.m.

St. Anthony Park

The District 12 Community Council meets on the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at South St. Anthony Recreation Center (SSA), 890 Cromwell Ave. To find when council committees meet, go to www.sapcc.org or call 651-649-5992.

Sewer repair on Raymond Avenue

A sewer-repair project in south St. Anthony Park has shut down Raymond Avenue from Manvel Street to West Hampden Avenue through early June. The City of St. Paul's Public Works has set up detours using Energy Park Drive, Highway 280 and West Territorial Road. Local parking is banned on the park side of Manvel, Bayless Avenue and Hampden.

The city said it expects to complete the project by June 5. Contact Aaron Hass with the City of St. Paul Sewer Utility at 651-266-6171 if you have any questions.

Raymond Avenue businesses are open and accessible during this project. Support your local businesses and continue to use them.

Como outdoor classroom to be dedicated at public event in May

The public is invited to attend the dedication of the Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom on Wednesday, May 20, at 11:30 a.m. in Como Regional Park.

The Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom (CWOC) has been a community-driven project since

2006. Supporters, students and community members will gather outdoors on the southside of the Como Woodland between the Kilmer Memorial Fireplace and the Como Park Pool at 1221 Como Ave.

Tim Chase, Murray Middle School science teacher and MAEE's 2014 Environmental Educator of the Year, will be the keynote speaker. He will share his experiences on how giving all students opportunities to explore the natural world arouses their curiosity and opens up new career possibilities for them.

Three school groups that have used the CWOC extensively will be attending the dedication: Great River Montessori, Murray and Como Park Senior High. After the ceremony, students will plant a tree near the Kilmer Fireplace and take part in a habitat-restoration activity in the woodland. The public is also encouraged to take part.

This 18-acre parcel located at the southwest corner of the park, is the largest woodland left in Como Regional Park. What had been a declining woodlot, overrun with invasive species, trash and random bike trails, is now on its way to becoming a healthy forest and prairie outdoor learning space. Invasive species are beginning to loosen their grip on Minnesota foliage and are being replaced by native wildflowers and shrubs. More than 2,500 feet of ADA-accessible trails have been installed.

The idea for developing an outdoor classroom in Como Park came from members of the District 10 Community Council's Environment Committee in the late 1990s after working to remove buckthorn from the woodlot. In

2006, these committee members formed the Como Woodland Advisory Committee, and funding was secured from the City of St. Paul and various other sources to proceed with the project.

The long process of restoration has been done through the hard work of community volunteers and students with the support of the City of St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department, and also with a grant from the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

The woodland will continue to need community and student volunteers to help maintain the outdoor classroom's multiple plant communities. Parks and Rec is developing a pilot program called Eco Stewards to support and coordinate those volunteers.

The CWOC's mission is to be a place of learning, recreation and nature appreciation for all ages and species. A fox family has been in residence for several years. More than 40 species of birds have been documented using this urban woodland at different times of the year.

The restored Joyce Kilmer Memorial Fireplace, which stands at the center of the woodland, was rededicated with much fanfare in May 2011. Now it's time to dedicate the surrounding woodland's new incarnation as the Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom. All are welcome.

If it rains the ceremony will be held at the Midway Picnic Shelter at the corner of Midway Parkway and Horton Avenue. For more information, go to www.comowoodland.org.

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Author's Peace Corps work is foundation for book

By Kristal Leebrick

Stephen Snook spent 15 years writing his first book of fiction, *One Degree South*, published in 2014 by Shipwreckt Books.

The story—a tale of love, witchcraft and political turmoil in Africa that's based on Snook's experience serving two terms in the Peace Corps in Gabon—"never let me go," he said.

"I understand why the Greeks thought of the Muses in the way they seemed to have, namely that writing comes from somewhere; it is something from outside as much as from within."

Snook, the son of a retired Luther Seminary professor who spent his high school years in St. Anthony Park, describes his early years as fairly conventional: His family moved from New York to Minnesota when he was a teenager. He and his three siblings attended Murray High School. After graduating in 1972, he attended the University of Minnesota.

After college, he felt compelled to go "someplace as different as possible from what I grew up knowing." He joined the Peace Corps "to challenge myself by doing

what the Peace Corps once called 'the toughest job you'll ever love.' "

He met his wife, Rosine, in Gabon, and after his Peace Corps service ended, he worked in Zaire (now Congo) building rural health centers. He left there to attend graduate school at the University of Florida, where he received a doctorate in political science in 1996. He and his family returned to Africa, where he led a project in Ghana assisting the electoral commission administer elections and working with local governments to help them do a better job of delivering needed services to citizens, he said.

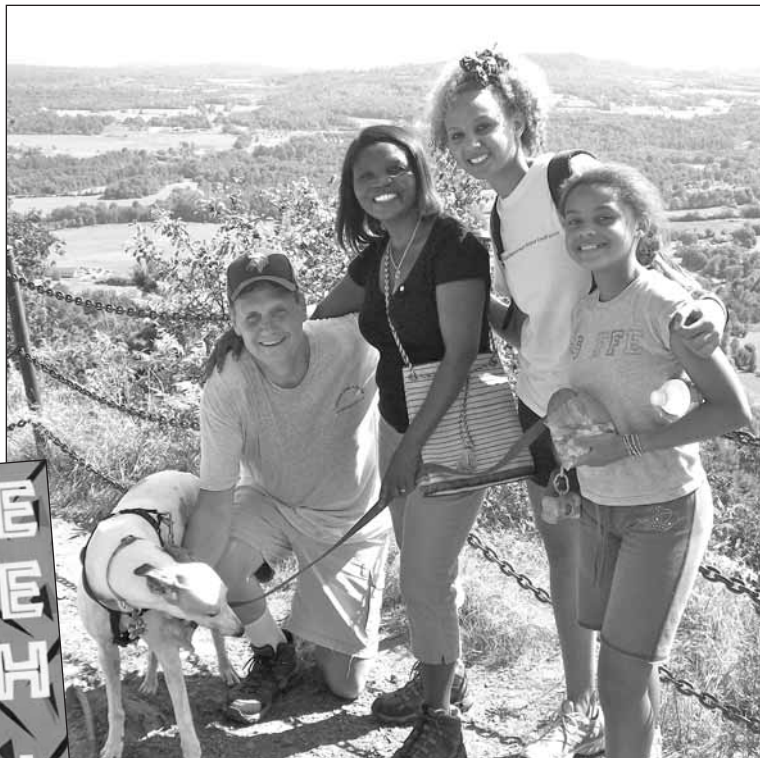
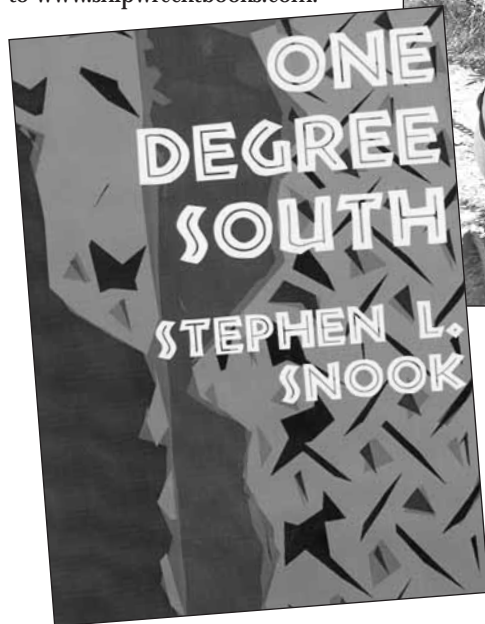
The family moved to South Africa, then to Guinea, and in 2009 settled in Vermont, where Snook now works for Tetra Tech, a company that helps developing countries address water, environment, energy, infrastructure and resource management challenges. He still travels extensively to Africa.

One Degree South is described as a "sweeping tale of love, politics and witchcraft set in the oil-rich nation of Gabon just as the Cold War ends. The U.S. relationship with African dictators suddenly changes and election fervor, which dominates the

headlines in African capitols, sweeps through the remotest of tiny villages."

Snook's work in Gabon more than 30 years ago is the foundation for the book and his connection to the book's publisher, Shipwreckt Books of Lanesboro, Minn., which is owned by another former Peace Corps volunteer, Tom Driscoll.

One Degree South is available at Micawber's Books, 2238 Carter Ave. You can also find out more about the book at www.stevesnook.com or go to www.shipwrecktbooks.com.



One Degree South (at left) is based on the author's experiences while serving in the Peace Corps in Gabon, Africa. Above, Stephen Snook with his wife, Rosine; daughters, Jessica and Gabriella; and dog, Kit. Photo courtesy of Stephen Snook

Muffuletta server stars in independent film

The Center *makes its Minnesota debut this week at Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival*

By Kristal Leebrick

Matt Cici had just returned from five long weeks in South Dakota working on a film crew when he opened his computer and saw a posting for a paid acting role in a feature film that was to be made in Minnesota.

"It was perfect timing," he said.

Cici, a waiter at Muffuletta, 2260 Como Ave., landed the starring role in *The Center*, a 72-minute feature film that portrays a young college graduate at a dead-end job on a search for meaning in his life. He joins a self-help group, where he first finds hope but then finds the group is a cult with many secrets.

The film will have its Minnesota debut on Wednesday, April 22, at 7:20 p.m. at St. Anthony Main Theatre, 115 S.E. Main St., Minneapolis, as part of the Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival. *The Center* will have a second showing on Friday, April 24, at 9:20 p.m. A question-and-answer period with the film's cast and crew will follow each showing.

Jonathon Demme (producer of *Silence of the Lambs*, *Philadelphia* and *The Manchurian Candidate*) is the executive producer of the film, which was written and directed by Minnesota filmmaker Charlie Griak.

The Center had its world premiere at the 25th anniversary Cinequest Film Festival in California in February 2015. There the audience and jury selected it for an encore screening on the festival's final day. The film then went to a festival in Australia. The Twin Cities festival



Matt Cici is starring in the film *The Center*, which makes its Minnesota debut this week.

will be its third showing.

The movie was filmed mostly in

downtown St. Paul in 2011, Cici said. Demme got involved in the film after working with Griak on an animated film short. Griak shared a rough cut of his film with Demme, who liked the film and came on board as its executive producer and presenter.

"He let us use his studio, so Charlie got to work in New York with some of the most award-winning post-production people," Cici said. "They were editing *Noah* while editing our film. It was a really awesome other-worldly experience for a lot of us here."

Cici, who grew up in Maple Grove, said he got his acting start at Osseo High School doing one-act plays. He spent two years at North Hennepin Community College and acted in some plays there, as well as in community theater in Maple Grove and the Anoka area. He spent his last two years in college at Hamline University, where he also did some theater and received a degree in communications studies and film studies.

Cici has had experience in front

of and behind the camera and has directed and made his own feature film. "When writing and directing you are very much involved in acting," he said. Directors and writers need to understand the skills brought into acting to do their job, he said.

Cici will be part of the panel discussions following the film's showings this week. The film has

garnered some positive press, including an upcoming feature in the fashion magazine *Marie Claire*, which named Cici "best dressed" at Cinequest in February.

To learn more about the film, go to www.thecentermovie.com. To learn more about the Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival, go to <http://mspfilm.org>.

St. Anthony Park: The new Hollywood

There must be something in the water at Milton Square in St. Anthony Park. Muffuletta server Matt Cici isn't the only film star at the corner of Carter and Como avenues.

On a Sunday afternoon in late March, a crew of production people and actors filled Micawber's Books for a long night of filming for a movie by local screenwriter and moviemaker David Ash.

Micawber's owner Tom Bielenberg said the store was used for two scenes "of a minute or two each" that take place at a poetry reading in a bookstore.

"It was a lot of fun," Bielenberg said.

The most interesting aspect of the evening for Bielenberg? "How many shots they took of every scene, how many takes of every possible scene." —Kristal Leebrick

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St. Anthony Park Area Seniors' Senior Cinema Series

**"Into the Woods" 2-4 p.m.
Thursday, May 14th, at SAP Library**

A witch tasks a childless baker and his wife with procuring magical items from classic fairy tales to reverse the curse put on their family tree. Starring Anna Kendrick, Meryl Streep, and Chris Pine. PG. 125 min.



St. Anthony Park Library, 2245 Como Ave.
651-642-0411 / www.sppl.org

651-642-9052 www.sapaseniors.org

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The Park Bugle is a nonprofit community newspaper serving St. Anthony Park, Lauderdale, Falcon Heights and Como Park. The Bugle reports and analyzes community news and promotes the exchange of ideas and opinions in these communities. The Bugle strives to promote freedom of expression, enhance the quality of life in the readership communities and encourage community participation.

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C O M M E N T A R Y

The Bugle welcomes readers' commentaries and letters to the editor. Send them to editor@parkbugle.org.

Improving urban public education— eight ideas from a veteran teacher

By Bill Leslie

It's hardly news that less than half of the kids in Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools are proficient in reading and math. Education "experts" have weighed in on this topic, but we haven't often heard the perspective of classroom teachers. What follows are eight ideas for improving urban education; they're based on what I learned from 34 years of teaching in public and private schools:

1. Provide one year of free preschool for all children from low-income families. Critics of urban public schools rarely acknowledge that many kids come to kindergarten

already a year or more behind. "How is that possible?" you might ask. If prospective kindergarteners have not been read to at home, they're behind. If they do not know that letters represent sounds and that numbers represent numerical values, they're behind. If they have little experience with drawing and coloring, they're behind. Preschool for everyone would help level the kindergarten playing field.

2. Cut district administrative costs to the bone; use the savings to pay for preschool and intensive reading instruction. Some years ago, I worked in a quasi-administrative capacity with St. Paul Public Schools. It was my observation that there were

roughly four levels of administration between the superintendent and the principals; I don't think this situation has changed. Would anyone notice if we cut two of these levels? I doubt it.

3. Make reading education an absolute priority. To succeed in any academic subject (and to become knowledgeable citizens), students must learn to read. Starting in second grade, students who are significantly behind in reading should be put in small, intensive reading classes (no more than 10 students per class) for half of every school day until they catch up.

4. Make it easier to remove underperforming teachers (and principals). Most teachers work hard and do a fine job, but there are some who do not. Under the current teacher union agreement with the St. Paul Public Schools, it takes a principal at least one year of observations, documentation and meetings to remove an underperforming teacher (the equivalent of part-time job). Let's give underperformers three months to improve their craft; if significant progress is not shown by the end of this time period, termination should immediately follow.

5. Layoffs (when necessary) should be based more on teacher quality and less on teacher seniority. It's unconscionable to put anything other than teacher quality first when it comes to deciding which teachers should stay and which ones should move on. Many districts now require principals to evaluate teachers several times a year—let's make use of that information.

6. Limit standardized testing to one week each school year. Students improve when they show up for school, stay at the same school and receive good instruction. Students are not helped by spending a month each year on standardized tests.

7. Allow teachers to take ownership of their instruction. Unfortunately, many school districts now take a top-down, "stick to the script" approach to supporting instruction. Successful schools value teacher input and encourage teachers (and students) to be creative, take risks and think outside the box.

8. Pay bonuses to teachers who serve in lower-achieving schools. Higher-achieving schools tend to attract the most highly regarded teachers; lower-achieving schools too often are left with inexperienced teachers and high staff turnover (a double whammy for students). To keep top teachers at lower-achieving schools, let's make it worth their while by paying a \$10,000 annual bonus.

Urban teachers are practical, they work very hard, and they know a lot. They know that some urban kids need a preschool boost if they are to succeed in higher grades. They know that excellent teachers and strong principal leadership matter. They know that focused, sustained, small-group instruction matters. Improving urban education is not an impossible task. Let's make it happen.

Bill Leslie taught at St. Anthony Park Elementary School from 1999 to 2013. He is retired and now lives in Roseville.

Thanks!

We did it. We hit our fund drive goal and then some.

Thank you to our readers and local businesses who helped us raise \$37,076 in our 2014-15 fund drive. This nonprofit, 41-year-old community resource would not be able to continue publishing without your tax-deductible contributions. Once again, thank you.

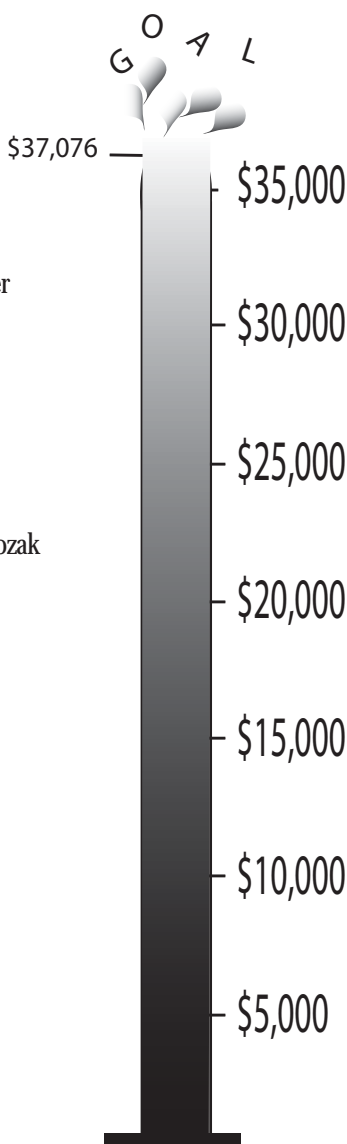
Of course, we'll continue to accept contributions. If you'd like to give, you still can. Donate online at www.parkbugle.org. Click on the green DONATE NOW button on the right side of the page. Or send a check to Park Bugle, P.O. Box 8126, St. Paul, MN 55108.

The list below reflects those who gave through April 12.

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L E T T E R S

The Bugle welcomes commentaries and letters to the editor. Send them to editor@parkbugle.org.

No one asked him

Once there was a Norwegian bachelor farmer who lived alone on a very nice farm. From all outward appearances he seemed quite satisfied with his place in life. On a sunny summer's day there was a knock at his door. When he opened it he found a small group of fine-looking men and women with clipboards in hand.

To his astonishment he was told that they were in the process of deciding what kind of new home he should have. What dimensions, kind of siding, driveway access and all manner of personal decisions a new homeowner has to make. Apparently this very nice, dedicated and well-intentioned group had been meeting amongst themselves and with various

township officials for nearly two years to come up with probable specifications for change.

My farmer friend thought this to be quite curious and downright presumptuous in that no one asked him if he was even interested in building anything. He listened politely, suggested that they go to town for a coffee, and come back and then ask him if he wants to change any part of his living accommodations. As he said, "Then maybe there will be a reason to look at your clipboards."

(That is the reason I chose not to fill out the recent ADU surveys Parts I, II and III.)

*Jack Neely
St. Anthony Park*

Donate your gently used books, CDs and DVDs to library book sale

The St. Anthony Park Library Association is seeking donations for its annual book sale to be held during the St. Anthony Park Arts Festival on Saturday, June 6.

The association is looking for books, CDs and DVDs that are in good condition. Textbooks, magazines, cassette tapes and VHS tapes will not be accepted.

Please leave your donations at the book cart in the lower level of the

St. Anthony Park Library, 2245 Como Ave. (outside the auditorium).

If your books are in boxes or bags, there is no need to remove them. Just place the bags or boxes on or near the cart inside the library. Please don't put your donated items in the library's book return.

The money raised from the sale goes directly toward library programs and facility improvements. The library association helps fund the

children's Summer Reading Program, improved landscaping around the building, and such activities as the February Silent Movie Night and weekly story times.

If you have any questions or have a large number of items to donate and would like them picked up, please e-mail Susan Dean at smdean16@gmail.com.

SAPAS to host June fundraiser at Giggle's at state fairgrounds

By Michelle Christianson

Organizations often talk about "raising funds and raising friends," and that's exactly what the St. Anthony Park Area Seniors board intends to do with its first-ever fundraising event on Sunday, June 14, from 3 to 6 pm. A \$35 ticket will get you food and beer (and other beverages) at Giggle's Campfire Grill on the Minnesota State Fairgrounds, as well as music, a silent auction and information about the activities the organization sponsors.

There will be at least 35 craft beers from local breweries to sample

(free with the ticket) and the food is an abbreviated version of the menu Giggle's offers during the fair.

Just as important as the food and drink is the opportunity for neighbors to meet and learn about the important work SAPAS does.

"We want people to know that SAPAS is a vibrant organization serving more than the very elderly or homebound," says board member Katherine Eklund. Besides health care, rides to appointments and Meals on Wheels, SAPAS offers exercise classes, respite support for caregivers, social outings and much more. (You really must see their

website sapaseniors.org!) They are also focusing on issues of housing and community building.

Because state and grant funds are shrinking, a new source of income was needed to supplement individual and corporate donations. Expenses, including those for staff, facilities, administration, communication and supplies continue to grow.

Tickets will be available at a number of local businesses, including Tim & Tom's Speedy Market and Stout's Pub, and online at the group's website soon. Local businesses, including the University of Minnesota golf course, are also donating items and services for the silent auction, and local musicians will provide music. This is an event not to be missed.

Music in the Park season ends with Brazilian guitar duo concert

The Schubert Club's Music in the Park Series 2014-15 season will conclude with Brazilian-born guitarists Sérgio and Odair Assad in their Music in the Park Series debut Sunday, May 10, at 4 p.m. at St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ, 2129 Commonwealth Ave. A preconcert discussion will begin at 3 p.m.

The Assad brothers have set the benchmark for all other guitarists by creating a new standard of guitar innovation, ingenuity and

expression. Their artistry and ensemble playing come from a family rich in Brazilian musical tradition.

They have worked with such renowned artists as Yo-Yo Ma, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Paquito D'Rivera, Gidon Kremer and Dawn Upshaw.

Tickets are \$30 and available in a limited quantity. You can buy them online at schubert.org/musicinthepark or call 651-292-3268.

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returned to their classroom without much, or any, repercussion for their actions.

"We now have a better menu of services for Tier 2 students so we can better respond to the needs of each individual student," Collins said. "Disruptive students are kept out of the classroom longer, which means a better classroom experience for the rest of the students."

Additional changes, such as added recreational and movement time, the implementation of a Positive Behavior Intervention (PBI) program, a partnership with New Lens Urban Mentoring, input from a parent advisory board council, a School Climate Improvement team, new behavioral intervention staff and the Murray Core Values Program have also helped move the school in the right direction, she said.

"The Murray Cores Value Program, for example, intentionally teaches students behavior expectation at our school," she said. "These core values are taught in a Core Values Foundation course and reinforced during all-school assemblies so that everyone is on the same page."

Assistant Superintendent Lisa Sayles-Adams is proud and supportive of the work that Theien-Collins has done at Murray. Sayles-Adams has been in her position since last year, having

previously served as principal at Battle Creek Middle School.

"At Battle Creek we had a similar experience as Murray last year," she said. "We had a lot of changes, too. We all weathered that storm."

While she is aware of the negative impression the community had of Murray last year, she is hopeful about the continued improvements in the future.

"I know what the narrative is out there; there are lots of rumors," she said. "I hope people look at the data and see that it didn't take long to turn things around significantly."

"Stacy was confident that we can all work together," Sayles-Adams said. "She really heard the parents, she was very transparent, and she focused on all the kids." Sayles-Adams believes that Murray now has a strong administrative team that is working together with the community to create an even stronger school.

"We are a public institution; there are going to be challenges," Sayles-Adams said. "I don't know if you can really show it with data—although we have the data to support this—but the building just feels different. It's a totally different school; we are figuring it out."

Several teachers who left Murray and other SPPS schools last year were not willing to go on record to talk about their experiences last year,

citing fear of retribution, even for those who left the district. Of the 14 Murray teachers who left, five were part of budget cuts, according to Sayles-Adams, and two retired.

But many who stayed say they are glad they did. Erin Dooley, a seventh-grade science teacher, returned to Murray in February 2014, after serving as a support coach in the district.

"I was really happy to come back," she said. "Both my kids went to Murray." While she admits space was an issue last year, she does not see much of a difference in the way her students are behaving this year. "We had to be creative with space last year, but personally it does not feel that different this year. My students seem to be doing very well at Murray," she said.

At the end of last year, many Murray families were frustrated and disgruntled. Last May, the district held a meeting with stakeholders, including several disheartened families, to discuss Murray's woes and possible solutions. According to Theien-Collins, the meeting was a turning point for Murray administration.

Bill Mills, a Murray parent and a member of a parent task force that was asked to work on behalf of Murray families, was at that meeting. Mills said the meeting got off to a negative start.

"It started with angry parents with pitchforks and burning

torches," he explained. "It took hard work on the part of everyone to turn the energy into something productive."

"Families were up in arms," he said. "Last year the teachers were just trying to keep their heads above water, which does not make for a productive learning environment for our kids."

Over the next few months, the task force started gathering data on the problems at Murray in an effort to target assistance to the right students. "Murray staff looked at data about which kids were struggling most, at what time of the day, days of the week, etc.," he said.

The environment has improved, Mill said, but he is still frustrated with the district's upper administration's decisions and with what appears to be lack of action on the part of the school board. "The school board works for us; they are supposed to be our voice," he said. "At this point it seems they are busy defending past poor choices."

But he acknowledged that everyone seems to have the students' best interest at heart. "I feel that these are all passionate people who care about the kids, about doing the right things for the kids, and that goes a long way with me," he said. "But I come from a business world where you are held accountable for poor execution. Were the teachers and local administrators given the resources they needed to succeed?"

Sara Veblen-Mortenson is one parent who was happy at Murray last year and still is. She has one daughter at Murray and another at Laura Jeffrey Academy. "It was just a matter

of fit," she explained. "My Murray student is enjoying it so far and has not seen too many of the problems we have heard about."

"Last year we were just trying to keep the wheels on. It's all relative," Mills said. "My son used to report fights, the police being called in, this was normal to him last year. This year, it's completely different. This year, it's good, and now the conversation can turn to how to make it great."

Louis Seeba relates as both a parent and as an SPPS school board member. "At the board we are often the recipients of complaints, but I have to say that this year we have barely gotten any," she said earlier this winter.

"If you flash back a year ago, parents were worried about sending their kids there. My message last year was 'give us a chance.' I see what's planned and I know what we are moving toward."

Seeba is grateful for the faith that parents have shown in Murray. "I haven't heard of anyone who stayed that has regretted that choice."

When asked why so many changes were implemented at once, Seeba was candid. "I have to say that I didn't agree with all of the changes at once," she said. "The changes definitely impacted the middle schools the most."

"My seventh-grader is reporting that it is better this year, but honestly she didn't complain much last year. She has a pretty high threshold of chaos," Seeba joked.

"Murray administration and staff are miracle workers to be where we are now at Murray. I am a parent and I want to do what's best for my kids, but I really want to do what's best for everyone, and I believe in public education. We've got this, and it's getting better."

Consensus is clear: It was a mess last year, but it does seem to be getting better. Perhaps Seeba put it best: "Things are improving at Murray," she said. "Whether that is thanks to leadership at the district or in spite of it is up for debate, but things are improving nonetheless."

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Passengers preparing to depart for a tour of the fairgrounds waterway, circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.

World’s Fair in Minnesota? That is so yesterday

By Roger Bergerson

The news that civic leaders are mounting an effort to bring a World’s Fair to Minnesota in 2023 calls to mind similar aspirations of a century ago.

In the early 20th century, the area around today’s intersection of Como and Raymond avenues in St. Paul consisted of woods, water and pasture, the latter used by the dairy herds from the nearby St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota.

Between 1908 and 1909, the State Fair acquired 90 acres of this land, installed a new entrance gate at Como (then Langford Avenue) and Raymond and began dredging what was envisioned as a series of channels and lagoons stretching all the way to

the new grandstand.

With gasoline-powered gondolas plying the waters, it was to be an attraction to rival the canals of Venice, the centerpiece of officials’ hopes of hosting a World’s Fair.

Unfortunately, it proved impossible to maintain the levels in the water features and within a few years they were filled in to create the Midway entertainment area.

But the dream didn’t die and business leaders were probably encouraged by the success of San Francisco’s widely acclaimed Panama Pacific International Exposition in 1915, a fair celebrating the opening of the Panama Canal.

In 1919, several officials with the St. Paul Association, the predecessor of the Chamber of Commerce, announced that they



hoped the fairgrounds would be the site of a World’s Fair in 1925.

St. Paul would not try to finance the project on its own, they cautioned, but would seek federal and state funds as well.

However, many businessmen who belonged to the association expressed serious reservations, pointing out that Chicago, Ill., St. Louis, Mo., and Buffalo, N.Y., which had financed earlier fairs, were still trying to pay off the losses incurred.

There is no indication that those plans went any further, but, as it has been observed, history has a way of repeating itself.

Roger Bergerson writes about history and community news regularly in the Park Bugle.



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Dina Kountoupes sees yards as potential "food forests." Photos courtesy of Dina Kountoupes

She aims to build community, one edible landscape at a time

By Kristal Leebrick

Do you dream of having your own vegetable garden right outside your door but have no time to bring that dream to reality?

Dina Kountoupes can help.

A signature piece to Kountoupes's business, Harvest Moon Edible Landscapes, is its Full-Service Kitchen Garden package, which includes planning the garden, all the materials you need, weekly maintenance and the harvest from the garden delivered to your door each week.

If you just need a little something to get you started, Harvest Moon has garden kits that include the compost and soil, mulch, plants, seeds, installation labor and an hour of coaching time "and boom: instant garden," Kountoupes said.

Kountoupes also consults with would-be gardeners to help them turn their yards into edible

landscapes. The impetus for her four-year-old business is her deep-seated desire to help people connect more with their land by taking advantage of nature's systems and growing food.

She thinks of herself as a "garden educator," and that's pretty much how she began in the business.

Kountoupes came to the Twin Cities from Oberlin, Ohio, in 1989 to attend Macalester College, where she took courses in environmental studies and Spanish. After college she lived in Costa Rica for a while, working on organic farms and researching sustainable agriculture.

She also met Marty Ruddy, a fellow Macalester grad who was in Costa Rica serving in the Peace Corps. Ruddy and Kountoupes moved back to Minnesota, married and now live in St. Anthony Park, where Ruddy grew up.

After returning to Minnesota, Kountoupes worked as program director for Farm in the City near


Dunning Field in the Midway area. Farm in the City is a children's horticulture and environmental art education program that began in the 1990s.

"It was so great," she said. "We were basically not only doing community gardening with kids, but also doing cooking as part of the program and art. It was giving [the kids] such a sense of place. They were all from the neighborhood over by Dunning Field."

"To me, it was absolutely a life-achieving, gratifying thing to see these kids connect with the earth, and so from then on, I was kind of sold on that."

She went back to school at the University of Minnesota, where she received an interdisciplinary degree in environmental education and sustainable agriculture with a focus on gardening with children.

She worked in an Extension program on schoolyard ecology




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explorations and wrote curriculum on how to get kids outside in the garden “and what to do with them out there,” she said. But then, “I got sick of writing in front of a computer and wanted to get back in the garden again.”

Kountoupes began working with the Permaculture Research Institute (PRI) in Minneapolis, helping low-income residents grow food in their own yards.

“PRI gardeners would descend on a yard, build a 10-by-10 garden, maintain it, take care of it, show people how to do it and harvest it,” she said.

Eventually she and a co-worker, Krista Leraas, decided to create a business, Harvest Moon Backyard Gardening, doing similar work.

“We knew there was a demand and it was an amazing thing that we were doing,” she said. The business was created in January 2011, the same month Kountoupes gave birth to her second child, Georgia, whose name comes from the Greek word for “someone who works in the earth.”

The business name changed to Harvest Moon Edible Landscapes this year, and Kountoupes is now the sole proprietor.

Harvest Moon uses the concept of permaculture, a term coined by two Australian men in the late 1970s, Kountoupes said. “It means ‘permanent agriculture,’” she explained. “It’s about gardening mimicking nature’s systems.”

“Nature already has these ecological systems going. Trees go up and shade plants grow underneath the trees. Leaves fall and form mulch. Why are we taking everything out—including all systems—and planting and replacing with fertilizer and chemicals rather than letting it do its own work?”

Permaculture “keeps pollinators in the system, keeps worms in the system, keeps mulch in the system, keeps shade in the system,” she said. “Nature already invented all the systems for us, so you either tap into it or copy it. It’s way more economical and sustains itself and is more permanent that way.”

For example, Kountoupes counsels clients with shady backyards to plant under trees food that naturally grows “understory,” like fruit—particularly currants and elderberry—and herbs. Or plant the



Orange marigolds and yellow calendula serve as pollinator attractors, pest deterrents and colorful contrast to the dark green leaves of the kale. They also fill in space under the kale, which serves as a living mulch, shading out weeds and keeping the soil protected cool, and moist.

herbs right up next to the house because they can tolerate some shade and will be easily accessible from the kitchen.

That’s another aspect to permaculture, she said. “Don’t put your garden way over there. Put it by the house so you are more liable to go out and use it. It’s less work to get that food integrated into your life.”

Folks with an abundance of shade can grow the sun-loving plants like tomatoes and peppers in containers that can be moved into the sun. Or try growing items that need specific soil conditions—think blueberries—in large containers. They get the soil they need and are out of reach of rabbits.

Harvest Moon has partnered with Minneapolis synagogue Shir Tikvah and Seward Montessori School to create community gardens. At Seward, the garden was planted by students in the spring, and during the summer the harvests went to a local food shelf. Kountoupes would love to see St. Anthony Park Elementary School tap into land around the school to plant a “food forest,” where students can learn about horticulture and community.

Part of growing food is connecting to your community by sharing the harvest, she said. “You can’t help building community by working the land and growing your food.”

Business Briefs

Como Dockside grand opening

After months of planning and hard work, Como Dockside is just about ready for its close-up.

Throughout May, the newly remodeled restaurant will be open with limited hours due to outdoor construction. St. Paul Parks and Recreation will be busy building additional outdoor seating and improving the patio and paths, all work that has to wait until May due to weather limitations.

The much-anticipated lakeside service window should be open by Memorial Day weekend, according

to co-owner Jon Oulman.

Inside the gleaming new space, food service will gradually ramp up in May as new staff gets trained in and more hours, such as breakfast service, are added.

“We want to make sure we move slowly into this so we are confident in our ability to deliver,” Oulman said.

A grand opening is planned for Sunday, May 31. Details and hours will be added to Como Dockside’s website, www.comodockside.com, as they become finalized. —Alex Lodner

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April 23 gathering will launch Roseville alzheimer's project

By Warren Wolfe

A public gathering at Roseville City Hall, 2660 Civic Center Drive, Thursday, April 23, will start a summer-long project aimed at helping people in the area build new skills and confidence so they can better assist people with Alzheimer's disease.

Called Roseville ACT on Alzheimer's, the volunteer-led project seeks to deepen knowledge about Alzheimer's and dementia among families, neighbors and businesses, to reduce the stigma often associated with dementia and increase services for area families dealing with those conditions.

The kick-off event will be 1-3 p.m. in the City Council chambers. Organizers will introduce a series of programs that will start the following week. In addition, those at the event will see videotaped interviews with local people discussing the impact dementia has had on their families.

ACT activities this year will focus on eight presentations by experts April 28-May 21 and again in the fall, a series of four movies about people coping with dementia,

and opportunities for volunteers to help expand programs serving area families dealing with dementia.

The project is the most ambitious one undertaken by the Roseville Alzheimer's and Dementia Community Action Team (Roseville A/D), a collaboration of several dozen community members, city and school officials, business leaders and service providers. Roseville A/D was organized in 2013 to help the city prepare for increasing numbers of residents with dementia diseases.

While the ACT project is focused on Roseville, "the same information and resources are relevant to people wherever they live," said Sara Barsel, a co-founder of Roseville A/D. "Our programs are free and open to everyone. We encourage anyone interested or concerned about dementia to attend."

Part of statewide effort

Roseville ACT is one of 34 projects statewide intended to help create more dementia-friendly communities. That concept focuses on building awareness, education and skills so that those with dementia

can continue to live as independently as possible as part of the community, helped by families, friends, neighbors and businesses.

The project received a national award in March from the Family Caregiver Alliance.

"We need to learn how to face our discomfort and talk with each other about dementia," said Deb Nygaard, a volunteer with the project and director of development at Arthur's Residential Care in Roseville. "With ACT, we want to help people realize that there are ways each of us can help people with Alzheimer's and their families."

Talks by local experts

A series of eight presentations by local experts will begin April 28 for four weeks.

On Tuesdays, April 28-May 19, 6:30-7:30 p.m., presentations will focus on dementia and the healthy brain at the Fairview Community Center, 1910 W. County Road B.

On Thursdays, April 30-May 21, 1-2:30 p.m., speakers will discuss caregiving issues and techniques at Roseville City Hall.

Expanding services

In addition to the educational programs, Roseville ACT is seeking volunteers to help expand two services for area people with dementia and their families. Both will train volunteers before they start.

The Gathering, coordinated by Lyngblomsten, needs volunteers to help in its day program at Centennial United Methodist Church in Roseville. It provides activities and social stimulation for people with early to mid-stages of memory loss and offers a caregiver-support group. There are 20 clients on its waiting list.

P.S. I Understand is a peer-support program of Wilder Caregiver Services that matches current caregivers of people with dementia and former caregivers who have been away from caregiving for two years.

Other Roseville A/D projects

Before starting the project, Roseville A/D helped launch a series of smaller projects aimed at helping people in the area learn more about Alzheimer's and dementia that included public presentations and dementia-screening clinics.

It also worked with the city to create a dementia-information section on the City of Roseville website—believed one of the few in the nation.

The work of the Roseville volunteers will not end with the ACT project, according to co-founder Barsel, who is active in many community efforts, including a study about whether or not a Roseville block-nurse program for older and disabled people should be reestablished.

For more information about the Roseville ACT on Alzheimer's project, go to the Alzheimer's and Dementia Information page at www.ci.roseville.mn.us/2721/Alzheimers-Dementia.



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Community Worship Directory



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www.peacelauderdale.com

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❖ ST. CECILIA'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

2357 Bayless Place. 651-644-4502

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Saturday Mass: 5 p.m. at the church

Sunday Masses: 8:15 a.m. and 10 a.m. at the church

❖ ST. ANTHONY PARK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

2129 Commonwealth Ave. (corner of Commonwealth and Chelmsford)

651-646-7173 www.sapucc.org

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www.sapumc.org, 2200 Hillside Ave. (at Como), 651-646-4859

Pastor: Rev. Dr. J. Samuel Subramanian.

Sundays: 10 a.m. Worship celebration and Sunday School

11 a.m. Fellowship and refreshments

6:30 p.m. Free young adult dinner in parlor

Mondays: 7 p.m. Community Bible study in parlor

❖ ST. ANTHONY PARK LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Wednesday Community Dinner: 5-6:30 p.m. (free will offering)

(served until May 13)

Summer Worship Schedule begins, Sunday, May 24

one worship only 10:00 a.m.

❖ ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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2136 Carter at Chelmsford, www.stmatthewsmn.org

Sunday 9:15 a.m. Education for all ages

10:30 a.m. Worship with communion and sermon

Nursery care provided 9 -11:20 a.m.

5:30 p.m. Evening worship with communion, Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Undercroft Gallery: Children's Art Show, Opening reception May 3

To add your church to the directory, contact Bradley Wolfe at 952-393-6814 or bradley.wolfe@parkbugle.org



The Birdman of Lauderdale

by Clay Christensen

Spring brings the brief return of the yellow-rumped warbler

I'm hoping this column hits the streets at about the same time as its subject, the yellow-rumped warbler. Warblers in general are quite small, 4 to 6 inches in length, colorful and melodious. They're the birds that most northern bird watchers long to see each spring.

As warblers migrate through, one of their favorite foods is caterpillars. So when I see inchworms hanging down from my neighbor's oak tree, I tune my senses to look and listen for warblers.

There are nearly 30 species of warblers on the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union's checklist. Several of the species nest here in the metro area, but most breed in northern Minnesota and on up into Canada. We see them in passing, on their spring and fall migrations.

Identifying warblers in the spring requires gathering and assimilating several views, trying to get a good look at the head, wing, body and tail, then putting it all together into a composite, a memory you can take to the field guide in an attempt to put a name to the flitty critter. The birds are busy gleaning food, checking spider webs, leaf clusters, grooves in the bark, so you've got to follow them on their forays and try to get a look at as many different parts as you can.

The male yellow-rumped warbler is predominantly blue-gray with a yellow patch on the top of his head, on his shoulders and, of course, on his rump, which is especially visible in flight. It's that yellow rump that has given the bird its nickname "Butter Butt." Besides the yellow parts, it has a black mask, white throat and a dark black patch on its chest shaped like an inverted U.

The female yellow-rumped is more brownish with duller yellow patches.

I'm focusing on the yellow-rumped warbler because it's one of the earliest spring migrants to these parts and usually among the most abundant. It's a gregarious bird and

often migrates and forages in flocks. The birds keep in touch with each other with a contact call: "check." Listen for that in early spring. Its song is a weak, indistinct warble or trill that often just fades out.

Like many other warblers, yellow-rumped warblers do some fly-catching, darting out to snatch an insect. They even chase insects over water, often right near the shoreline.

But when it's too cool for bugs to be flying, yellow-rumped warblers have an adaptation that allows them to turn to a different food source. Look for these early migrants feeding in the street or on the sidewalk—not on inchworms but on the scales of tree buds that have been knocked down after a storm. That gives us a chance to take a good look at this attractive warbler.

Yellow-rumped warblers have the ability to feed on vegetative matter. It's unusual for an insectivore to be able to digest plant material. The yellow-rumped warbler's digestive tract does a retrograde reflux that moves its food from the intestines back up into the gizzard for further processing, and can do so several times if necessary.

And there's a higher concentration of bile in the gallbladder and intestine and a slower gastrointestinal process that enables the bird to get nutrition out of the waxy lipids contained in such berries as those of the bayberry, juniper, poison ivy and wax myrtle.

In fact, before its name was changed, the yellow-rumped warbler was known as the myrtle warbler.

Perhaps it's this ability to eat berries and seeds that allows it to be such an early migrant, even before any flying insects or inchworms have come out. But it also migrates early because it has a long way to go.

The yellow-rumped warbler breeds all across Canada and the extreme northern United States from Minnesota east to the Atlantic coast. It's the most abundant wood warbler in Canada.

There are several places to look for warblers in Ramsey County. My buddy Val and I led a walk around Lake Como early one May morning and found a tree that had so many different warblers, it became a tutorial for spring-warbler identification.

Another good place to hit in the spring is the Woodview Open Space at Larpentur Avenue and Mackubin Street, especially in the dog-park area near the lake. (Remember, dogs have priority in this area; observe from outside the fence if pups are playing.)

The yellow-rumped is one of the last warblers to leave in the fall. It heads to southern climes, even as far south as Panama. Once again, in the fall, it can survive on waxy berries after the frost has killed off all the flying and crawling insects. What a nice adaptation, this retrograde reflux.

Maybe you'll get a chance to identify one of these Butter Butts this spring.

Clay Christensen lives and writes in Lauderdale.

Woody biomass harvesting topic of May Audubon meeting

Dr. Michael Rentz will present "No Free Lunch: Ecological Impacts of Woody Biomass Harvesting" at the next St. Paul Audubon Society meeting Thursday, May 14, at 7 p.m. The talk will be held at Fairview Community Center, 1910 W. County Road B, Roseville. The event is free and open to the public. A social time begins at 6:45 p.m.

Rentz will present the findings of his Ph.D. research on the impacts of woody biomass harvest on small mammals and forest plants.

Rentz is a life-long Minnesotan who recently moved south of the Minnesota border to take a faculty position at Iowa State University.

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L I V E S L I V E D

*The Park Bugle prints obituaries free of charge as a service to our communities.
Send information about area deaths to Mary Mergenthal at mary.mergenthal@gmail.com or call 651-644-1650.*

Laverne Carney

Laverne C. Carney, 88, Como Park, died March 27.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Frank "Nub" in 2003, and brother, Gordon Kapaun. She is survived by sons, Michael (Ginger) and David (Arlene); four grandchildren; many great-grandchildren; and sister-in-law, Chloe Ann Kapaun.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated April 9 at Holy Childhood in Como Park, with interment at Roselawn Cemetery.

Dorothy Green

Dorothy A. "Dottie" Green, 80, Como Park, died April 7.

She is survived by her husband of 55 years, Lee; seven children, Kathy (Mike Rother), Ellen (Doug) Friberg, Chris, Jeff, Jenny (Pat) Coyne, Karen and Aimee; 19 grandchildren; one great-grandson; and sister, Marie Petrasic.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated April 13 at Holy Childhood.

Marion Hoff

Marion Jean (nee Loney) Hoff, 92, died on March 15 at St. Therese at St. Odilia.

She was preceded in death by

her husband, Arthur.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated March 19 at Holy Childhood, with interment at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

Geraldine Kohnen

Geraldine Mae Kohnen, 90, Como Park, died March 2.

She was preceded in death by her husband, John H.; son Jeff; and two great-grandchildren. She is survived by her children, John (Patricia), Barbara (William) Johnson and Dennis (Audrey) Bennett; six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren; and sister, Donna Hoffmeister.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated March 7 at Holy Childhood, with interment Calvary Cemetery.

Geraldine O'Donnell

Geraldine "Geri" O'Donnell, 90, Como Park, died on March 7. She was a lifelong member of Holy Childhood. Interment was at Calvary Cemetery.

Donna Poland

Donna (Meiske) Poland, 81, of Lauderdale, died on March 23.

Born in Bowling Green, Ohio,

Donna spent most of her adult life in St. Paul, raising her family and working. She earned her bachelor's degree from Bowling Green State University and master's in food science from Michigan State.

She worked at the Hospitality Institute of Technology and Management for 25 years until her retirement two years ago.

Donna was married to Jay C. Meiske from 1956 to 1987. She is survived by her children, Susan Meiske, Sally Meiske Pinkston, Thomas Meiske and Mary Birrell (John), and four grandchildren.

A memorial service was held April 18 at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Roseville.

Francene Reiter

Francene Ann Reiter, 51, died March 12. She was a compassionate nurse and teacher.

She was preceded in death by her father, Carl Falkowski. She is survived by her mother, Betty Jean; husband, John; daughter, Cassie; sons, Ricky (Katie Little) and Matt Kubitschek; one granddaughter; and siblings, Pamela Falkowski, Carl Falkowski Jr., Carlene Wells, Rita Falkowski (Mattie), Paul Falkowski and Bonnie Jo Rocchio (John).

Her funeral service was held at Como Park Lutheran Church on March 16.

Herbert Schmitz

Herbert J. Schmitz, 86, Como Park, died March 21.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Florence; children, Paul (Lucy), Stephen, Douglas (Jennifer), Richard (Kathrine) and Suzanne Schmitz; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; a sister; and six brothers.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated March 26 at Holy Childhood, with interment at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

Vince Schroder

Albert V. "Vince" Schroder, died March 16 at age 87. He was born March 5, 1928.

Vince enlisted at age 17 and served in the Navy toward the end of World War II. After his service, he attended Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, graduating in 1952. While at Luther, he met and married Lucille Rustad. They moved to St. Anthony Park in 1956.

Vince was one of the first employees of Control Data Corp. (retired 1988) and Cray Research.

Shortly after he retired, he sold Adirondack chairs and other lawn furniture under the name Yard Goods, which operated for many years at the St. Anthony Park Arts Festival.

He will be missed by his wife of 64 years, Lucille; son, John (Reade); daughter, Ann (Nick); grandson, Erik (Julie); and great-grandchildren, Elin and Ethan Vincent.

Private interment will be at Fort Snelling Cemetery. A celebration of life will be held at Gardens of Salonica Restaurant, Minneapolis, Saturday, May 30, 1-4 p.m.

William Stoessel

William J. Stoessel, 68, of Falcon Heights, died unexpectedly April 9.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Robert Sr. and Harriett; and sister, Nancy Wald. He is survived by his wife, Melissa; children, Brian Stoessel (Meredith), Kristi Angelopoulou (Theodore), Andrew Bossert (Maria) and Michael Bossert; six grandchildren; brother, Robert Stoessel Jr.; and sister, Elizabeth Steeber.

His memorial service was held April 13 at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, with inurnment at Roselawn Cemetery.



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Neighbors

Free children's art workshop

Courtney Oleen, art teacher at St. Anthony Park Elementary School, will give a free two-hour art workshop for children ages 4-18 Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m.-noon, at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church 2136 Carter Ave.

The workshop is being offered along with the "Creations from Wonderland" Community Art Show for children and youth, which will open Sunday, May 3, with a public reception at 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Call Peg Houck to register for the workshop, 651-645-4453.

Earth's largest lakes topic of Moos Family Speaker Series lecture

Dr. Robert Sterner will explore the hydrology, geopolitics, biodiversity and biogeochemistry of the world's largest lakes Thursday, April 30, at 7 p.m. at the U of M St. Paul Campus Student Center Theater.

The free lecture is part of the Moos Family Speaker Series, co-sponsored by the Freshwater Society and College of Biological Sciences.

Celebrate National Train Day

Join the Twin City Model Railroad Museum in celebrating National Train Day Saturday, May 9, with two events: a Spring Hobby Show at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds Education Building (9 a.m.-3 p.m.) and activities at the museum, 1021 Bandana Square.

Festivities at the museum will include free roundtrip rides on historic buses between the museum,

Jackson Street Roundhouse, Union Depot and James J. Hill House. The museum will be open 10 a.m.-5pm. There is an admission for each event. Find out more at tcmmr.org

YMCA camps Spring Garage Sale

YMCA Camps Widjiwagan and du Nord Spring Garage Sale will be held Wednesday-Saturday, May 13-16, at the Merchandise Mart on the Minnesota State Fairgrounds.

Admission is free. The sale will be open Wednesday to Friday, 9 a.m.-7:30 p.m. The Saturday Bag Sale opens at 8 a.m. and runs to 2 p.m. For more information, call 651-645-6605.

Plant the library gardens!

The St. Anthony Park Garden Club invites you to the annual planting of the flower boxes and gardens at St. Anthony Park Library, 2245 Como Ave., on Saturday, May 30, 9-11 a.m.

Bring gloves, a trowel or shovel and kneeling pad and one or more divisions of astilbe, Rodgersia, ligularia or Japanese anemones from your gardens if you have them. Questions? Contact Mary at 651-644-7388 or [magui011@umn.edu](mailto:magu011@umn.edu).

Growing grapes in Minnesota

Sue Riesgraf will present "Growing Grapes in Minnesota" at the St. Anthony Park Garden Club meeting at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Fellowship Hall, 2136 Carter Ave., on Tuesday, May 5, at 7:30 p.m. (social time begins at 7 p.m.). All are welcome.

Riesgraf is the former vineyard manager in the University of Minnesota Grape Breeding Program.

Langford offers summer fun

Langford Recreation Center will offer Summer Blast, a free afternoon program for youth who have completed grades K-5, June 15-Aug. 20. Hours will be 1-4 p.m. The program will include crafts, art, tennis, cooking, swimming, gym games, water fun and more.

Students can also sign up for Urban Tennis, held at many of the city's parks, by calling 651-222-2879, or going to www.urbantennis.org.

Summer classes at Langford include activities for preschoolers up to teens.

You can see a full listing of classes and register at www.stpaul.gov/parks, or call 651-298-5765 for more information.

Summer at Northwest Como

Summer Sports Registration at Northwest Como Recreation Center was in March, but you can call or come into the center, 1515 Hamline Ave., to see if any spots are available for pre-T-ball (ages 3-4), T-ball (ages 5-6), nearball ages (7-8), machine pitch baseball (ages 7-8), baseball ages (9-12), softball slow pitch (ages 9-18) and lacrosse (ages 6-11).

Summer classes and camp registration is open. See the offerings and register at www.stpaul.gov/parks, call 651-298-5813 or come into the center Monday-Thursday, 3-8 p.m., or Friday, 3-6 p.m.

MAY

Events

Venue information is listed at the end of the calendar. Send your events to calendar@parkbugle.org by Wednesday, May 6, to be included in the June issue.

2 SATURDAY

Adoption Fair, CHLSS, 9 a.m.-noon. Register at chsfs.org.

3 SUNDAY

District 10 Sunday Series: Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom, 1:30-3 p.m. Meet at the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Fireplace (west of the Como Pool), or Midway Picnic Pavilion in case of rain. Call District 10 at 651-644-3889 for more information.

5 TUESDAY

Baby/toddler story time every Tuesday, St. Anthony Park Library, 10:30-11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.-noon.

St. Anthony Park Garden Club program, "Growing Grapes," St. Matthews Episcopal Church Fellowship Hall, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Business meeting, 6:30 p.m.; social time, 7 p.m. Contact Sandee Kelsey, kelse005@umn.edu or 651-645-9053 with questions.

6 WEDNESDAY

English Conversation Circles, every Wednesday, St. Anthony Park Library, 4-5:30 p.m.

St. Anthony Park Book Club, will discuss "Orphan Train" by Christina Baker, St. Anthony Park Library, 6:30-8 p.m.

7 THURSDAY

St. Anthony Park Library closed for staff training.

St. Anthony Park Elementary School plant sale, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Fidgety Fairy Tales, a family-friendly theater production that reimagines myths and legends to reduce misunderstandings around mental health disorders, CHLSS, 6:30 p.m.-7:15 p.m.

8 FRIDAY

Preschool (ages 3-5) story time, every Friday, St. Anthony Park Library, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

St. Anthony Park Elementary School plant sale, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Night by the Lake at Como Dockside, Como Lakeside Pavilion, 6-11 p.m. A benefit for Como Park Senior High School's boys soccer program. Music, food and drinks. Buy tickets at comosoccer.com.

11 MONDAY

Minnesota's Waiting Children information session, CHLSS, 6-8 p.m. Learn about adopting children who live in foster care.

Author Craig Lang will moderate a panel of five area residents who claim to have experienced extraterrestrial

alien contact, Spirit United Church, 3204 S.E. Como Ave., 7 p.m.

14 THURSDAY

Preschool Mandarin Chinese story time, St. Anthony Park Library, 10:30 a.m.

St. Anthony Park Senior Cinema Series: "Into the Woods," St. Anthony Park Library, 2-4 p.m.

18 MONDAY

Community sing, Olson Campus Center, Luther Seminary, 7 p.m. Social time begins at 6:30 p.m.

Twin Cities Chef's Table with food writer Stephanie Meyer, St. Anthony Park Library, 7-9 p.m.

Free showing of documentary on UFOs, Spirit United Church, 3204 S.E. Como Ave., 7 p.m.

21 THURSDAY

Learn Chinese folk dancing, St. Anthony Park Library, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

22 FRIDAY

Co-ed drum circle, Women's Drum Center, 6:30 p.m. Cost is \$10 at the door. Drums provided.

23 SATURDAY

St. Anthony Park Library closed through Monday, May 25, for Memorial Day weekend.

26 TUESDAY

Community Blood Drive, St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2-7 p.m.

28 THURSDAY

Preschool Mandarin Chinese story time, St. Anthony Park Library, 10:30 a.m.

30 SATURDAY

Plant the library gardens with St. Anthony Park Garden Club, St. Anthony Park Library, 9-11 a.m.

31 SUNDAY

Sunday Afternoon Book Club, "Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President," by Candice Millard, Micawber's Books, 2:30 p.m.

SENIOR EXERCISE

St. Anthony Park Area Seniors:

Tuesdays and Fridays, St. Anthony

Park Library, 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Wednesdays, St. Anthony Park United Methodist Church, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Mondays and Thursdays, Lauderdale City Hall, 2-3 p.m.

Como Park/Falcon Heights Block Nurse Program:

Tuesdays and Thursdays, Falcon Heights Town Square Senior Apartments, 9:30-10:30 a.m. and Arbor Pointe Senior Apartment, 11 a.m.-noon

FREE SENIOR BLOOD PRESSURE CLINICS

St. Anthony Park Area Seniors:

Wednesdays, St. Anthony Park United Methodist Church, 11:30 a.m.-noon

Como Park/Falcon Heights Block Nurse Program:

Third Thursdays, Arbor Pointe Senior Apartments, 10-11 a.m.

Fourth Thursdays, Falcon Heights Town Square Senior Apartments, 11 a.m.-noon

VENUE INFORMATION

Arbor Pointe Senior Apartments, 635 W. Maryland Ave.

CHLSS, Children's Home & Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, 1605 Eustis St., 651-255-2355,

Falcon Heights City Hall, 2077 W. Larpeur Ave., 651-644-5050

Falcon Heights Town Square, 1530 W. Larpeur Ave.

Lauderdale City Hall, 1891 Walnut St., 651-631-0300

Micawber's Books, 2238 Carter Ave., 651-646-5506

St. Anthony Park Elementary School, 2180 Knapp St., 651-293-8735

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

St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Ave., 651-645-0371

St. Anthony Park United Methodist Church, 2200 Hillside Ave., 651-603-8946

St. Matthews Episcopal Church, 2136 Carter Ave., 651-645-3058

Women's Drum Center, 2242 W. University Ave., www.womensdrumcenter.org



Aikido Center settles into new digs above co-op

Students at the Twin Cities Aikido Center practice in the center's new location above Hampden Park Co-op, 2382 Hampden Ave. Here, Kathy Aguilar-Downing and Vickie Selep work with students in the space that had been a ballroom dance school until recently.

The Aikido Center moved from its longtime location at 2390 University Ave. in late March after the building was sold to Exeter Group, which owns C&E Lofts, 2410 University Ave. Representatives from Exeter attended the March District 12 Land Use Committee to present plans to build new market-rate apartments where the Aikido Center, armored car company Loomis and Gremlin Theatre had been housed, next to C&E Lofts.

The Aikido center opened for classes at the new location in early April. Founded in 1976 by a group of University of Minnesota graduates, the nonprofit organization opened on University Avenue in what had been a truck showroom. TCAC has grown to be the largest Aikido group in the region, offering at least two adult classes per day, seven days a week, as well as two youth classes per week.

You can find out more at tcaikido.com. —Kristal Leebrick

Dr. Todd Grossmann, DDS
651-644-3685 tagdds.com

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School News

The Bugle welcomes news about students and schools in the area. The deadline for the June issue is Wednesday, May 6. Send your news to editor@parkbugle.org.

Avalon School

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www.avalonschool.org

“Almost, Maine” at Avalon School

Local actor and director Charles Fraser is directing Avalon School students in “Almost, Maine,” which will be performed Wednesday-Friday, April 22-24, at 7 p.m. at the school. Tickets are \$6, but on Friday for \$10 patrons can attend the play and have dinner at 6 p.m. as part of the annual Gender Sexuality Alliance Spaghetti Dinner.

Robotics team won regional

Team 2491 No Mythic brought home a first-place trophy from the North Star Regional competition April 4.

Avalon students on the team are Adam Thomas, Cian Fearn, Elizabeth Bender, Ethan Havens, Evan Tang, Gus Maynor and Killian Lingel-Macias. The team also includes students from Great River School, Twin Cities Academy and St. Louis Park High.

Chelsea Heights Elementary

1557 Huron St., 651-293-8790
www.chelsea.spps.org

Carnival is May 15

Chelsea Heights will host its annual Spring Carnival on Friday, May 15, 5-8 p.m., rain or shine. There will be games (with prizes!), food trucks, raffles and a lot of other fun activities. All proceeds will help support student activities at the school. Bring friends, family and neighbors. Email chelseacarnival@gmail.com for more information.

Como Park Senior High

740 Rose Ave., 651-293-8800
www.comosr.spps.org

Spring play April 30-May 1

Como students will perform the

comedy “Little Red Riding Hood and the Power Mutants” on Thursday, April 30, and Friday, May 1, at 7 p.m. in the school auditorium. The work is a playful twist on the classic fairytale.

Music awards

The Como Park Advanced Band received a Certificate of Excellence from the Minnesota State High School League at the March 24 Large Group Competition at Tartan High School.

Senior Rachel Tetlie was awarded a Presidential Distinction Scholarship and \$20,000 annual music scholarship at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn.

Athletic scholar

Senior Will Kidd was awarded the Mike Warter Scholarship from the Minnesota State High School Soccer Coaches Association. The award is received by just one male and one female soccer player in the state each year. Coaches select the winners from a competitive pool of players who have excelled on the field and in the classroom. Kidd has signed a national letter of intent to play and study at Bradley University in Peoria, Ill.

Robotics team wins award

The Robotics team debuted their robot, the Recyclops, at the 10,000 Lakes Regional Contest on April 3 at Williams Arena. The team received the Chairman’s Award, the most prestigious award given to teams.

Fundraiser for boys soccer to be held at Como Dockside May 8

The Como boys soccer program will raise funds for its 2015 season with a Friday, May 8, event at the soon-to-be-open Como Dockside at the Como Lakeside Pavilion. More information about “Night By the Lake” is available at comosoccer.com.

Maternity of Mary-St. Andrew

592 Arlington Ave., 651-489-1459
www.mmsaschool.org

Spring Fling

MMSA’s Blue & Green Spring Fling,

will be held Saturday, April 25, 6-10 p.m., and is open to the public. The evening will include food, raffles, Minnesota-style games, and silent and live auctions. Call the school office to reserve tickets, 651-489-1459, or visit the MMSA website at mmsaschool.org.

Tickets are \$35 each, plus \$5 for a drink wristband (the early bird price) or \$10 at the door for the wristband. Guests must be 21 years or older. Tickets will be sold at the door.

Donate and shop at flea market

MMSA is seeking donations of gently used items for a flea market in May. Items may be dropped off at the school Monday, May 11, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Tuesday, May 12, noon-6 p.m.; and Wednesday, May 13, 9-11 a.m. and 4-7 p.m.

To drop off outside of these hours, call 651-489-1459. The flea market will be held Thursday and Friday, May 14 and 15, 4-7 p.m.; Saturday, May 16, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; and Sunday, May 17, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Murray Middle School

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

Encore!

Murray’s school play was a great success. Erin Dooley, producer of “Into the Woods, Jr.,” along with Murray Middle School, thanks the crew (under the guidance of Eileen Slagle and Eric Karn), sound and lighting crew (under the guidance of Carrie Bittner), parents and community volunteers who made the play possible. And a special thanks to the talented students who put on three amazing performances.

Food drive a success

The school’s National Junior Honor Society’s food drive collected more than 1,700 pounds of food for the local food shelf and its toy drive brought in a large donation to the crisis nursery. The Honor Society has more than 30 students volunteering for 20-plus hours each year in support of the school and larger community. Students also made cards of encouragement for families using Meals on Wheels and took care of the school’s courtyard.

Boys basketball wins!

The boys basketball team finished its season with a winning 10-2 record.

State Science Fair

Eleven students competed in the state science fair in March: Valerie Bares, Celia Olson, Ella Vadnais, Henrie Friesen, Eli Powell, Thomas Heesch, Kathy Tang, Zoe Ward, Amira Boler, Maasia Apet, James Carlson and Lila Seeba.

The following students received awards: Henrie Friesen, Office of Naval Research Award; Maasia Apet, Welsch’s Sweeping Northern Star Award and Bronze Award; Valerie Bares, Henrie Friesen, Celia Olson and Eli Powell, Broadcast Masters

Award; James Carlson, Lila Seeba and Ella Vadnais, Wolfram Research Mathematica Award; Eli Powell and Celia Olson, Seagate Top 10% Award; Valerie Bares, Minnesota Academy of Science Eighth Grade Paper Medal and Gold Award; Henrie Friesen and Eli Powell, Silver Award; and Celia Olson, Gold Award.

DI winners

The Chilly Peppers, a team of five Murray sixth graders, took second place at the Destination ImagiNation state tournament in April and will head to the Global competition in Knoxville, Tenn., in May. Team members are Hannah Hausman, Bridget Lee, Audrey di-Girolamo, Riley Eddins and Charlie Wilson-Jackson.

St. Anthony Park Elementary

2180 Knapp St., 651-293-8735
www.stanthony.spps.org

Spring carnival and plant sale

The annual Spring Carnival fundraiser will be held Friday, May 1, 5:30-8 p.m. Organizers are seeking gently used stuffed animals and small toys for use as prize items. Clean out your overflowing toy and stuffed-animal collections and donate to the carnival. Questions? Email SAPschoolcarnival@gmail.com.

The annual plant-sale fundraiser will be held on Thursday and Friday, May 7 and 8, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. in front of the school. The sale will include annuals, perennials, hanging baskets, and organic vegetables and herbs.

A talent show, a race and more

The annual St. Anthony Park School Talent Show will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Friday, May 8, in the Murray Middle School auditorium.

The Running Club race will happen Tuesday, May 12, at the school. Thank you to Anderson Races for professional timing and race management.

The annual School Patrol Picnic will be held Tuesday, May 19. Thank you to the St. Anthony Park patrols for your leadership.

DI winners

The fourth-grade Destination ImagiNation team the 7 Fluffy Slugburgerz took third place at the state tournament and are advancing to the Global competition in May. Team members are Caitly Coyle, Molly Clement, Maggie Fuller, Gustavo Juarez-Sweeney, Levi Nichols, Oliver Pletch, and Charles Wriedt.

Fourth-grade team the Red Pandas took fourth place at the state tournament and will serve as an alternate to Globals. Team members are Hemetii Apet, Kendall Beard, Graham Whitney, Violet Eicher and Lydia Westerlund.

Twin Cities German Immersion

1031 Como Ave., 651-492-7106

www.tcgis.org

Anniversary celebration

Twin Cities German Immersion School will celebrate its 10-year anniversary and host an open house at its new building on Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. The event will include fun activities, and food and refreshments will be available for purchase. This is free event is open to the community.



Students raise money for Hold Your Horses

Twin Cities German Immersion School fourth-graders presented \$615.22 to Janet Weisberg of Hold Your Horses in late March. The 14 students sold bracelets to earn the money to donate to the Independence, Minn., nonprofit, which offers equine-assisted services to people with disabilities. Anne Boehm (at top), school mentor adviser, said the students chose Hold Your Horses because one of the students, Hadley Ninow, has a sister who receives services at the group’s facilities. Shown here are the students with Weisberg, Anne Boehm and Jeff Horton, TGIS assistant executive director.

SAPAS Fundraising Event Sunday, June 14 3:00-6:00 p.m.

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Send your ad to classifieds@parkbugle.org or P.O.Box 8126, St. Paul, MN 55108, or call Fariba Sanikhatam, 651-239-0321. Ads are \$5 per line. Add a box or art for \$10. **Next deadline: May 8.**



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CPHS Cougar Sports

Eric Erickson highlights Como Park Senior High School athletics each month in the Bugle.

Como baseball begins quest for championship repeat

Coming off a 2014 season that culminated with a conference championship, the Como Park Senior High School baseball team is clear about its goal for 2015: compete for another title.

The Cougars coaches and players are not shy about articulating their aims. They believe they have what it takes to be in the mix, even after the graduation of several key players.

The 2014 seniors included starters Peter Schrader, Doug McCune-Zierath, Peter Gaertner, Jonah Leurquin, Tor Will and Chris Heesch, along with Harrison Thompson and Luke Larson, who provided help off the bench.

The class of '14 played essential roles in propelling the team to their 10-2 conference record. Beyond that, they left a legacy of hard work that remains with the new 2015 team.

Guiding the work are co-coaches Matt Smith and Lenny Franco, now in their seventh year. It's a unique coaching structure, but it clearly works. They each have specialties and are comfortable sharing the managing roles. When observing them in the dugout before practice, one senses that they enjoy the working relationship and that the players are also comfortable with both personalities.

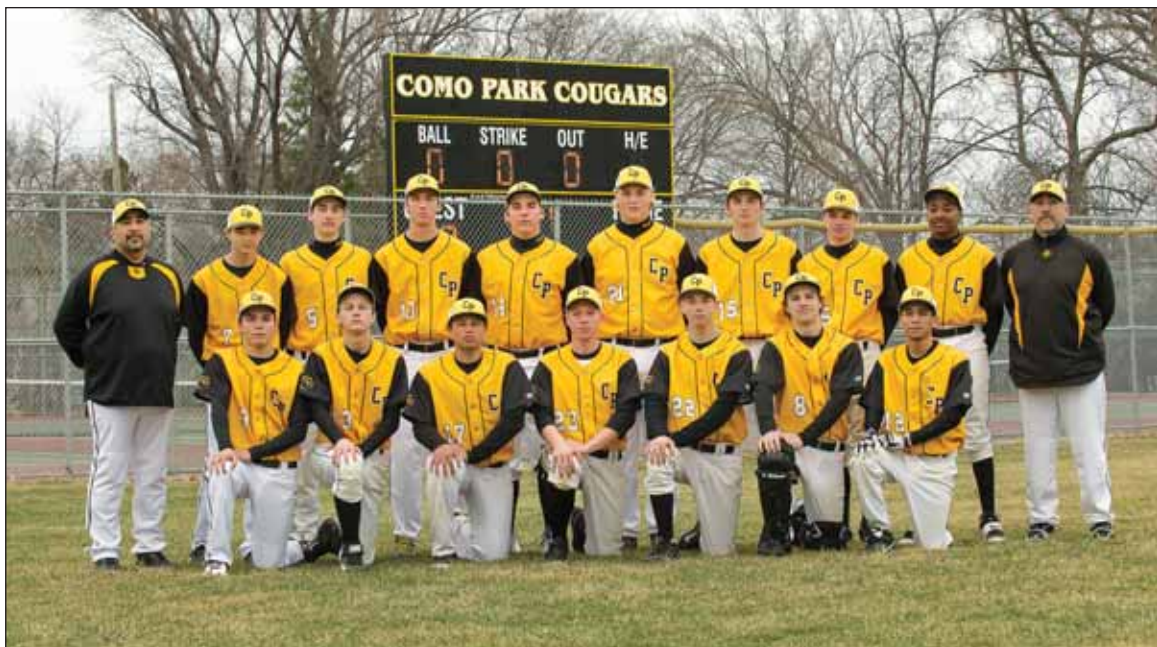
"It's two different personalities that are able to help and reach all players," senior John Wenger says. "They are on the same page, but they have different styles of presenting key information the team needs."

"It's kind of a cool situation," senior Richie Gulner says, "Coach Franco specializes in the mechanics of pitching, and Coach Smith does more swing mechanics and fielding technique. Having in-depth points of view for all aspects of the game really helps us as players."

Gulner and Wenger were starting pitchers last year in crucial contests and will form the foundation of the rotation this season along with senior Jake Vandome, who was also a big contributor on the mound in 2014. "All three can throw strikes and deliver key pitches in tough situations," Smith says.

Returning the bulk of the starting pitching provides stability for the defense. The starting infield is likely to feature Vandome or Gulner at shortstop when not pitching, junior Patrick Kolias at third base, senior Matt Klein at second, with juniors Chris Steinhoff and Kevin Smith both capable on first base.

Coach Smith says the infield can "make the routine plays, and that's what we're asking them to accomplish right now," Franco notes



The Como baseball team: front row (L to R), Chris Steinhoff, Alex Ventrilli, Jake Vandome, John Wenger, Alec Johnson, Jacob Barnard and Jorge Mendoza. Top row (L to R): Coach Lenny Franco, Jackson Muehlbauer, Matt Klein, Patrick Kolias, Richie Gulner, Charlie Kray, Kevin Smith, Alex Forstrum, Nate Jackson and coach Matt Smith. *Photo by Mike Krivit*

that a concern is a lack of varsity experience in the outfield. "We'll be young out there," he says.

Offensively, Gulner and Vandome are expected to be leading hitters. They produced last season and are expected to get on base frequently again. Junior catcher Jacob Barnard also swings the bat aggressively and should produce runs. Mix in the patient hitting of

Kolias, Smith and Steinhoff, and the Cougars have a formidable lineup.

It's not a lineup expected to hit mammoth home runs, but the coaches are confident there is enough power for extra-base hits. Franco credits the players for developing disciplined hitting habits, waiting for pitches that they can drive into the gaps.

Depth is provided by seniors Jorge Mendoza, Nate Jackson and Alec Johnson, juniors Alex Ventrilli and Alex Forstrum, and sophomores Charlie Kray and Jackson Muehlbauer. All of these players are prepared to contribute with experience they've gained in the program's JV and C-Team in previous years.

With the "one-game-at-a-time" mantra as a focal point, the Cougars

will have a home game and away game against each city opponent. While the games against Central and Highland count the same as all the others, they will be highly anticipated.

Como, Central or Highland has claimed each city crown since 2009, and they've been the top three finishers in the conference every year since that time. The rivalries are well-established. It's certain to be another exciting season in the St. Paul City, and the Cougars are ready to compete.

Eric Erickson teaches at Como Park High School, and has coached a variety of school and youth sports teams in St. Paul over the last 20 years. Follow twitter @eestp for current school sports news.

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