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NENA Board fires its two long-time staff members, four board members resign

Board calls Town Hall Meeting for Dec. 11 to replace eight vacancies on the board

By **TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN**

Allegations are flying about the Nokomis East Neighborhood Association following the board's termination of both its executive director and assistant director, and the subsequent resignation of four board members. Both had been on staff for about 15 years.

In the wake of this decision, it is alleged that the board has been meeting regularly in closed executive sessions without staff or the public, and the officers have been operating on their own without full board approval.

As of press time, minutes had not been released of the controversial Oct. 23 meeting, and the board has only printed a short statement about the events (see page 11 for the complete statement).

Despite *Messenger* requests for comment from all seven remaining board members, only Vanessa Haight and Chair Kent Knopp-Schwyn responded. When asked for details of why the board fired Executive Director Rita Ulrich and Assistant Di-

rector Doug Walters, Haight stated, "Out of respect for the privacy of former staff members, I decline to comment."

Knopp-Schwyn said, "As a human resources matter, employee privacy issues must be maintained; as such all actions leading up to the termination cannot be listed publicly. As much as legally feasible, items were discussed, or moved, or passed in meetings that were open to the public."

Details of the Oct. 23 meeting

According to now-fired Walters, the Oct. 23, meeting proceeded normally until it was scheduled to end at about 9pm. Then, he said, he saw Board Member Andrea Jauli nudge Board Vice Chair George Jelatis, who produced a pre-printed motion to fire Ulrich and Walters effective immediately. It had not been on the agenda, but he requested that it be discussed based on a "point of personal privilege."

There was discussion for 75 minutes, much of it regarding procedural items that required answers from "Roberts Rules of



Nokomis East Neighborhood Association Assistant Director Doug Walters is pictured left of Executive Director Rita Ulrich. Both staff members were fired Oct. 23 by the Board of Directors who took their keys and escorted them from the building that night.

Order," the standard book for proper organization procedure. There was a lack of second on the motion for a period of time,

recalled Walters, who said he was in a state of shock. "The chair should have said that the motion died for lack of a sec-

ond," stated Walters.

Instead, Chair Knopp-Schwyn

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"My Last Breath" Director Cy Dodson (left), Producer Kelly Jo McDonnell (back right), and the documentary subject, Josh LaRue (front) at the Twin Cities Film Fest, where they garnered two awards for the film.

Local filmmaker garners two awards

Documentary wins awards in both "Best Short Documentary" and "Fan Favorite" categories at Twin Cities Film Fest

By **JAN WILLMS**

Longfellow resident Cy Dodson's first film was not an easy one to make. The subject of his documentary, "My Last Breath," could not see or speak. Telling his story would be a challenge.

But Dodson was up for the task. Reading a copy of "My Last Breath" in one sitting, Dodson knew the chronicle Josh LaRue had written of his life had to be made into a film. Twenty-two years ago, LaRue was a seventeen-year-old boy living in the Brainerd area. Growing up with several siblings, he spent most of his time outside, enjoying the beauty of the lakes and forests that surrounded him. He fished

and hunted and swam.

But LaRue also had asthma, a childhood disease that seemed to worsen in his teen years. One January morning he awoke, struggling to breathe. His father put him in a car and headed for a hospital, meeting an ambulance enroute at a local gas station. LaRue was transferred to the ambulance but died on the way. He was revived, lapsing into a coma that lasted three months.

"Josh woke up a totally different person," Dodson said. "He couldn't move, couldn't speak and couldn't hear."

The doctors were telling LaRue's family that if this is what his life would be like, a life of

paralysis, they should talk about doing something. They were not sure at the time if his mind was affected. But LaRue's mother would have none of that, and he made it to his high school graduation in a wheelchair, the first time he had really been out of his room for anything significant. LaRue was weak, but he graduated.

LaRue persisted in his will to live. He wanted a power wheelchair, but was not provided one because of his lack of eyesight. However, his nursing aide shot a video of Josh, showing his ability to maneuver by himself, and he got the power wheelchair a few years after his hospitalization.

Dodson said that although LaRue's family has been around him so much that they can translate some of what he says pretty easily, for the most part he cannot communicate by speaking. So he had the idea of using Morse code, and a method was developed for him to use an attachment with his computer, using his tongue to type out one letter at a time. He has used this to write and self-publish six books, including children's books and poetry.

As Dodson pored through "My Last Breath," he said he knew this was a story that he

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In The Zone

By MATTHEW DAVIS

School teams slide into winter sports

In recent years, snow has arrived well after area high school winter sports teams have begun practices and competition.

Not so for this year. It benefits area ski teams since they can practice on real snow, which hasn't always been available in their first week of practices during mid-November.

Minnehaha Academy returns some strong talent on their alpine girls' team and hope to reach February's state meet. Senior captains Madison Webster and Sophie Gunderson will provide leadership for that team.

On the boys' side, the Redhawks will field a young squad. Their only state entrant from last year graduated. Jamie Devolis and Gunnar Nelson will help lead the rebuilding process as senior captains.

Minnehaha's boys' hockey team returns lots of talented

players, eleven with ten or more points last season. The Redhawks have the personnel to pull off a section championship this season.

Their top returning players include goalie Austin Butterfield and defensemen Griffin Malone, Joel Lenhart, Zach Newton, Jake Frisell and Noah Fabie. Minnehaha has lots of depth at forward with Ryan Pearson, Josh Galokowski, Josh Radtke, Andre Larenzie, Andrew Wolpert, Jake Lundquist and Alex Jordan.

Fall sports wrap up

Though the snow and ice has taken up residence in the state, the falls sports season only recently wrapped up.

Minneapolis South took fourth in state adapted soccer in the physically impaired division on Nov. 14-15 at Stillwater High School. The Tigers beat St. Paul

Humboldt 7-4 in the quarterfinals but fell to eventual state champion Robbinsdale-Hopkins-Mound-Westonka Robins 11-0 and then South Suburban in the third-place game, 11-5. Overall, the Tigers went 7-1 prior to the state tournament led by senior goalkeeper Becky Moore, senior wing Sadala Douglas and high-scoring ninth-grade wing Shafi Abdulahi.

Minneapolis Roosevelt's cognitively impaired adapted soccer team also reached the state tournament in their division. The Teddies gave Park Center a tough quarterfinal game before falling 7-6. Allen Chalmers had a game-high five goals for the Teddies. Elijah Jackson added a goal.

One-goal losses became a theme for the Teddies as they fell 5-4 in the consolation semifinals to North Suburban the next day. Ahmed Omar had a

huge game in goal for the Teddies with 30 saves. Chalmers and Jackson each had two goals.

The Teddies had a 5-3 record overall prior to the state tournament. South also co-ops with Roosevelt for the CI adapted soccer team.

Minnehaha's Marin Fredrickson competed in the Class A girls state cross country meet on Nov. 1 in Northfield. She clocked a time of 16 minutes, 14 seconds for 84th.

The Redhawks boys team took 12th overall, led by Epharim Bird's third-place finish at 16:11.2. Erik Ubel took 46th at 17:24.7.

Chris Schold and Gabe Satoskar came in at 61st and 62nd respectively. Andrew Wintz's rounded out the team's top-five at 84th.

The Redhawks also had representation at the state girls' tennis tournament. Elsa Ubel reached the Class A singles tourney.

With a brutal start to winter weather, boys' tennis in the spring seems like light years away. Nonetheless, plenty of area high school teams will have entertaining and competitive winter seasons. Enjoy it while it lasts.

Next issue
deadline:
Dec. 12

Next issue:
Dec. 23

Local writer releases first book in planned sci-fi series

Longfellow resident Barry McMahon has written and illustrated the first installment in a series of sci-fi novels introducing a team of middle school kids who discover they have superpowers. McMahon created "The Magnificents: The World's Longest Field Trip" as a nighttime story for his daughter, recording each night's "episode" on his smartphone. The novel is available on Amazon in Paperback and on Kindle.

Imagine discovering you

have superpowers after one of your friends accidentally tricks you into falling through a wormhole. That is exactly what happens to Josephine and four of her friends on an otherwise normal Minneapolis afternoon. But finding out you have superpowers and figuring out how to master them is a journey all its own.

"I decided to finally record the stories I had been telling my children for twenty years. This time I told one story, adding to

it every night for two years. I hope everyone enjoys the story as much as my daughter has," said McMahon.

McMahon, President of Deeper Arts Inc. and Founder of BFA Barry Fine Arts, has established BFA Press as a POD (print on demand) outlet for BFA which will publish the 5 book series as well as books from other local writers and artists. BFA will be announcing a call for artists within the next few months.

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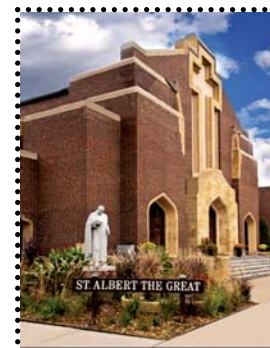

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Filmmaker

Continued from page 1

wanted to tell through film. He had moved from Ohio to Minneapolis in 2000 to take a job working in news with KSTP Channel 5. He currently works in video production, and started his own company, Triumph Pictures, in 2006. Dodson is soft-spoken, modest about his work with the History Channel, Travel Channel and ESPN, and his winning of two regional Emmy awards.

But this would be his first documentary. As he finished reading LaRue's story, he noted that Josh and his family had moved from Brainerd to Ohio, close to the area where Dodson's family now lives.

"So I would go home to visit family and then work with Josh on the film," Dodson said. He said LaRue was eager to get his story told, and the documentary would be another avenue for him to do that.

"His family has been great through the process," Dodson added, "even though it meant revisiting some tough memories."

The film recreates the day of LaRue's asthma attack, revisits Cayuna Regional Medical Center where he was first brought in and provides interviews with his family members and many of the people who first treated him that day. His caregivers are interviewed, and childhood friends talk about Josh.

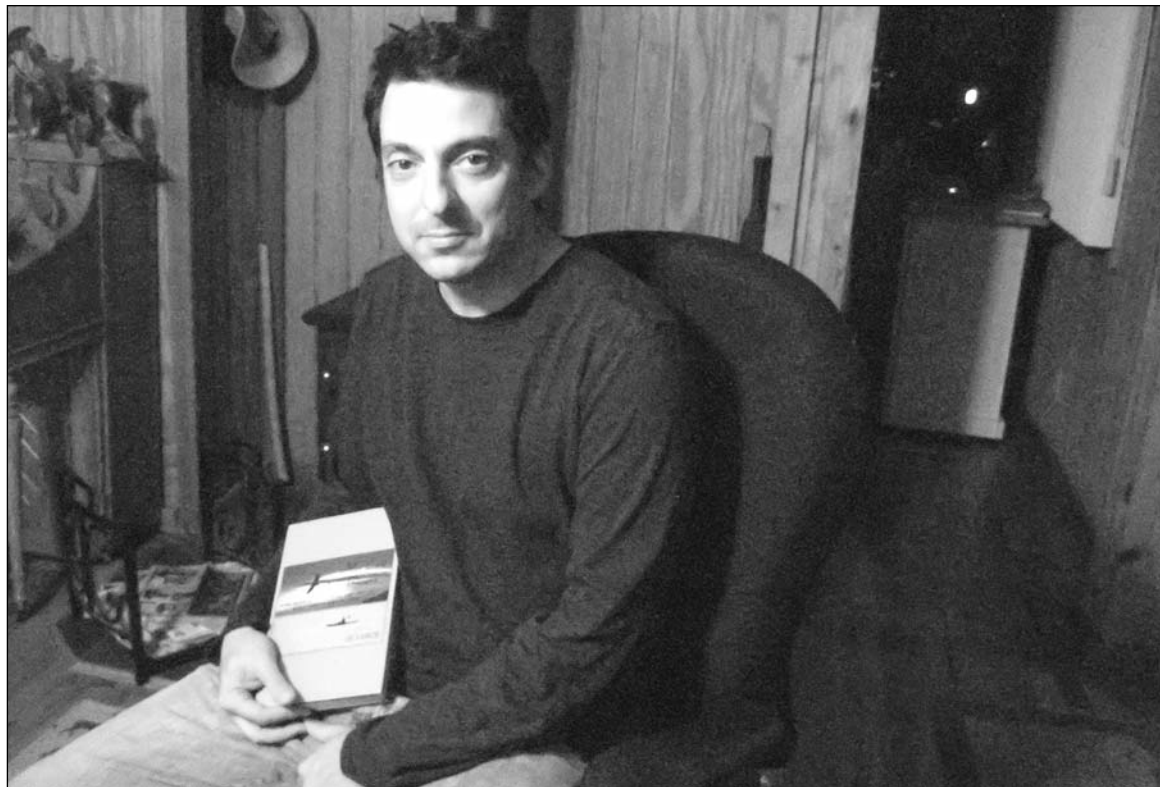
"It was kind of a handful to take on," Dodson said. "We communicated through email through the contraption Josh has set up. But as far as having a conversation and going over details, it didn't happen."

Dodson said LaRue is approaching 40 now. "We're about the same age," he said. "I think he's content, as much as he can be. His mind was unaffected. At one point, he had anger, more along the lines of 'Why didn't I just go?'"

LaRue spends a lot of time writing, according to Dodson. He is bound to his chair relying on other people to shower and dress him, help him use the bathroom and put him to bed.

Always an outdoor person, LaRue has a deer stand set up in his yard for his aides. "They go out there and hunt and he can coach them along."

Dodson said working on the film itself helped LaRue to have



Cy Dodson, Longfellow resident and the filmmaker, director and editor of the documentary "My Last Breath," was inspired by a book of the same title on the life of Josh LaRue. (Photo by Jan Willms)

something different in his life.

"He is definitely positive and wants to get things done. Sometimes I can't, I have to work. If it were up to him, we would be taking this out on the road now and telling his story," Dodson said.

"At some point that may happen, but we are just sending it out to film festivals now." The film has been screened at the recent Twin Cities Film Fest and also at the Square Lake Festival in Stillwater.

"The hardest part of the film was to tell the story," Dodson said. "After I gathered what I thought was enough for the story, then sitting down and putting it together was challenging." He shot, directed and edited the production. Kelly O'Donnell produced the film, and Joseph Haidle composed the music. Dodson, who plays the guitar and piano, also composed some of the music.

Dodson said the movie had many rewarding facets. "One was meeting people, having people around you excited by the story and wanting to help," he said. "The other part is doing something for Josh. His family is involved, a lot more than me, watching me do the story and getting it right. It's not just about me, for sure."

Dodson said that since this is his first effort at making a short film, he doesn't know how

to compare the film community in the Twin Cities to other areas. "But the film community here just seems to be very supportive," he said.

Dodson helped fund the cost of making his film with an online

Kickstarter campaign. He said that although getting the film done is an accomplishment, in some ways it still feels like a work in progress regarding marketing.

"Some say the work starts when the film is finished," Dod-

son said with a smile. "There are a million ways to get your work out there, but who knows what the right way is? Everyone has an opinion on it. And finding the right situation for a short film is a lot trickier. Josh asked about what the next step is, and I'm just learning here as I go."

Dodson said that now that he has this documentary under his belt and can add it to his resume, he has some ideas for new projects. "There are definitely people I'd like to reach out to and work with," he noted.

Meanwhile, he continues working with video production, editing some network series and working with several corporations. His home office has a wood-burning stove, and while he works he sips from a huge cup filled with tea.

He is preparing "My Last Breath" for another showing, this time in the Ohio community where LaRue lives.

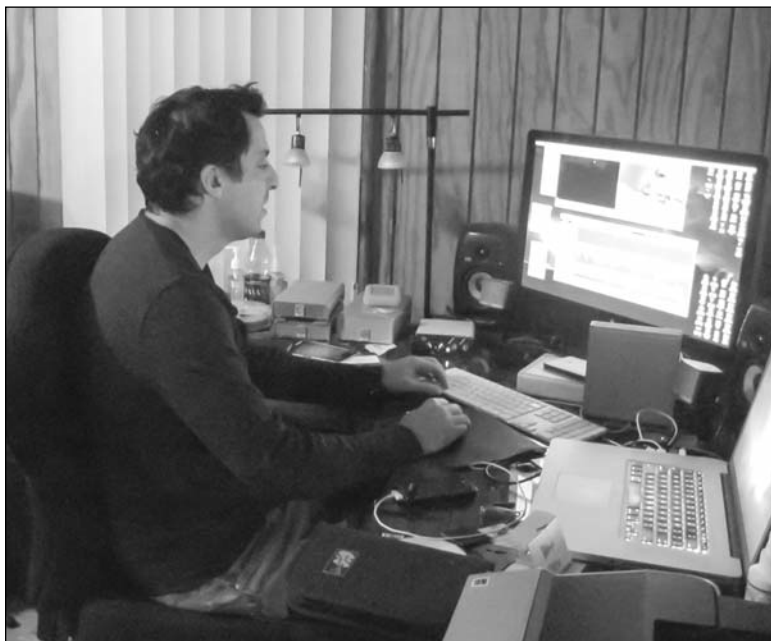
"We're going to show it in Ohio over the holiday," Dodson said. "It will be good. Josh and his family will be there, and this will be the first time we are all kind of together to watch it."

The film can be purchased at the website, www.mylastbreath-film.com for \$10 (digital download), \$15 (DVD) or \$20 (Blu-Ray).



"We're going to show it in Ohio over the holiday. It will be good. Josh and his family will be there, and this will be the first time we are all kind of together to watch it."

– Filmmaker and Longfellow resident Cy Dodson



Cy Dodson works from his home office. His company, Triumph Pictures, works with such entities as the History Channel, Travel Channel, and ESPN. (Photo by Jan Willms)

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NENA

Continued from page 1

asked for discussion on the matter. Eventually Board Member Bill Koncak seconded the motion, but five minutes later sought to withdraw his second.

"I got a copy of Robert's Rules of Order and gave it to Kent (Board Chair) because they couldn't figure out what to do," recalled Walters. The determination was made that he couldn't drop his second.

Board Secretary Phil Duran and Treasurer Emily Antin voiced their objections to the way the motion came up, how the rest of the board didn't know this was coming, and the lack of inclusion of the item on the agenda.

They also asked what the reasons were to fire staff.

"There was very little discussion about staff and what the problems might be," stated former Board Member Marian Streitz, who was one of two community members at the Oct. 23 meeting.

Three board members suggested the vote be postponed until a future meeting to allow for the absent board members to be present, since the whole board was never notified that this matter was going to be discussed.

Board Member Jauli requested that the vote be made by secret ballot.

The ballots were counted by the board chair and Haight.

The vote was 6-3 to terminate Walters and Ulrich. They were immediately escorted from the building and their keys taken.

"I think it was very underhanded," stated Streitz. "I think it was devious. I think it was planned well in advance and waited until the quorum worked their way."

"It is my personal opinion that the board has been acting as if this is their board representing themselves and not representing the neighborhood."

- Marian Streitz, former NENA board member

Board member resignations follow

Board Members Andres Hortillosa, Jill Marckel and Angel Almieda were absent that evening. Hortillosa's resignation had been approved by the board earlier that evening effective Nov. 1.

Board Members Duran and Antin resigned that night, and Marckel resigned soon after. Almieda announced his resignation on Nov. 12.

Those still on the board include Knopp-Schwyn (who has been chair for four years), Jelatis, Koncak, Haight, Jauli, Helena Pikus-Li, and Mark Preston.

Board statement released Nov. 6

On Oct. 30, NENA held a board meeting, but the remaining board members declined to speak about the terminations, despite a request to do so from residents in attendance and City Council Member Andrew Johnson.

Fourteen days after staff were fired the NENA Board released the following statement, in part:

"The Nokomis East Neighborhood Association (NENA) is making a change in administrative leadership because, despite signifi-

cant effort over several months, the board has been unable to rebuild and maintain a positive working relationship with existing staff. The board has regretfully concluded that a change in NENA's day-to-day management was necessary. Maria Fernanda Alcaraz will continue, as Community Outreach Specialist, working with NENA's Latino community." (Editor's Note: You can read the statement in its entirety on page 11.)

However, reports indicate neither Walters nor Ulrich have ever

"When board members are breaking policy, it's my job to make sure everyone is aware of that situation and can act. Sadly, they did not."

- Rita Ulrich, former NENA Executive Director

received letters of reprimand or negative performance reviews, despite statements made at the Oct. 30 meeting that Ulrich had been previously suspended.

"What really upset me was the way it was handled — not allowing retrieval of personal property and two board members telling some residents that the Executive Director had been suspended before. That is not true," maintained community member and former NENA Board Member Cheryl Luger.

"There is no official personnel file held by the board," asserted Streitz.

Ulrich did receive a letter that was hand delivered by Jelatis (who was not an officer at the time) and Chair Knopp-Schwyn in April, but she says it was not signed, nor ever officially approved by the board during an open board meeting.

Was firing retaliation?

Former Board Member Lisa Dunn believes that Walters and Ulrich were fired in retaliation for a letter Ulrich wrote board members in January 2014. In it Ulrich expressed concern about what the Executive Committee (chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer) was doing, and pointed out that according to the bylaws the Executive Committee has no decision-making authority on its own. All decisions must be made by the board as a whole.

In the letter, Ulrich sought to clarify the employment position of Latino Community Organizer Yasmin Ventura as a staff member (as opposed to a contract worker) and pointed out how reviews were done per NENA's policies.

Also, Ulrich discussed the fact that the board had been holding closed executive sessions without stating a purpose, which she noted was a violation of NENA's bylaws. She maintained that it also violated the open meeting laws government bodies

must adhere to—which she said applied to NENA because of its contracts with the city.

According to Walters, the NENA Board began going into closed executive sessions last year on a regular basis. While the board is allowed to go into closed sessions, they are only to discuss legal and personnel matters. "Were those items really being discussed every meeting all year long?" questioned Dunn.

"I think it was bad form," said Streitz, who served on the board from 1995 to 2013. The closed executive sessions she was in were argumentative and hostile, and she said they were part of why she resigned last October.

No minutes have been released to staff or the public of these closed sessions, despite the requirement that they be. Board minutes are not available on the NENA web site.

"The board was getting very secretive and not copying staff on routine emails," noted Ulrich.

"Why did it have to be that hostile?"

As of press time, neither Walters nor Ulrich have been allowed back into the office to pick up their personal items, which are significant after 15 years working in the NENA office.

Ulrich, who had worked for NENA since 1999, is upset about how the terminations were handled. "They never talked to me about it not working out," she said. "It doesn't make sense. Why did it have to be that hostile? It was unwarranted. It was definitely very personal with a couple of people."

She added, "I want to see the neighborhood take back its neighborhood association."

Walters, who has lived in the neighborhood since May 1978, is quite upset about what he believes are lies being circulated by the board regarding himself and Ulrich. He doesn't hope to get his job back, but he does resent the stain on his character. "We are being destroyed and defamed," Walters said.

"They have been strong advocates for local empowerment, having spent endless hours advocating for neighbor's participation rights and funding to make neighborhoods improve their local decision making abilities," said Luger. "They ran a tight financial ship leveraging and stretching every dollar used in neighborhood capital investment and operations, including good financial reports to the board to be used in board decisions."

Attempt to dismiss the board

By mid-November a group of neighborhood residents had banded together in an attempt to call a Special Membership Meeting with the expressed purpose of dismissing the remaining seven board members.

The group submitted a statement to the *Messenger*, which stated in part: "In addition to firing staff without even providing notice to all Board members, they did so irresponsibly, without any transition plans in place or consideration for damage to the organization's finances, programs and reputation. Those same members now plan to self-appoint additional members to fill the eight open seats. More of the same will not restore NENA's integrity or its functioning. We know that replacing the remaining board members with people who will act in the neighborhood's best interest is the first step in rebuilding NENA."

Within days of calling for the meeting, a controversy arose over whether or not the neighbors had the power under state law, and the NENA bylaws, to legally hold a separate meeting with the purpose of dismissing the existing board. The *Messenger* was told that advice was sought by lawyers on both sides of the debate. Those calling for the special meeting canceled it as of Nov. 24, citing the fact that they did not have the financial wherewithal to pay for legal action against the board.

Continued on page 14

"We are being destroyed and defamed."

- Doug Walters, former NENA Assistant Director

"Out of respect for the privacy of former staff members, I decline to comment."

- Vanessa Haight, current board member



NOKOMIS EAST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

A TOWN HALL MEETING to fill Board vacancies:
Thursday, December 11, 7:00 to 8:30 PM,
at the Keewaydin School Cafeteria.

BOARD VACANCIES:

Keewaydin: 2, Minnehaha: 2, Morris Park: 2, Wenonah: 2

Upcoming Meetings:

12/11: Membership/Town Hall Meeting, Keewaydin School Cafeteria, 7:00 to 8:30 PM

12/11: Special Board Meeting, Keewaydin School Cafeteria, 8:30 to 9:00 PM, immediately following the Town Hall Meeting. Board to formally appoint new Board members.

12/18: Board Meeting, time and location TBD.

Meeting locations are subject to change. Please visit www.nokomiseast.org for updates and agenda items.

Upcoming Events:

NENA Night Before New Year's Eve party, Tues., Dec. 30, 5:00 to 8:00 PM, at the Nokomis Community Center.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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Integrating Restorative Justice into our city

By JAN WILLMS

Building community. Giving people the tools they need to resolve conflicts.

A better path to better outcomes in our criminal justice system.

These are all the results of Restorative Justice, a program that is being gradually integrated into the City of Minneapolis. It is about restoring any harm that has been done to a community; victims and offenders come together, and the impact of the offense is made known.

"A simplistic view of restorative justice is that it's just a good alternative in an individual case that would otherwise go to the criminal justice system," said Andrew Johnson, Ward 12 Council Member. "A more complex view is that it only may apply to a scuffle between two teens, and not gun violence. But gun violence is often the result of individuals not having tools to work their problems out in an appropriate way. Restorative justice is about teaching that. It is about conflict resolution."

Johnson is such a strong believer in it that he convened a conference this fall on the topic, bringing together advocates, youth and city leaders for a Youth Summit on Restorative Justice.

Bringing together different generations, former offenders and participants in restorative justice programs, the conference offered attendees an opportunity to learn more about how too many Minneapolis youth are harshly disciplined when more supportive and reparative forms of discipline could be used.

"In a large part, Minneapolis is a tale of two cities within one," Johnson said. "There's a huge disparity within our system. Right now, one in three black men are in prison for the same exact offense, and black male students are four times more likely to get expelled."

Johnson said a recent ACLU report showed that men of color are more likely to be cited for specific crimes. "You see these disparities represented across our city," he continued. "Not just citations and arrests, but also in the education gap, and in socioeconomic and environmental concerns, across the board. We have the worst employment rates in our nation for Afro-American males. Why it's so egregious when it comes to crime, is that we know that people who enter our criminal justice system are not being set up for success. We have the tools to do better, and restorative justice is one of those tools. Again, we have this tale of two cities and here's our chance to close that gap and bring about one Minneapolis where prosperity isn't predictable by your race."

Former Viking Oscar Reed, who has worked for years in the field of restorative justice, addressed the conference about his experience working with students in the St. Louis Park High School. Once restorative justice talking circles were in place in the school, there was a reduction in suspensions as well as absenteeism.

"I got word one day about a fight planned after school. I called a couple of guys, and they were excited and going to watch it. I asked them what had we been talking



Marjorie Grevious makes a point during a recent conference in Minneapolis on restorative justice convened by Ward 12 Council Member Andrew Johnson. (Photo by Jan Willms)

about in circle all these weeks. They told me they got it; no fight happened. It was an example of the power of restorative justice," Reed said.

Johnson cited a study in the San Francisco county jail that implemented the restorative justice program. "It virtually eliminated jail violence and cut violence offenses by 90 percent," he said. "So if we want to cut recidivism rates, we absolutely know restorative justice is far more capable of that than our current punitive justice system, which doesn't pretend to rehabilitate."

Johnson said he has yet to meet a person who hasn't made a mistake in his or her life. "Everybody's made a mistake, and it's

important that we acknowledge that," he noted. "Because if our criminal justice system doesn't adequately acknowledge that, then how can we call it justice?"

Sarah Johnson, a youth advocate attorney, told the conference participants that there is a sense of urgency for restorative justice. "Minority youths have much higher contact with our legal system," she said. "Black youths are arrested at more than six times the rate of white youths. We are making some incremental progress, but it's not good enough."

She said policy changes need to be made, getting restorative justice in schools city-wide and making it a mandatory part of the court process.

Johnson sees restorative justice as a program that can affect all ages.

"We have a lot of opportunity across the whole system, and I see that personally overwhelming to think about how it stretches so far beyond the city. But you can say that about everything, like climate change. You can't let that paralyze you from action," Johnson explained, "and you have to start somewhere."

He emphasized that support systems need to be in place, or individuals coming out of prison will be limited in their options. "If they can't get a job or good housing, what are they going to do? Too often they will fall into the same old patterns."

He said that starting restorative justice programs with youth is a strong area to focus on, if you're going to disrupt the cycle of business as usual. "I think the chance to do that is getting to individuals when they're young and making sure they are set up for success at a young age, because often times young people are not committing egregious crimes; they're committing smaller crimes and go on to be adults who commit far larger crimes."

According to Johnson, the city currently spends \$40,000 a year on restorative justice programs, yet over \$150 million a year for the Police Department and \$7.5 million for prosecution under the City Attorney's office.

He said that funding is definitely an aspect of promoting restorative justice, and he thinks the city could do better. "But I also think we need to make sure we are integrating these approaches at every level," he advised. He said he would like to see conflict resolution in both the schools and the community.

He said the city is putting together some specific policy initiatives that will be introduced by spring.

"Restorative justice is so applicable to everything; relationships, work, family, friends, and it just so happens it also relates to crime and violence," Johnson said. "I would encourage people to be a part of this solution, to work with groups such as the Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice Partnership and help young people with those communication skills and conflict resolution skills. Help them become a stronger part of the community. If we don't do it, who will?"



Ward 12 Council Member Andrew Johnson addresses conference attendees. "We have the tools to do better, and restorative justice is one of those tools," he said. (Photo by Jan Willms)



Sherenia Gibbs listens as Fred DuBose explains what he has learned about restorative justice. (Photo by Jan Willms)

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In Our Community

Messenger

Send us your news! When you submit your press release it will be considered for both the newspaper as well as the Messenger Facebook page (Facebook.com/LongfellowNokomisMessenger). You can also go to our website, LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com and enter the information in the online Event Calendar.

Pizza night set at Bethany Lutheran

Christmas Warm-Up Movie & Pizza Night is planned at Bethany Lutheran Church (3901 36th Ave. S.) for Fri., Nov. 28. The evening will start at 5pm with a pre-dinner kids' Christmas movie. Then make and eat pizza together at 5:30, followed by kids' activities during the showing of a vintage Christmas movie for the adults. \$5 per family suggested donation.

Hiawatha Y Club Christmas trees

The Hiawatha Y Service Club and the YMCA are again sponsoring a Christmas Tree Sale at Hiawatha Ave. and 42nd St. The profits are used by the YMCA for programs and youth scholarships. The lot is open on Fri., Nov. 28, 10am-7:30pm and then on Mondays through Fridays 5-8pm and on Saturdays and Sundays from 10am-8pm. The Hiawatha Y Service Club is a service organization to the YMCA for the purpose of serving the community.

Study Center open every Wednesday

"Student Study Center" is held every Wednesday from 3:30 to 5:30pm at Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church, 4101 37th Ave. S. High school and college students can come to the church for an optimal study atmosphere with quiet space and light snacks. Walk-ins welcome! This study center will be supervised. If you have questions call 612-722-9527.

Healthy seniors plan party Dec. 16

Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors and Minneapolis Community Education will hold their annual Holiday Party for seniors on Tues., Dec. 16, at 10:30am, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 E. 31st St. Seniors will be able to enjoy live music, lunch and door prizes in the basement gymnasium. Doors will open at 10am. All seniors who reside in greater Longfellow and Seward neighborhoods are welcome to attend this free event (but a nominal free-will donation is appreciated). Registration is not required. Call Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors at 612-729-5799 for more information.

\$54.5M awarded for local development

The Hennepin County Board approved the transfer of \$54.5 million to the Hennepin County Housing and Redevelopment

Authority (HCHRA) for the acquisition, development and construction of the South Minneapolis Regional Human Services Center at Hiawatha Ave. and E. Lake St., at their board meeting in mid-November. The majority of the property is currently owned by Minneapolis Public Schools. The construction of the building and parking facility is part of a plan to strategically place human services centers to improve access to services for county residents. An additional request for land acquisition, land sales and leasing of property was approved by the Hennepin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

Sanford stages production Dec. 5-6

Project SUCCESS stages "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" on Fri., Dec. 5 and Sat., Dec. 6, at 7pm at Sanford Middle School, 3524 42nd Ave. S.

"You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" is a universal story about how finding our happiness and sharing it with others can shape who we are and where we want to go in life. Students began rehearsals in October and rehearsed every day - acting, dancing and singing - for eight weeks with professional artists and quality sound, lighting, sets and costumes.

Project SUCCESS uses hands-on theater experiences in the schools to help students build confidence, life skills and build peer and community support. Nearly all youth who want to participate in the production are given a role in front of, or behind the scenes. This fall's musical, "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" at Sanford has more than 80 Sanford Middle School students involved in the production.

HoliGaze schedules four performances

Patrick's Cabaret will hold their "HoliGaze Bawdy Boutique & Show" on Fri., Dec. 5 and Sat., Dec. 6. Boutique opens at 6pm and performances start at 7:30pm and 8:45pm. Admission is \$5 and includes three raffle tickets.

Performances include burlesque, bawdy music, spoken word, drag shows, vendors, food, drinks, and some feisty Cabaret charm. Bawdy Boutique vendors include Moshiki Kaybird Vintage, Boudior Belle, Musical Comedy Editions, Robert Guttke, and Bridget Faricy.

Featured performers include Thadra Sheridan (show curator), Paul Canada (spicy spoken word), Courtney McClean (bawdy music), Sheila Rouse (Friday burlesque), Sarah Gordon (Saturday burlesque), Tom Cassidy (performance art), Kiss Kiss Slap (improv), and a special drag guest!

Additional raffle tickets can

be purchased for \$2 each, 7 for \$10, or 15 for \$20. Choose between tickets, getaways, dates, what used to be called smut, food, drink, and more worth \$25-\$100! Special raffle prizes include a vacation home getaway in Buffalo, MN, a case of wine, budoir photography session, original art, passes to the Twin Cities' Roots, Rock, & Deep Blues Festival in July 2015, and much more!

NEBA to light holiday tree Nov. 29

The second annual Nokomis Tree Lighting will be held Sat., Nov. 29, 4-6pm in the Oxendale's Market parking lot and presented by the Nokomis East Business Association (NEBA). NEBA is proud to welcome Steve's Tire & Auto as a new sponsor for the 20-foot holiday tree with lights provided by Nokomis Hardware. The tree will be lit up at 5:30pm.

New to the event this year is a special Dog Park outside of Oxendale's, sponsored by Wendy's Doghouse, the Canine Coach, and Now Boarding. Dog lovers and owners can bring their dog to the event and get information on neighborhood pet resources and a free photo of your pup from 2nd Truth Photography.

Food will be onsite for purchase from Kabomelette Food Truck, Boss' Pizza and Chicken, and Town Hall Lanes will be selling merchandise and sampling beverages.

Santa Claus will make a special appearance inside the store, hosted by Brushed Monkey, with free pictures taken by professional photographer Pamela Diedrich. U.S. Bank will provide family fun gift bags given to all kids while supplies last. Kids will also be able to pick out a free book, provided by the Friends of the Nokomis Library.

For additional information on the free Nokomis Tree Lighting event, visit www.nokomiseastba.com.

Senior yoga classes continue weekly

Twice weekly yoga classes for seniors, for only \$3/class, is being sponsored by the Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors! Friday classes focus on gentle yoga where you'll learn breathing techniques, balance poses and relaxation methods. Monday classes focus on healthy, strong bones and you will learn safe movements to sustain and improve skeletal health. Classes are held at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 E. 31st St. from 10-11am. No registration is required - just show up. For questions, call Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors at 612-729-5799.

Epworth schedules weekly meet-ups

Join your neighbors at "Cabin Fever" for a weekly play date for kids and their caregivers on Wednesdays from 9:30-11:30am, at Epworth United Methodist Church (corner of 32nd St. and 37th Ave. S.) through Dec. 17; then, beginning from Jan. 7 through Mar. 25. Epworth will provide toys and snacks and a safe place for community, asking only that caregivers supervise their children.

Holiday lunch set at Bethany Dec. 13

The Women's Christmas Lunch is planned for Sat., Dec. 13, noon-2pm at Bethany Lutheran Church (3901 36th Ave. S.). The program will be by award-winning Minnesota musician and storyteller Jack Pearson: "The Christmas Hope Chest" - Jack brings new life to familiar carols with his guitar, banjo and fiddle. There will be a collection of mittens, hats and scarves for Hiawatha/Howe Schools. This luncheon is appropriate for all ages and tickets are \$8. Make reservations by Dec. 7 with the church office: 612-729-9376 or email office@bethany-on36th.com.

Advent Workshop planned Nov. 30

Come make decorations for your home or gifts for your family at the Advent Workshop Sun., Nov. 30, 3-6pm at Epworth United Methodist Church, 3207 37th Ave. S. Enjoy chances to turn photos into pictures and frames, or create the perfect centerpiece for your table. A lot of family fun and it all ends with a Mystery dinner delivered by the church youth.

Events scheduled in December at MCLC

Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church, 4101 37th Ave. S., is planning numerous events in December.

Every Monday night there is an AA meeting at 7pm, and every Tuesday and Wednesday night there is an AA meeting at 7:30pm. On Thursday night there is an NA meeting at 7:30pm. All are welcome to attend and they will be meeting during the holiday season.

On Tue., Dec. 9, at 6:30pm, the Adoption Support Group for Teens and Parents will meet.

The community is invited to the annual "Longest Night" service at MCLC on Sun., Dec. 21 at 4pm. This quiet, reflective, prayerful service is designed for those dealing with grief and loss as the holidays approach. This

year's theme is "Pain and Promise: the Gift of Memories" and will include readings, time for reflection, and a candle-lighting ritual followed by a time of fellowship and refreshments. All those who are dealing with grief are invited to join in.

Bossen Field to get redesign

Bossen Field Park, 5601 28th Ave. S., will have a new master plan designed starting in January 2015. The plan will guide an anticipated two-phase-construction to update and improve the park. Construction will begin as soon as fall 2015 and is expected to continue for 1-2 years.

The Bossen Field Master Plan will be developed with the assistance of nearby community members and citywide recreation participants. This project will have an appointed Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to help guide the design and prioritize improvements to the park.

The composition and charge of the CAC was presented to the MPRB Planning Committee at their Nov. 19 meeting. It will now go to the Full Board of Commissioners for approval on Dec. 5.

Community members interested in volunteering to participate on the CAC will find an application on the MPRB project website after Dec. 4. See the project page for more information by visiting www.minneapolisparcs.org and search for Bossen Field Park or look for the link under Design & Planning/Current Projects. Those interested are also encouraged to sign up for e-mail updates.

Winter Frolic scheduled Dec. 5-7

"The Seward Winter Frolic: Art in the Hood" celebrates its 15th year of highlighting local artists and businesses with a weekend of festivities Dec. 5-7.

The weekend kicks off with an evening of food, wine and performances including music, poetry and dance at the Playwrights' Center on Fri., Dec. 5 from 6:30-9:30pm. Proceeds will benefit The Seward Neighborhood Group.

The Seward Art Crawl will take place on Sat., Dec. 6 from 10am-5pm and Sun., Dec. 7, from noon-5pm. More than 60 artists will be displaying and selling their work at local businesses, art and home-studios, galleries and churches. All venues are within walking distance throughout the Seward Neighborhood. Free pedicab rides will also be available from 1 to 5pm.

Visit www.sewardarts.org for more information.



Kay Hanson, co-owner of Family Estate Sales. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

Shop the Minnehaha Mile

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Chicago may have its destination shopping district, the Magnificent Mile along Michigan Ave., but Minneapolis can now also boast its own: the Minnehaha Mile. While not quite as posh, the emerged and emerging shops will likely appeal more to our Minnesota sensibilities of thrift and creativity.

How to best describe the eight businesses that make up this shopping corridor? While each is unique, the common thread is re-use. The goods sold here are vintage, re-purposed, gently used, gorgeously upcycled, rediscovered, and typically, one-of-a-kind.

Stretching along Minnehaha Ave. from East Lake St. to the Falls, this cluster of like-minded businesses was awarded a \$3,000 grant from the City of Minneapolis' Great Streets Business District Support Program. The Longfellow Business Association (LBA) got the ball rolling and secured extra funds from member LBA businesses to generate some start-up PR. The monies donated went toward branding, and creating some nice-looking maps of the Minnehaha Mile available in all of the participating shops.

Last year the *Messenger* ran an article about the businesses open at the time, but several new ones have been added to the Minnehaha Mile this year.

Kay Hanson and her partner Mike Atkinson opened Family Estate Sales (3904 Minnehaha Ave.) in June. Kay has been in the antiques business since the



Lucille Neal, who reigns over Lady Lucille. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

1970's, and is thrilled to have hung her shingle practically around the corner from the house where she has lived for more than 60 years. Costume jewelry is her specialty, but the shop carries all kinds of nifty items. Though Kay and Mike have no additional employees, they get plenty of help from family and friends. She calls these

helpers, "Pickers," and says, "They're the folks that call us up with tips, knowing what we like, and they tell us where to find great stuff." In her spare time she loves to watch American Pickers, a show on the History Channel about two antique dealers from Iowa who dust off and sell things

Continued on page 9



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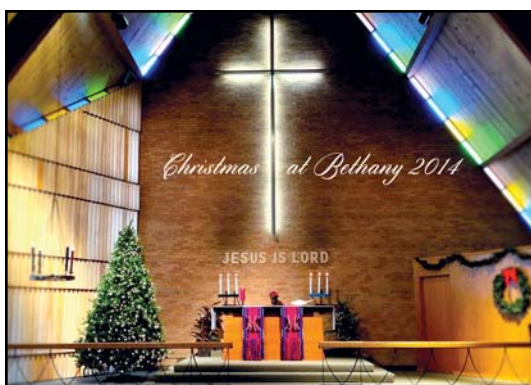
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A cut above the rest

Article and all photos by **MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN**

The Meat Raffle held at Patrick's Cabaret last month wasn't your typical fundraiser. But then, nothing about Patrick's Cabaret is typical, so why should their fundraiser be?

Scott Artley, curator of performing arts at Patrick's since January, really wanted to do something different this year. "What about making the fundraiser a performance? Why not commission artists to create interactions based on good old-fashioned Minnesota games?" he wondered.

It was performance art with prizes. In the center of the Cabaret, tables were surrounded by contestants playing "Meat Bingo." A dance party cakewalk was gyrating in the corner. A gymnastic form of Twister was being played without a mat, the contestants covered with large colored dots. There was carnival darts, bean bag toss, fishing out of a hat and, last but not least, crop art making. The result was child's play for grownups, and it worked.

Patrick's Cabaret is a grassroots, community, arts-producing organization that has been supporting artists in their growth and development for decades. They encourage performers of all experience levels to try new things, take risks, and present works in progress. The Cabaret is a home and a point of intersection for emerging and established artists working on the edge of culture, whether because of radical content, experimental form or cultural marginalization.

Because all of the games were interactive, energy was created by the artists and the ticket holders playing together. This is a lot like what happens during a regular performance at the Cabaret. The performance space, located in an

old fire station at 3010 Minnehaha Ave. S., is intimate. There is a synergy that has developed over time between the artists and the people who support them. 100% of the proceeds from the box office every night go right back to the artists. The Cabaret receives funding from a variety of sources both public and private and the hat that gets passed at intermission is another dependable source of generosity and good will. Sara Jo Lehrer, communications coordinator, said, "Ours is a very unusual business model."

To round out the fundraiser, people were able to bid on "dates" with the artists of Patrick's Cabaret. Scott Artley served as auctioneer, auctioning off an evening with several artists while the bids flooded in—some even arriving by cell phone. What were these mystery dates? Storyteller Heidi Arneson's Scary Backyard Campfire included a toasty blaze, all the s'mores you can eat, and a super scary ghost story. Or, rock the night away with Chris "Bacon" Tarboy (the undisputed local Karaoke King) at the Vegas Lounge in the wilds of NE Minneapolis. Each winning bidder received a meat product as congratulations: SPAM was in the house, as well as Canadian bacon, pork chops and pepperoni. There was something for every carnivore...

Check out the many opportunities at the Cabaret this fall: their web address is www.patrickscabaret.org. There are several cabarets offered each month, as well as music events, West African and modern dance, evolutionary yoga and more. The space is also available for rental at very reasonable prices. As Artley said, "We have established a community around the art that happens here in Minneapolis - be on the lookout for us!"



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Body Parts Twister required spot-on listening and lots of flexibility.



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Tension ran high all night as Meat Bingo played on. Note "bacon coat" worn by gentleman on the right.



The highly entertaining Crop Art judges, the Ladies of the Lakes.



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Minnehaha Mile

Continued from page 7

they find in old barns—"Rusty gold" they call it. To hear Kay talk, there is a strong element of treasure hunting in this line of work.

Right next door, actually sharing the same address, is Lady Lucille, owned by the highly original Lucille Neal. For years Lucille ran her business out of a pink and black 1959 Shasta Air Flight (a travel trailer) with wings on the back! Since July, she has taken up residence on Minnehaha Ave., but still hits the road on summer weekends to travel the circuit of classic car shows across Minnesota. Lucille was born in Idaho, but because her mother went into labor there when they were on a road trip, she's not sure if it "counts." The family lived in six different states before settling in Minnesota, which means Lucille absorbed a lot of Americana growing up. She describes her personal and professional vision as being, "A pin up, retro, rock-a-billy lifestyle." Her clothing concept is called retro-reproductions, which means the items are made with new materials but based on designs from the 1950's--the line is colorful and beautifully constructed. A trip to Lady Lucille is a super fun blast from the past.

Toni Johnson and Kevin Hauser opened Turquoise Vintage at 3456 Minnehaha Ave. in August. Toni had previously operated the store as Tumbleweeds, but with a new business partner and the talents he brought, a name change made sense. Kevin is a terrific wood refinisher and upholsterer, as can be seen by the many pieces of 1950's furniture on the sales floor. Toni's passion is finding homes for things, reflecting that, "There's so much waste in the world, why would I want to add to it?" She was kind enough to provide a little history lesson, explaining that "A lot of people use these words interchangeably, but they mean different things. Retro goes back 20-30 years, and just feels funky. Vintage is 30-70 years old, and



Toni Johnson, co-owner of the newly re-named Turquoise Vintage. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

something antique would have been around for a long time, 70-100+ years."

While the Minnehaha Mile proprietors are selling a lot of old stuff, they are doing it in a new way. According to Toni, "Our collaborative model of business development is special."

The shop owners had a vision of collaboration from the beginning, and the Longfellow Business Association helped them solidify it. They advertise and market as a group, not as individual businesses. They encourage shoppers to visit

all the stores, and cheerfully offer copies of the Minnehaha Mile shopping map to anyone who comes through their doors. The atmosphere among the shop owners is non-competitive, as everyone is selling something different.

Time Bomb, opening this month (when we went to press the opening date was "late November"), is the latest addition to the Minnehaha Mile. Located in the old Falls Hardware building at 4008 Minnehaha Ave., their refurbished building will house several different vendors. Owners Andrea and Scott Poague have a love for all things mid-century, modern, art-deco, psychedelic and retro. If your holiday shopping list needs a little inspiration, head over there for collectible toys, retro candy and soda, or locally produced art lovingly re-made of relics from the past. Check out their website at www.timebombvintage.com for information about their opening date and participating vendors.

Minnehaha Ave. is scheduled for major road repair beginning in early 2015 and ending in fall of 2016. Phase I of the re-construction will involve 46th to 38th streets; phase II will involve 38th St. to E. Lake St. Business owners hope that they can build customer loyalty before construction starts. They will remain open for business during the construction and, as we all know, that can be very hard - especially for small business owners.

Come on out and explore the Minnehaha Mile, learn where your favorite businesses are, identify their cross streets and make a point to continue supporting them through the months ahead.



The proposed exterior for the soon-to-be-completed Time Bomb, located in the old Falls Hardware building. Photo courtesy of Andrea Poague.

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Nokomis resident publishes book

Teresa Thomas, Nokomis East resident and Director of MN Women In Networking (WIN), has published a new book, "How to Tap Into the Power of Win/Win Connections: Your Guidebook for Confident and Effective Networking." The guidebook, with easy-to-implement tips, templates, checklists and section for notes, helps new and seasoned business people learn how to make more meaningful connections with person to person networking.

A networking expert and professional speaker, Thomas energizes and empowers. Her guidebook distills her eighteen year career as an inspiring connector into easy-to-follow tips, ideas for overcoming networking jitters, and successful strategies for building your own A-list professional network.

The book is available for purchase at www.teresa-thomas.com.



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You Gave to the Max!

Thank you to all who Gave to the Max on Thursday, November 13! LCC raised more than it ever has on Give to the Max Day. These donations will go towards making Longfellow a safer, healthier and more fun neighborhood! We are so grateful to all who donate to us, thank you again.

Public Art & Streetscaping Committee Volunteers Needed!

Longfellow Community Council in partnership with Hennepin County is looking for creative volunteers to help develop a comprehensive public art plan and long-term maintenance strategy for streetscaping improvement along the Minnehaha corridor. This project will stretch from Lake Street to 46th street along Minnehaha Avenue with the construction beginning April of 2015

and wrapping up November 2016. A unique public art and streetscaping campaign along the Minnehaha corridor can increase our community's sense of place and identity. Public art can enhance the cultural, social and economic value of a neighborhood and we would love to have you involved in the process. Please contact Joe Sturm for more information 612.722.4529 ext. 13 or joe@longfellow.org.

Join the Neighborhood Development Committee Today!

We are seeking new members for the Longfellow Community Council's (LCC) Neighborhood Development Committee (NDC). The NDC meets the 3rd Monday of the month at the LCC office (2727 26th Ave. South) from 6:30 -8:30pm. NDC works to advance

and guide economic development and redevelopment in the greater Longfellow community. Residents participate on the committee, as well as on specific task forces, to monitor and influence development projects. The committee is also responsible for providing resident input on zoning applications, specifically for commercial and multi-family housing developments. Please Contact Joe for more information joe@longfellow.org or 612.722.4529 ext. 13.

Chili Champ Named!

The Longfellow Annual Chili Cook Off Fundraiser was Saturday, November 15 at Gandhi Mahal. We had a great turn out for both chili and event attendees, and are grateful to all who came and either made chili or cast votes! Gandhi Mahal is owed a special thank you for hosting the event and providing utensils, tables, chili and a great atmosphere. It was very exciting when about a dozen firefighters from the Local 82 showed up with their chili, fire engine, coloring books and free smoke detectors. We would also like to thank Forage Modern Workshop, Angie Pabón, Soderberg Flowers & Gifts, and Summit Brewing Company for donating raffle and Chili prizes.



LCC President Eric Day presents the Chili Trophy to overall winner Trevor Russell.

The Winners by category:

Vegetarian: Mariel Alper with Dessert Chili

Spicy: Lucas Riedi

Meat: Trevor Russell

Business: TIE! Between Fireroast Café and the Firefighters



Lucas Riedi wins Spicy category for the second year in a row. Photo credit Jessica Buchberger

And the new Chili Champ of Longfellow and the recipient of the new amazing trophy is Trevor Russell! He really brought the competition to a new level with his chili, a choice of toppings and a home brewed jalapeno beer chaser. Congratulations Trevor! Thanks again to everyone involved, this was one of our best events ever!

President's Message

Eric Day,
President of the Board

November was a great month for the Longfellow Community Council! Give to the Max Day and the LCC Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser brought out the best in our wonderful community. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who donated and participated with these great events. With so many worthy causes and organizations to choose from on Give to the Max Day, your support of LCC means the world.

The Chili Cook-Off was not only a successful fundraiser, but it was also a lot of fun. One of the areas of focus for the LCC is increased support of our local business community. Fortunately for the LCC, this support has been returned in a big way – it was great to see so much support from our local business community this year. A huge THANK YOU to Gandhi Mahal for hosting the event and entering a chili. Jeff from Fireroast Café, was back with his award-winning chili and ended up tying the fire-fighters from the Local 182 for Best Business Chili. We're happy to say that Jeff's chili is available regularly at Fireroast Café and is the perfect antidote for this January-like weather. It was also great to see new and upcoming businesses getting involved. Urban Forage Winery & Cider House, a soon to be operating business on East Lake Street, entered a chili, and will hopefully have successfully completed their Kickstarter campaign by the time you read this. I would also like to



thank the local businesses that generously donated prizes to the event – Forage Modern Workshop and Soderberg's Floral who donated gift certificates, and Junket: Tossed & Found for the donation of the parts for the LCC Chili Champ Cup, which will be a traveling trophy awarded to the winner of the Best Overall Chili. Congratulations to LCC Board Member Trevor Russell for taking home the trophy this year!

Another area of particular focus for the Longfellow Community Council (and a huge part of the reason the council exists) is Community Engagement. For me, as for many, the colder weather, the holiday season, and the end of the year, bring a time of reflection and introspection. This has been particularly true this year as my wife and I welcomed a daughter into the world on November 13, 2014. In contemplating my daughter and her future, one of the things I think about is what type of community I want my children to be raised in. This question leads to others about, what is community, how is it built and how is it strengthened? I feel so

fortunate to live in an area where community is so important to so many. LCC has made improved community engagement a priority over this past year. The fruits of these efforts have been apparent in the monthly LCC community happy hours. These happy hours are family friendly affairs and offer a great opportunity for people to meet their neighbors and some of the LCC staff and board. It has been great to see and meet different people at each event. Our October General Membership Meeting also had a number of first time participants – which was wonderful to see!

It is great that there are so many ways to connect with our neighbors - Facebook, e-democracy, or Next Door - and I would encourage people to join in however possible. At the end of the day, however, there is no substitute for old fashioned one-on-one, face-to-face interaction. I know that can be difficult, especially in the winter, but would like to invite and encourage everyone to get out there and meet your neighbors and talk about what is going on in your lives and the community. To connect with the LCC sign up for our email alerts and "like" and follow us on Facebook. Or better yet, volunteer on one of our committees! 2014 has been a great year for our community and we'll continue the work in 2015 to make our community an even better place to live, work and play!

As always, we are so grateful for our volunteers and invite folks to get involved. Contact the LCC Office for more information. Thanks again for your continued support and I'll see you around the neighborhood!

COOPER HOWE

LONGFELLOW



HIAWATHA

Longfellow Community Council

2727 26th Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55406

612.722.4529 • www.longfellow.org

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JoAnna Lund, Community Engagement Coordinator
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NENA (Nokomis East Neighborhood Association)

BY HELENA PIKUS LI, NENA AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVE

Town Hall Meeting and Night Before New Year's Eve

NOTE from NENA Board Chair Kent Knopp-Schwyn: The NENA organization currently comprised of seven (7) Board members and a part-time staff member, is diligently working to ensure that NENA continues to fulfill its mission of serving the grassroots needs of the neighborhood and its residents while maintaining the ongoing success of popular community-wide events. Thank you to the community members who have attended our recent meetings, reached out by phone or email, and those who have already committed to helping out during our transition. We welcome your contributions and input to the organization.

General Membership/ Town Hall Meeting on Dec. 11

The NENA Board of Directors currently has eight vacancies. As the Bylaws require the Board to fill by appointment (not election, unfortunately), the Board, desiring neighborhood participation in this important process, invites residents to a Dec. 11 meeting from 7-9pm at the Keewaydin School Cafeteria, 5209 30th Ave. S.

From 7-8:30pm, the current Board will introduce itself and outline the responsibilities and expectations of Board members. Board candidates will have an opportunity to express their interest in serving, speak with residents within their neighborhoods, and describe their unique skills and ability to enhance the capacity of the Board. Facilitators will assist table discussions and each neighborhood will make a recommendation of up to two candidates to the Board. The eight new Board candidates must live in the neighborhood (Keewaydin, Wenonah, Minnehaha and Morris Park) that they will represent. The boundaries of these neighborhoods are shown in the map on the NENA website www.nokomiseast.org, on the map in the West window of the NENA office, and will be re-

Upcoming Meetings:

12/11: Membership/Town Hall Meeting, Keewaydin School Cafeteria, 7-8:30pm
 12/11: Special Board Meeting, Keewaydin School Cafeteria, 8:30-9pm
 12/18: Board Event, TBD
 1/8 & 1/22: Board Meetings, TBD

Upcoming Events:

11/29: NEBA Tree Lighting event, Oxendale's, 4-6pm
 12/30: NENA Night Before New Year's Eve party, Nokomis Community Center, 5-8pm

Web:

<http://www.nokomiseast.org>
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Nokomiseast>
 Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NokomisEast>
 General Email: NENA@nokomiseast.org
 Chair: chair@nokomiseast.org
 Volunteer: volunteer@nokomiseast.org
 Phone: 612-724-5652

viewed at the meeting. The Board will briefly convene from 8:30-9pm to discuss and appoint seats. This is a very important meeting and the Board urges neighbors to volunteer for positions and participate in the selection process.

When all seats are filled, as prescribed by the Bylaws, the NENA Board will have fifteen (15) members, including three "Neighborhood" representatives from each of its four neighborhoods, Keewaydin, Wenonah, Minnehaha and Morris Park, and three "At Large" representatives. Please take note that each neighborhood currently has only one of the three allotted representatives (the three At-Large positions are filled).

15th Annual Night Before New Year's Eve

The 15th Annual Night Before New Year's Eve (NBNYE) Party will take place on Tue., Dec. 30, 2014, from 5-8pm at the Nokomis Community Center, 2401 E. Minnehaha Pkwy. The



free, family-friendly event features old-fashioned hayrides and marshmallow roasting at the bonfire. Indoor activities include food and beverages, carnival games, crafts, fortune telling, live music, strolling magician, photo booth and a DJ with dance contests and prizes for kids of all ages. Father Time will ring in the New Year with the traditional countdown, complete with noisemakers, at 7:55. Extra parking is available in the overflow lot east of the Center and below the center along E. Lake Nokomis Pkwy. Shuttle service to satellite parking lots will be provided, and advertised in flyers and social media. The event is free, but donations to offset the cost are greatly appreciated. The Night Before New Year's Eve event could not take place without generous donations and volunteer hours of community members, Nokomis Community Center, MPRB and neighborhood businesses.

Volunteers Needed!

Night Before New Year's Eve volunteers are needed for delivery and set-up (Dec. 29-30), Decorating (Dec. 30 in the afternoon), greeting, games in the gym, food prep and service, crafts, outside activities, transportation and cleanup.

NENA also seeks writers, photographers, web designers, craftspeople, event managers, and administrative assistants for various projects throughout the year. Sign-up via VolunteerSpot at <http://vols.pt/hVMj4B>, email volunteer@nokomiseast.org, or call the NENA office at 612-724-5652.

Continued on page 15



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Wednesday, December 24
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 11:00 p.m. Candlelight Service



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Public statement by the NENA Board of Directors regarding staff changes

Adopted by the NENA Board on Nov. 6, 2014

The Nokomis East Neighborhood Association (NENA) is making a change in administrative leadership because, despite significant effort over several months, the Board has been unable to rebuild and maintain a positive working relationship with existing staff. The Board has regretfully concluded that a change in NENA's day-to-day management was necessary. Maria Fernanda Alcaraz will continue, as Community Outreach Specialist, working with NENA's Latino community. Over the next few months the Board will refocus the organization's energy on serving the neighborhood and its residents by: encouraging resident participation; fostering neighborhood communication and engagement; and managing projects that maintain and improve the character and vitality of the neighborhood. The NENA Board will continue to communicate with neighborhood residents through the NENA website and will resume regular, monthly Membership/Town Meetings beginning in December. Membership Meetings are to communicate, to listen and to engage our neighbors, businesses and other organizations in a grass roots planning process for NENA projects and activities going forward. Board members and current staff will be responding to email, phone messages and walk-in traffic, until NENA can hire an interim Director to reorganize and manage day-to-day operations. We regret any delays and inconveniences this may cause. ... Dates, times and locations of upcoming Board and Membership meetings will be posted on the NENA website and announced in the *Longfellow Nokomis Messenger*.

Here comes the judge...

Reflections on being a first-time election judge in Minneapolis

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

The mid-term election on Tue., Nov. 4 was the day I stepped into a new role and became an election judge. The title sounds a little intimidating, but the job is not. Anyone who is eligible to vote in Minnesota and is able to speak, read and write in English can be one. Like many judges I spoke with, I had thought about doing this every time I came to vote for the last several years, but never quite got around to it. I'm glad I finally did!

As an election judge, you are required to attend a two hour training several weeks before the election. The city of Minneapolis enlisted the help of 1,960 election judges for the election. As a judge, you can be compensated for your time at the rate of \$11.20/ hour, or you can decline payment and serve as a volunteer. The Department of Election and Voter Services becomes the largest work force in the City each election day.

One of my personal goals for becoming an election judge was to commit to memory my ward and precinct numbers—for some reason, they never would stick. Now, after the election, I'm proud to say I still remember that I live and vote in Ward 2, Precinct 8. The City of Min-



All flags and signage were put in place by election judges.

neapolis has 13 wards and 125 precincts (those are the places where we vote). Each ward has a council member representing it at City Hall.

As an election judge, you are required to take a legally binding oath. With right hand lifted, you are sworn in by the head judge in your precinct before you start your shift, saying: "I solemnly swear that I will perform the duties of election judge according to law and to the best of my ability, and will diligently endeavor to prevent fraud, deceit and abuse in conducting this election. I will perform my duties in a fair and impartial manner, and not attempt to create an advantage for my party or my candidate." If you are a person who cares about the process of free elections, these are actually sig-

nificant words to vow.

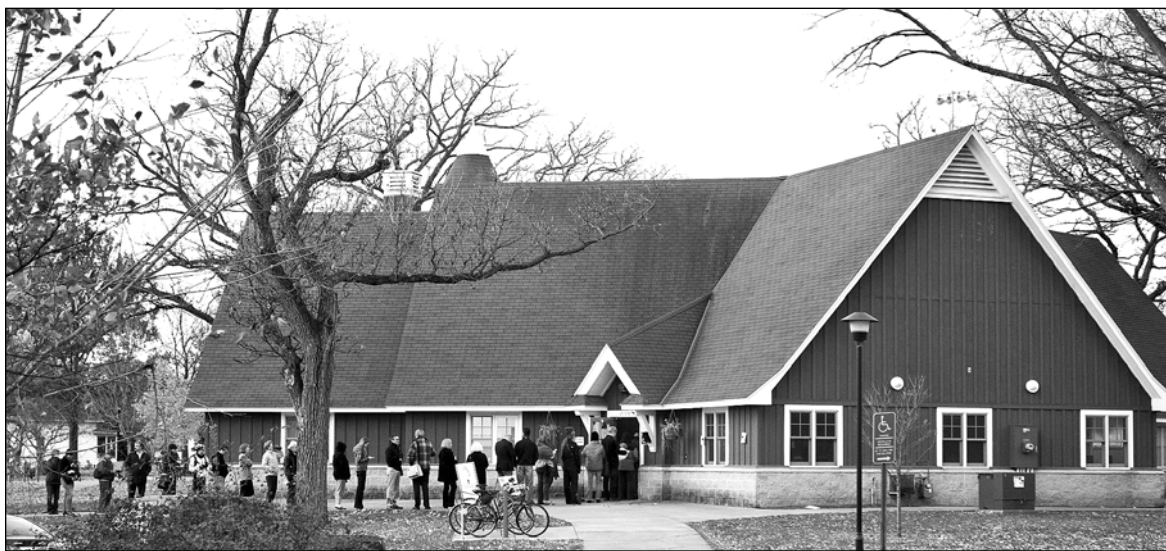
I served as election judge at my polling place in Brackett Park. It's approximately 50' from my house, so an added benefit was that I got to see many of my neighbors voting.

In the park building foyer, a non-partisan program called Kids Voting Minneapolis was staffing a table where school-age kids could participate in mock-voting. The program, which has been around for 10 years, aims to partner with schools and families in preparing students to become informed voters.

Election judges serve in several different roles. The greeter stands in the entry way and directs voters to where they need to go. Registration judges register new voters, and roster judges sign in voters who registered in advance of election day. Ballot judges hand voters their ballots and demonstration judges show how to mark them (be careful - the ballot has two sides!). The ballot counter judge oversees the ballot box area and hands out the familiar, red "I Voted" stickers. During the eight hour shift (which either covers the 7am opening or the 8pm closing of the polls), election judges rotate through the different roles. You get to try your hand at each one.

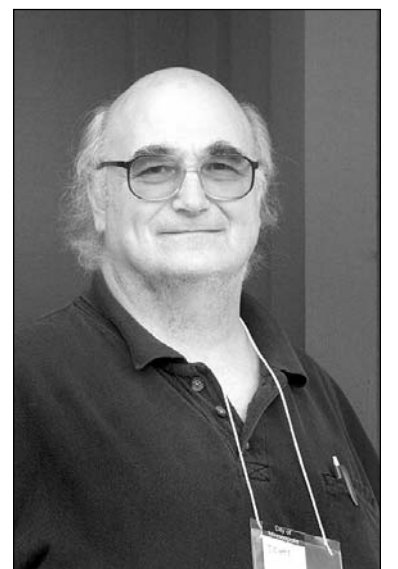


Margie O'Loughlin, article author, flanked by two of the helpful fellows who packed up all the election equipment and put it back into storage til next time.



The Brackett Park polling place had a line formed before the polls opened at 7am. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

In years past, high school students aged 16+ could serve as election judges but had limited responsibilities. This year, they were invited to participate in the full training and could assume the same responsibilities as adult election judges. Not surprisingly, participation of students increased by nearly 40%. Aidan Denison, a junior at South High School, was a terrific ambassador as a student election judge. She worked the full day, both shifts, and said, "Until two days ago, I didn't even know that we were getting paid." She was there because she's interested in the electoral process, and grew up in a family where her Mom organized political campaigns for a living. Helping out was a way of life in their family, and she was often recruited to stick stamps on envelopes in hopes of reaching people and getting them excited about issues.



John Drucker, head election judge for Ward 2, Precinct 8. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

Minnesota Secretary of State Mark Ritchie estimated voter turnout at just over 50% in this mid-term election. That leaves just under half of our state's voters that aren't exercising their right to vote. Whether you're excited by or indifferent toward America's electoral process, consider stepping in as an election judge to see how it works - you'll learn a thing or two about the state you live in.


I learned something when Becky Boland, precinct support judge, addressed a man delivering vending machine supplies at Brackett Park. He asked if he could vote out of precinct, since he was standing in a polling place but was far from home. She told him, "You can't vote out of precinct, but Minnesota state law requires employers to give time off to vote without penalty or reduction of pay. Minnesota is only one of about half the states in our country to do this."

I also learned about "vouching," a process that makes it possible for people without a permanent address or lacking picture

ID to become registered to vote. A registered voter can bring up to eight people (who fit the description above) to the polls, personally vouch for their identity, and they'll be able to vote for the next four years without having to re-register.


You may agree or disagree with these, and other, election procedures. But, the point is, whatever your opinion or your political persuasion, getting involved in the process is more fruitful than doing nothing. Consider becoming an election judge in an upcoming election. Get to know the workings of election day from the inside out. Learn to set up and take down portable voting booths. Demonstrate kindness by welcoming voters and thanking them for their participation. Help someone who is confused by the process to register smoothly and cast their vote, maybe for the first time.

The City of Minneapolis Election and Voter Services Department will answer your questions at 612-673-3030. Email them at elections@minneapolismn.gov or check out their website at www.voteminneapolismn.gov.



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Nokomis-Hiawatha Master Plan nearly finished

Last chance for public to give input during 45-day review process or January public hearing

By **TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN**

Today, 10% of the Nokomis-Hiawatha Park is natural and the rest is turf grass. Someday, it will be 50% natural, according to the newly created Nokomis-Hiawatha Park Master Plan.

The change won't happen right away, but will occur gradually over the next 25 years.

"The community and the Community Advisory Council (CAC) have supported a significant increase in restored habitat in the park," noted Adam Arvidson of the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB). "The master plan deliberately places turf areas in certain locations and envisions the restoration of the remainder of the park to landscapes such as savanna, wet meadow, short-grass prairie, and wetlands."

What are the benefits of a more natural shoreline? "This will provide broader habitat options for plants and animals, and

will help improve water quality in both lakes," stated Arvidson.

The master plan is currently in the middle of a 45-day public review and comment period that will close on Dec. 22. View the plan online on the Nokomis-Hiawatha Project webpage, or at the Nokomis Community Center, Hiawatha Community Center or Nokomis Library.

This is the first master plan for the park since Theodore Wirth created one in 1934.

Arvidson pointed out that community members have been heavily invested in this planning process. The survey got nearly 1,000 responses, and there were about 20 people at every CAC meeting and 60 people attended each open house. "These are very big numbers for park planning projects," observed Arvidson.

"It is a testament to the importance of this park to the community. And I can assure you that the ideas in the master plan repre-

sent the desires of the community. Of course there are things that individuals might disagree with, but on the whole, this plan is driven by that groundswell of participation by the park's neighbors."

Highlights of the plan

Highlights of the master plan include:

- Pedestrian and bike trails around Hiawatha Golf Course, allowing for a full Grand Rounds experience around the northern half of the park

- A winter-only trail on the shore of Lake Hiawatha (in the golf course), and additional gates in the golf course fence to increase winter accessibility.

- A new vision for the eastern shore of Lake Hiawatha focused on nature-based recreation, scenic views, and boating. The beach will be removed within 6-12 years to make way for a

boardwalk, over-water pavilion, and canoe/kayak launch. "Per this plan, the beach would not be removed without these other amenities replacing it," stressed Arvidson.

- Improved trail circulation throughout the park, including improved crossings of Cedar Ave., additional trails by the Nokomis lagoon, and additional connections between the park and the neighborhood.

- A redesigned Nokomis Main Beach area with an expanded swimming area, additional parking and (eventually) a new beach house.

The CAC refrained from deciding how to reconfigure the athletic fields, but instead agreed to have that decision made when the work is done within 6-12 years.

The location for the skate park will be on the north side of Lake Nokomis, near the recreation center.

The parks department is about to begin a study of all of its recreation centers, and this study will determine what changes will be made at the Nokomis Community Center. Suggestions had been made to expand it and possibly add a track.

Minnehaha Creek will likely be re-meandered, but this project will be led by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) in close collaboration with the parks board. Funding would have to come from

MCWD in order for this to move forward.

What will happen in the short term?

The CAC assigned priority levels to each project, ranging from short term (within 6 years), medium (6-12 years) and long (12 years or more) term.

Many of the short-term projects will offer trail experiences that knit the park together. Roadway crossings will be enhanced to designate separate spaces for walkers and bikers. More portable restrooms will be added, particularly on the south side of Lake Nokomis.

On the list of short-term projects are:

- New playground near Nokomis Community Center, \$150,000
- Refurbishing the vita-course, \$150,000
- Pedestrian-only bridge over Minnehaha Creek, \$300,000
- Pedestrian-only loop around Nokomis lagoon, \$92,000
- Removal of the Art Walk, \$5,000
- Beach improvements (including shade awnings), \$174,000
- Pedestrian/bike trails around Hiawatha Golf Course, \$585,000
- Additional trail connections, \$72,000



"I can assure you that the ideas in the master plan represent the desires of the community. Of course there are things that individuals might disagree with, but on the whole, this plan is driven by that groundswell of participation by the park's neighbors."

— Adam Arvidson, project manager

What's next?

The MPRB Planning Committee will hold a public hearing on the plan in January 2015. After MPRB approval, it will go before the Metropolitan Council, which will likely take place in March or April of next year.

Stay on top of local events by visiting the *Messenger* Events Calendar at www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com

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Submit your local events at LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com
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- Workforce Investment Board (WIB)
- Community Action Partnership of Suburban Hennepin Board (CAPSH) (Local elected officials only)
- County Extension Committee (Minnesota Extension Service)
- Human Resource Board
- Library Board
- Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board
- Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners

Application deadline: Wednesday, December 31, 2014

For more information and to apply online:
www.hennepin.us/advisoryboards

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Neighborhood Churches Welcome You!

Bethany Lutheran
3901 36th Ave. S. • 612-729-9376
www.bethanyon36th.com
Pastor Jo Bauman
Sundays - 9:30 am Generations in Faith Together
10:30 am Worship
Saturdays Dec 6 & 20: Soul+Food Dinner Church at 5 pm
Saturday Dec 13: Women's Christmas Lunch at noon (Reservations Needed)
Christmas Eve: 4 pm Candlelight Service
Christmas Day: 10:30 am Jazz Service
All are Welcome!

Minnehaha Communion Lutheran
4101 37th Ave. S. • 612-722-9527
www.minnehahacommunion.com
Pastors Dan Ankerfelt & Sally Ankerfelt
Sunday Worship: 9:45 am
Sunday School: 9:45 am
December 14: 4 pm, "The Longest Night" service
December 21: Sunday School Christmas Play during 9:45 am worship
December 24: 4 pm Christmas Eve service (Handicapped accessible)

St. Peder's Evangelical Lutheran
4600 E. 42nd St. • 612-722-8000
www.stpeders.net
Julie A. Ebbesen, Pastor
Worship: 9 and 10:30 am,
Summer: 9 am only
Education for all: 9 am
(Childcare; Wheelchair Acc., Braille)
Coffee 10 am

Bethlehem Covenant
3141 43rd Ave. S. • 612-721-5768
www.bethlehemcov.org
Pastor Ryan Eikenbary-Barber
(Handicapped accessible)
Children especially welcome
Christmas Eve Services:
December 24, 4:30 pm and 10:00 pm;
Contemporary Worship Sundays 8:45 am
Sunday School for all ages 10:00 am
Traditional Worship Sundays 11:00 am;
Wednesdays at 5:45 pm
Meal and activities for the family

Minnehaha United Methodist
3701 E. 50th St. • 612-721-6231
www.minnehaha.org
Traditional Service: 9 am
Contemporary Worship: 11 am
(Sept.-May) 10:30 am (June-Aug.)
Education for all ages: 10:15 (Sept.-May)
Sunday School Christmas Play: December 21st at 9:45 am
Christmas Eve Service: 4 pm
(Childcare; fully accessible)

Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls
5212 41st Ave. S. • 612-724-3691
www.trinityfalls.org
Pastors Derek Johnson & Matt Oxendale
Sunday Worship 8:30 & 10:30 am
Thanksgiving Service Wed. 11/26 6:45 pm
See display ad for Christmas services
AA Meetings Tuesdays/Sundays: 7:00 pm

St. Albert the Great Catholic
E. 29th St. at 32nd Ave. S. • 612-724-3643
www.saintalbertthegreat.org
Fr. Joe Gillespie, O.P.
Sunday Mass: 9:30 am (Childcare available)
Saturday Mass: 5 pm
M,T,Th,F: Rosary at 8 am, Daily Mass 8:15 am
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament,
First Fridays from 9 am to noon
(Handicapped accessible)

Epworth United Methodist
3207 37th Ave. • 612-722-0232
www.epworthumcpls.org
Rev. Pam Armstrong
Adult Classes: 9:45 am
Sunday Worship: 10:30 am
Sunday School (children): 10:45 am
Christmas Eve Worship, 7 pm
(Childcare Provided)
(Wheelchair Accessible)

Projects of the Neighborhood Churches Include:

Minnehaha Food Shelf,
Serving People Tuesday
10:30 am - 3 pm

Call us at 612-721-6231

Minnehaha United Methodist,
3701 E. 50th St.

NENA

Continued from page 4

The prevailing opinion seemed to be that under the current bylaws, only the current board had the legal right to remove another board member, by a two-thirds vote of the sitting board...with it being highly unlikely that they would vote to remove themselves.

Going forward

Haight, who has been on the board since April 2014, stated, "I think the NENA Board can im-

prove transparency and I welcome any ideas and comments on this issue. I understand why people are upset by the termination and I respect their concern and questions. I also understand the desire for more details related to the staff termination, but privacy concerns have limited the release of such details. I hope those upset by the action continue to ask questions and to stay involved."

Knopp-Schwyn, who has been on the board for 14 years, noted that board members and retained outreach staff are working in the office and presenting a public face to the neighborhood so neighbors can stop by and

"I think the NENA Board can improve transparency and I welcome any ideas and comments on this issue."

- NENA board member Vanessa Haight, current board member

visit or discuss issues or concerns. He added that moving forward, the board will again hold regular town meetings at a large public space.

"Hopefully everyone comes together and gets back on track — a little bit more focus on organizational structure and committees," stated Jim Tennesen, who helped

establish NENA in 1988. "I think we are too focused on looking backwards and blaming each other. We need to move forward."

Eight new board members to be appointed

The board is hosting a Town Hall meeting on Thur., Dec. 11 at 7pm at the Keewaydin School Cafeteria. At this meeting, neighborhood residents can recommend representatives for their specific neighborhoods to fill the eight vacancies on the 15-member board. The board will convene at 8:30pm that same evening to appoint those selected by the membership to the board.

Classifieds

Messenger

Want ads must be in the Messenger before Dec. 12 for the Dec. 23 issue. Call 651-645-7045 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Messenger's website at www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com

Messenger Want Ads are \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Messenger Classifieds, 1885 University Ave., Ste. #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. Want ads must be mailed to the Messenger before December 12 for the December 23 issue. Ad copy can be e-mailed to denis@deruyternelson.com. Call 651-645-7045 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Messenger's website at www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com

EMPLOYMENT

The Longfellow/Nokomis Messenger is looking for local reporters to write news and feature stories on a free-lance basis. Pay is based on small stipend per story. Journalism students or graduates are preferred, but not required. Prior newspaper experience a must. Send resume, cover letter and clips to: Longfellow/Nokomis Messenger, 1885 University Av. S., St. Paul, MN 55104.

Newspaper delivery carriers wanted for delivery of the Midway/Como Monitor and the Longfellow/Nokomis Messenger. Must be available during daytime hours on delivery days. For more information, email Sara at saracelia@gmail.com. 11-14

Like Pets? Pet lodging service is seeking good people to transport pets to homes. Van provided. Must have good driving record and like pets. This is part time and somewhat flexible. Includes weekends. Call 952-837-1877 for more info. 12-14

FOR SALE

Four drawer file cabinet. Good condition. \$35. Jim, 612-729-8623. 12-14

For Sale: Vintage 1900-1949 lights, house hardware, doors, tubs, radiators, etc. Also furniture hardware. 651-644-9270. 20% off with ad. B-14

HANDYMAN

Handyman, remodeler for hire - All manner of home repairs. Experienced, affordable. Mark 612-250-1033. 1-15

Dr. House does it all: From a leaky faucet to a new addition. I can save you money on electrical and plumbing. Call John at 651-231-5652. B-14

PAINTING

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By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Bethany Lutheran Church, on the corner of 39th St. and 36th Ave., welcomes community members to join them for dinner on the first and third Saturday each month from 5-7pm. The idea for Dinner Church came from Pastor Jo Bauman, Bethany's minister for the past 2 1/2 years. "Church isn't about the building," she said, "it's about the community." With that idea in mind, Bauman and her congregation have been throwing the doors wide open for almost a year, providing a welcoming space for people who want to have a worship experience, but aren't likely to go to a traditional service.

What exactly is Dinner Church? As you enter Bethany, a friendly person is there to greet you and to walk you downstairs to the dining area. The tables are gracefully set with linens and glass dishes; flowers and candles add to the atmosphere. Adults prepare food in the kitchen, while kids play or do art activities together. Everyone is invited to find a seat, communion is passed, a meal blessing is shared and the food is served.

Bauman delivers the blessing with warmth and ease. Pastoring is her third career; she heeded a mid-life call to ministry and never looked back. "All of my jobs have been about change and transformation," she



Pastor Jo Bauman waiting to welcome folks to Soul + Food. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

said, "architecture, marketing and ministry have that in common!" Most people who start a new job get a new business card but Bauman has four, each with one of her own "Theological Mottos" written across the top.

#1: A generous spirit is hard to resist. The soul + food that was served recently was delicious: tacos with all kinds of healthy fixins' and everything needed to go with them. Meals like that take planning and coordination

which Maryann Eide, a retired caterer, generously provided. "The experience has pretty much saved me," said Eide when she talks about what Dinner Church has meant to her. "I had serious health problems right

about the time we were getting the program off the ground. I experienced the deaths of a few significant family members too. I was feeling so sad. Deciding to channel my energy and resources back into the church, into my faith, was the best decision I could have made."

#2: It's all conversation. Dinner Church is by nature much less formal than a regular church service—you not only get to bring your food into the worship space, but you also get to talk. There was a joyful noise in the dining room, the sounds of people visiting and children laughing. As Kyle Haemig, whose grandparents are long-time members of Bethany, said, "this church, and these dinner events, are about blending the very old with the very new." Conversation is at the heart of growing this spiritual community.

#3: Comfort is sometimes the death of the Gospel. As part of the worship portion of the evening, a short video was shown on the subject of forgiveness. It raised the question, what is forgiveness? Is it an attitude, an action, or both? A lively discussion followed, and it was clear that people were free to express their opinions. Honesty was more valued than conformity.

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NENA column

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Dia de los Muertos

The Latino Community celebrated "Dia de los Muertos" on Nov. 1, at the Keewaydin Community Center. Dia de los Muertos, or "Day of the Dead", is a traditional Mexican Holiday in which families honor the deceased by building "ofrendas" or altars using sugar skulls, marigolds, and favorite foods and beverages of the departed. Maria Fernanda Alcaraz, the Community Outreach Specialist

for NENA, along with community volunteers built an altar to teach children about the tradition and used it as a centerpiece for the event. Seven families, approximately 35 people, came together to share traditional food and drink, participate in a costume contest, face painting, coloring activities, mask skulls decoration and music, all under the context of the cultural holiday. It was a fun, festive event that promoted Mexican cultural roots and brought residents with a common interest together. Thank you to U-Care for the beautiful souvenir bags! If you are interested in planning or participating in future cultural activities, please contact maria@nokomiseast.org, or volunteer@nokomiseast.org.



The Latino Community celebrated "Dia de los Muertos" on Nov. 1, at the Keewaydin Community Center. Participants came together to share traditional food and drink, participate in a costume contest, face painting, coloring activities, mask skulls decoration and music.

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Soul + Food

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#4: God doesn't do bad design and neither should we. Congregation member Rachel Hefte noted, "I joined this church because it stood for inclusiveness and welcoming all people." That spirit of love and hospitality was apparent in Soul + Food. Pastor Jo's goal for the congregation and the community that participates at Bethany

Lutheran Church? "I want to open the building up, almost like a community center. If a church is open only to its own, it's not a church—it's a club. We already have house meetings and events for all kinds of groups like Transition Longfellow, Minnesota Facilitator's Network, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Gardening Matters, but we can do much more. Everyone is welcome, and it's time to shake things up!"

All photos by Margie O'Loughlin



Kitchen helpers come in all sizes.



Live music accompanied the worship service and gathering.



Maryann Eide (center) oversees the meals for Soul + Food.



The table is set.

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