



Tale Weavers learn to talk, listen, and evaluate

PAGE 9



Day of the Dead celebrated at Roosevelt High

PAGE 10



Distillery movement is thriving in Longfellow

PAGE 15

Longfellow
Nokomis

Messenger



Your community newspaper since 1982

December 2017 • Vol. 35 No. 10

www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com

21,000 Circulation

School opens in former Rainbow; senior housing, grocery store coming

Wellington Management expands reach from west side of Hiawatha to east with 6-acre Minnehaha Crossing project

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

The former Rainbow Foods, 2912 28th Ave. S., is being reincarnated as a mixed-use building anchored by a school.

The Universal Academy Charter School (UACS) moved into the building in time for the start of the 2017-2018 school year. The K-8 school is located in temporary classrooms at the front of the building as landlord Wellington Management Company oversees a 19,600-square-foot second-story addition for classroom space on the back side of the building. To accommodate the addition, a single-family home on the property was torn down.

When it is complete, the school will have 31 classrooms and 55,000 square feet, with an entrance on the east side of 29th Ave.

"Our team is excited to re-define the backside of a big box retail center with a light-filled school where students will learn, play and grow," said Wellington Management Director of Acquisitions and Development David Wellington.

Built in 1984, Rainbow Foods closed in 2014 after it was purchased by Jerry's Enterprises as part of a 27-store deal that reshaped the Twin Cities grocery

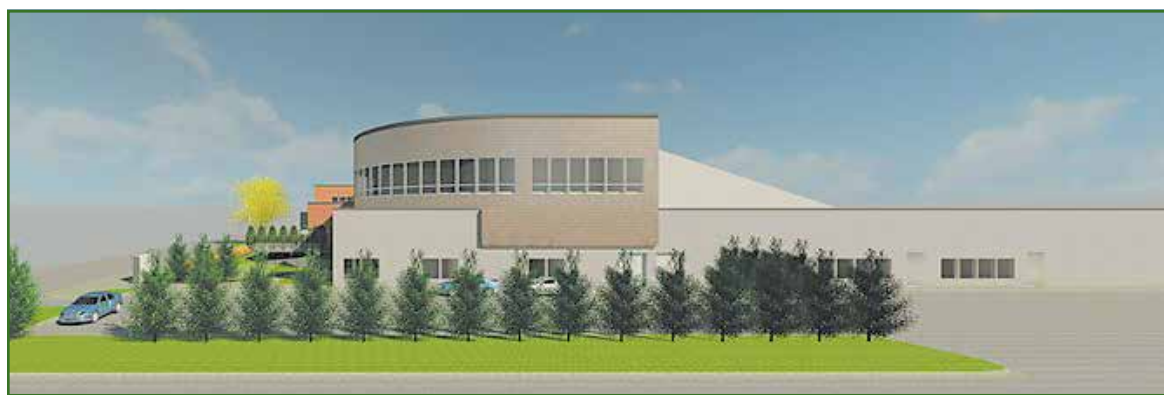


Photo left: The three-prong Minnehaha Crossing project at the six-acre property along Minnehaha Ave. includes a two-story addition on the west side for a school, the renovation of the east side of the empty Rainbow building for a grocery store, and the construction of a 90-unit senior affordable housing building. (Illustration courtesy of Wellington Management)

scene. The building and 6-acre lot were purchased by Wellington two years later for \$5.35 million, according to Hennepin County records.

Universal Academy served 288 students at its St. Paul location in the Midway neighborhood last year. This year, the school added another kindergarten class for a total enrollment target of 338 students.

Formed in 2014, UACS was originally slated to be located in Minneapolis, but ended up in St. Paul, according to Principal and Director Ms. Farhiya Einte. Most of the students live in Minneapolis.

Ninety-eight percent of students at the charter school are English language learners, according to Minnesota's Report

Card on the school. Its authorizer is Novation Education Opportunities.

'Golden opportunity' for Wellington

The Minnehaha Crossing project continues the efforts of Wellington that began more than a decade ago with projects such as Hi-Lake Shopping Center, the Greenway Office Building, Corridor Flats, Lake Street Station, and the Blue Line Flats.

The largest landowner and developer in the Hi-Lake market, Wellington Management's work in the area began with the purchase of the Hi-Lake Shopping Center in 2004, recalled Wellington, whose father considered it a

Continued on page 3



A 19,600-square-foot second-story addition is currently under construction on the back side of the former Rainbow Foods building. When it is complete, Universal Academy Charter School will have 31 classrooms and 55,000 square feet, with an entrance on the east side off 29th Ave. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

Woodshop empowers women to do what they've been told they can't

Women's Woodshop focuses on community building by offering variety of classes for women, non-binaries, and men

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Women's Woodshop owner Jessica Hirsch believes there is nothing more empowering than being told you can't, and then going ahead and doing it anyway.

In 2014, she built a sculpture at a shelter for domestic abuse survivors. As she worked, a 12-year-old girl became one of her assistants, and she watched the girl's confidence grow. The girl was building her own parts to add to the sculpture by the end of the month-long install.

"She went from using cordless drills, to miter saws, and jigsaws. When we completed the sculpture, she was glowing with pride," recalled Hirsch. "It was witnessing that transformation that birthed Women's Woodshop."

She began planning to open a woodshop, but it was the 2016

election that really pushed her to take the risk.

"I think its imperative right now to hold physical spaces for positivity and community building at the ground level," explained Hirsch. "I launched my website on the day of the inauguration as a personal protest." A fundraiser to buy a safer table saw followed, and she began accruing more equipment.

"I am learning as I go, and I know it's worth it when my student's say 'thank you for starting this space,'" said Hirsch.

Teaching from their skill sets

Women's Woodshop offers three to four different classes per month. In all, the shop has offered 11 classes varying from birch bark weaving to power

Continued on page 8



Kingfield resident Jenna Rice Rahaim took a wall shelf class using Japanese joinery techniques, and the finished piece is now hanging on her wall. "I've long admired joinery: constructing a functional and beautiful object without using glue or screws is like magic. Instead, the shelf has a single walnut wood peg, which keeps the entire shelf together," said Rice Rahaim. (Photo submitted)

Skateboarders looking forward to better and more skate parks

Nokomis in mix for 20-year Skate Park Activity Plan; MPRB will take public comments during hearing on Nov. 29

By TESHAM. CHRISTENSEN

Ask a Minneapolis skater what he or she thinks of the city's skate parks, and you'll likely get a list of problems.

The six existing parks were built 15 years ago with modular obstacles and features that were designed by playground manufacturers versus skateboard professionals. The park at Morris has a soft, asphalt surface and the ramps and features have sunk into it. All the existing skate parks are small and undersized. The elements are short, and not exciting to use. And they're all falling apart.

These issues and more are outlined in the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation's new Skate Park Activity Plan, which was initiated in 2012.

"Minneapolis skateboarders have been asking for quality skateboard parks for years. It has been a long five years in the making, but I am looking forward to the Minneapolis skateboard community finally getting the world-class skate



In this design conception, a skate park is shown at Nokomis as part of the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Master Plan. But, it is currently unfunded. It would be located west of the recreation center, and the initial design integrates natural elements. Skate bowls flow within the landscape. The skate plaza replicates nature with granite, bark textures, and shade trees. Plus, there's a high priority on integrating water management features. (Image provided)

parks they deserve," stated City of Skate President Paul Forsline, who served on the MPRB's

steering committee for the new skate park plan.

Public comment on the plan was accepted online until Nov. 5, and will be taken in person during a public hearing on Wed., Nov. 29, 6pm, at the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation (MPRB) Headquarters, 2117 W. River Rd.

20-year roadmap

The 66-page Skate Park Activity Plan is a 20-year roadmap for providing quality support to the local skate park community and encouraging skating among new generations of park users.

The draft Minneapolis Skate Park Activity Plan has three goals:

- 1) Increase the number, variety, and distribution of skate parks in Minneapolis;
- 2) Address policy barriers to high-quality skate park experiences; and
- 3) Improve the overall skate

"I hope every Minneapolis child has the opportunity to discover the challenge and creativity of skateboarding at their local public park and throughout our city."

— Paul Forsline,
City of Skate

park experience through design, operations, partnerships and safety measures.

It also provides context and analysis to help inform future decision-making regarding skate park opportunities within Minneapolis and the Minneapolis park system.

The plan recommends having one regional skate park, ten neighborhood skate parks (including expansion of the existing six), and six skate spots for a total of 17 public skate parks.

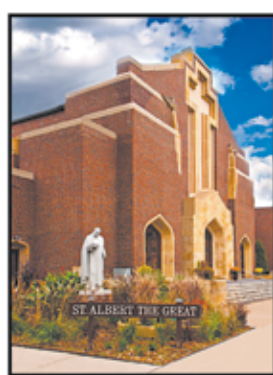
"If the skate park plan is funded moving forward, it will

Continued on page 9



"The Nokomis Park is in a great location. It is set to be built in an area between the two lakes," pointed out Longfellow resident Bill Welk of City of Skate. (Illustration courtesy of City of Skate)

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Rainbow site redevelopment

Continued from page 1

"golden opportunity."

He added, "It was a good fit for our company. We saw a lot of potential for development." It was a strategic decision to become invested in the area. Since "we've really enjoyed our work

in the neighborhood," said Wellington, age 35, who plans to work at the company another 30-40 years and continue the civic-minded approach his father has taken.

Through the years, the family-run company has doubled the density at the original site, first by building Corridor Flats, which houses Aldi's and 36 market-rate condos. Then they

erected the Lake Street Station building next to the light rail line in 2015, which provides 64 units of senior affordable housing. Rates are federally regulated and set at 60% of the area median income, or roughly \$900-\$1,200 a month.

Last year, Wellington built Blue Line Flats in the Corcoran triangle off 32nd St., offering 135 units of workforce housing at 30%, 50%, and 60% of the area median income.

The Minnehaha Crossing project marks the first time the Wellington Group has embarked on a project to the west of Hiawatha.

"We're just trying to be your friendly neighborhood developer," said Wellington.

Grocery store coming

Taken together, the Rainbow site, Cub land, and Target property represent the second largest piece of continuous asphalt in the city of Minneapolis, pointed out Wellington. The city's plans for the area call for greater density due to the light rail line, which Wellington Management has focused on providing as it redevelops the area.

The addition for Universal Academy is phase one of a three-prong project.

In the second stage of the Minnehaha Crossing project, the existing retail that currently fronts the parking lot along Minnehaha Ave. will be repositioned. This will include ap-

"We're just trying to be your friendly neighborhood developer."

**— David Wellington,
Wellington Management**

proximately 12,000 square feet of small shop retail, as well as a 22,000-square-foot grocery store. Work on this will begin after the school moves into the finished addition, likely in the summer of 2018.

They have been in discussions with Aldi, which has tossed around the idea of a new concept store focusing on high-quality meat and fresh fruits and vegetables at the site, remarked Wellington, but nothing has been finalized yet, and they continue to market the site to a variety of grocery stores.

Wellington does not own Schooner Tavern, just north of the Rainbow building at 2901 27th Ave. S. and it is not part of this project.

Affordable senior housing in the project mix

Stage three includes the construction of a mixed-use building on the northwest corner of the parking lot. It will have 90 units of affordable housing for seniors, and 15,000 square feet of retail space on the ground

level. This portion of the project is behind schedule as Wellington Management works to put the financial pieces together to make it affordable.

"It takes a village to get an affordable housing project off the ground," observed Wellington, but the company believes it is an important piece of the total development, particularly in light of the broader discussion on affordable housing in the city.

Wellington envisions that seniors who currently live in Seward and Longfellow will move into this building and stay in their neighborhood, shopping at the places they've always shopped at.

While Wellington Management tried to purchase the Auto Zone property at the corner of E. Lake and Minnehaha, the property owners were not interested in selling. So they signed a long-term agreement with Wendy's to remain there for 20 years, and have plans to construct a single-story 3,500-square-foot retail building in the existing parking lot area not being used by Wendy's along Minnehaha.

While two new buildings will use up some of the parking currently available at the site, Wellington believes there will still be enough parking there. He pointed out that parking, as well as the perception of adequate parking, is important to their retail tenants, and one of their primary concerns.



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The Longfellow/Nokomis Messenger is a monthly community publication in the Longfellow and Nokomis areas of Minneapolis, owned and operated by deRuyter-Nelson Publications, Inc. All correspondence should be sent to the Messenger, 125 First Ave. NW, PO Box 168, Minneapolis, MN 55369. To contact the editor, call Calvin at 651-917-4182. To reach the advertising department, call Denis at 651-917-4183.

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The former Rainbow Foods site has been mostly vacant since the grocery store closed in 2014. It had been purchased by Jerry's Enterprises as part of a 27-store deal that reshaped the Twin Cities grocery scene. The building and 6-acre lot were purchased by Wellington two years later for \$5.35 million, according to Hennepin County records. Universal Academy Charter School moved into temporary classrooms in time to start the 2017-18 school year. (Photo by Tessa M. Christensen)

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Letters to the Editor

Messenger should not have published letter

As a life-long member of the Howe-Longfellow community and someone who has regarded the Messenger as a quality informative publication that is usually non-biased, I beg to differ with the one (and only!) letter to the Editor that was published in this most recent Messenger edition.

It is surprising and embarrassing to me (bordering on a political bias) that you would

publish a letter that is basically lobbying for specific new members of a public community office. I agree that outgoing members should be heard in a public forum but in a publication without opportunity for other candidates to present their cause is without excuse!

I disagree with this, and I want my voice to be heard in this matter as a neighbor and mem-

ber of this community.
Belinda (last name withheld by request)

Editor's Note: All letters to the editor are considered for publication, with the focus on relevance, specific connection to the readership area, and to that issue's space limitations. In this instance, the published letter was the only letter received that month.

Local Tale Weavers Toastmasters learn to talk, listen, evaluate

By JAN WILLMS

It is a Tuesday night, around 6:30pm, and the meeting room on the second floor of Minnehaha United Methodist Church at 3701 E. 50th St. is starting to fill up. Here, on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, the Toastmaster group, Tale Weavers, gathers to talk, listen and evaluate each other's words.

Don Mathews, current president of the Tale Weavers, co-founded the group with Dave Schaal in 2003.

"I had started going to the VAMC Toastmasters club in 1996," Mathews said. "I thought 'What a great organization, dedicated to people who like to talk.'" Mathews described Tale Weavers as a club that is small and has a safe environment, where new members feel comfortable. He said when someone gets up to speak for the first time, he or she can be assured that the audience members have all done it before. "We are not teachers, we are comrades," he explained.

Mathews said members get a kit when they join, with two books enclosed. One is a manual on communication, the other on leadership.

"The communications manual is all about speaking," he said. "The first speech project is the icebreaker, a four-to-six minute speech where you tell us about yourself. You are what you know the most, and this speech is the easiest way to break the ice. The second speech is about saying what you mean, talking about something you are passionate about. And as you get more encouragement and confidence, you learn how



The Tale Weavers meet twice a month. (Photo by Jan Willms)

to say it."

Mathews emphasized that when someone joins they are responsible for their own education. "Most people join, and within eight months they're out. They get through about six speeches and then just leave. Toastmasters International has found this to be a problem," he said.

He said members who are successful in the club are those who are self-motivated or have someone to help them. "People who grow and stay in Toastmasters for many years are very self-directed. One thing which we try to do in our club, which all clubs should do, is when a new toastmaster comes in we get them to give their first speech, provide evaluation and get them as comfortable as they can be."

One part of the Toastmasters program that does not provide a lot of comfort to newcomers, according to Mathews, is table talk. In Tale Weavers it is called tiny tales. Members

are asked to answer a question or speak off the cuff for two minutes. Sometimes a story is started, and after two minutes, someone else needs to continue it.

"I ask them if they have ever been asked a question by their boss and had to answer it quickly. And if so, don't they wish they had practice?" Mathews said these short, impromptu speeches provide good learning.

He stressed the importance of the skills training Toastmasters provides. "For \$40 every six months, you get to practice many speeches. You can pay \$1,000 for a Dale Carnegie course, get a couple of practice sessions and then you're on your own. So what is best? Be self-directed or be told what to do? Where do you retain your learning?" He said a lot of companies are bringing in Toastmasters because it is excellent training for their employees and does not cost very much.

Mathews said his only expectation of members is that if they cannot make a meeting, they let him and the education vice president know.

Mathews said Tale Weavers has a lot of charter members who are still in the club. "That's always a good sign for a club," he claimed.

"Here at Tale Weavers we tell stories," Mathews continued. They have told stories at NPR Moth Hour events. One member does storytelling for children; another has a small film company. Whatever their profession is, Toastmasters has been helpful.

"Every club does different things," he said. "We have a regimented program to follow but are still flexible enough you can

in his professional life. "For a while, I was a consultant, and I had to do a lot of interviewing. Toastmasters helped me so much. He said it has also helped him in his work as a minister and his character acting as he plays Santa Claus for groups each year."

Schaal said that although Toastmasters started as a speaking club, the organization has a long history of wanting to serve people professionally, providing skills in listening, giving feedback staying on time and other leadership skills.

Kent Hawks, a 17-year member who is vice president of membership, said Tale Weavers is designed to help members improve and develop as speakers, leaders, and storytellers.

"Once people become members, they become my responsibility," he said. "I make sure they are coming to meetings." He said if someone becomes busy in his or her professional life, he encourages them to take time away and return when they can.

He said he works in customer service and has found Toastmasters has helped him communicate on the phone. "I can talk with them about anything, and impromptu speaking is something I want to keep up with."

He said Toastmasters becomes a part of one's life. He has earned the Distinguished Toastmasters award, the highest level in the organization, and he said it took him 14 years to do it. Hawks said he worked with another member, and they encouraged each other to move ahead.

"We strongly recommend that when someone joins, they get a mentor," he said.

It has been about an hour and a half. Speeches have been given and evaluated. A grammarian and timekeeper have weighed in. One member listens for how many ahs or ums a speaker may voice. The evaluations are helpful and encouraging. And there has been a lot of laughter.

Mathews likes the blend of professionalism and enjoyment. "Someone told us once we were professional clowns, and we take pride in that," he said.



Stephen Taylor weaves a story. (Photo by Jan Willms)

do what you want with it. Visit another club and draw comparisons. We're very different but in some ways the same."

Mathews said he recommends potential members visit at least three clubs to see where they feel most comfortable.

Schaal, who co-founded the club with Mathews and is vice president of education, said he has been a Toastmasters member for 20 years. "To tell a good message, you want to tell stories," he noted. Listeners may forget your point but remember your story. And if they remember your story, they will remember your point. I felt storytellers could use Toastmasters, and Toastmasters could use more storytelling. I told Don, and he said 'Let's do it!'"

Schaal said belonging to the club has made a difference



Don Mathews speaks to Tale Weavers. (Photo by Jan Willms)



The art of listening and evaluating is as important as the art of talking. (Photo by Jan Willms)

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Wednesday, December 13

5:30 p.m. Meatball Dinner & Christmas Music

Sunday, December 24

10:30 a.m. Morning Worship

10:00 p.m. Candlelight Service

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International president of Toastmasters says organization changes lives around the world

By JAN WILLMS

Toastmasters changes lives. Balraj Arunsalam, international president of Toastmasters from Sri Lanka, said he has seen the proof of this many times. In the Twin Cities area to speak at a fall conference in Rochester Nov. 3, Arunsalam said he has seen the impact Toastmasters has not only on its members but their families, communities, and businesses.

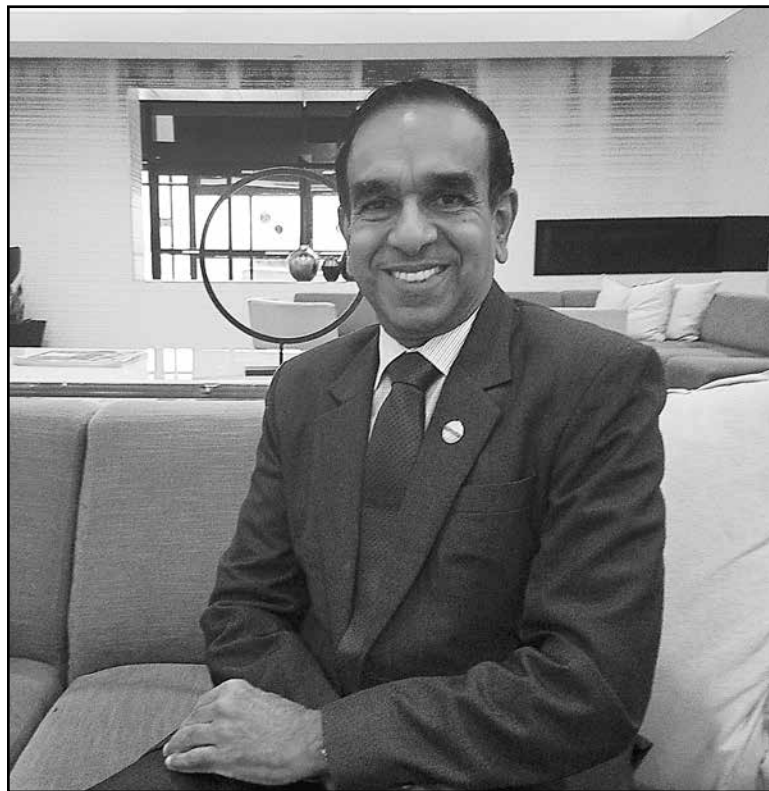
Toastmasters International is a non-profit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs.

The first international president from Sri Lanka and also from South Asia, Arunsalam joined Toastmasters in 1989.

"What drew me to Toastmasters is that I wanted to be with a like-minded social group, and I looked at Rotary and Lions," he said. "But I ended up at Toastmasters." He said he liked the way they conducted meetings, their evaluation technique, and fellowship.

"The fellowship aspect was fantastic," Arunsalam said. "There was a good display of food, drink, pastries, iced coffee, and tea...from 1989 until now we have 30 minutes of fellowship before we start the meeting." He became president of his club in 2002. "And ever since I have been going non-stop."

The first Toastmasters meeting was held Oct. 22, 1924, in Santa Ana, CA. Ralph Smedley, who was a director of education for the YMCA, wanted to start a group that could assist men in public speaking and leadership. From those beginning fellowships, the organization



Balraj Arunsalam, from Sri Lanka, is the international president of Toastmasters. (Photo by Jan Willms)

has grown to 16,500 clubs represented in 142 countries, with more than 352,000 members.

"We had one club in Sri Lanka in 2000, and today we have 128," Arunsalam said. "There was one club in India in 2001, and today there are 750." He said the fast growth of clubs is attributed to the needs of the hour, from India to Tanzania to Australia to the USA.

"The need is the same; the need for communication and leadership is universal," Arunsalam stated. "That is why we are growing year after year, and we have exponential growth when other organizations are struggling to grow."

Although the average person thinks of Toastmasters as a place to learn to speak in public, Arunsalam said that is not true. "You can also learn to speak in public, but that is only 10 to 15 percent of our program," he said. "The balance is about you and me and all the skills that we can learn together to improve our quality of life, to improve our skill levels to be better entrepreneurs or business leaders. That is Toastmasters."

To emphasize this point, Arunsalam talked about the huge difference belonging to Toastmasters has made in his family business. "I have reduced our meetings from running

four or five hours to one hour," he said. "That's because I now know how to get the same effect in one hour. I prepare myself, and I get my staff prepared before the meeting, and all this is possible because I learned meeting management in Toastmasters. I learned the step by step process to fix an agenda and not get distracted by other items that might waste time at meetings."

Arunsalam said that many companies and organizations have meetings all the time. "I don't know when they get the time to do their work or meet people. I am free to meet people because my meetings are short, sweet and crisp but have a huge impact."

He added that what he has learned from Toastmasters has also resulted in his not losing a single staff member for the last nine years. He said Toastmasters has taught him that people do not work only for money, but for quality of life, self-esteem, skill building, sharing and being able to impart knowledge. "These are all things we do at Toastmasters, and we are working in an environment of family," he said.

Arunsalam said Toastmasters is probably the only non-profit that exists within a profit organization. "You can run speech meetings, skill building, courtroom, debate competition and festival meetings," he said. "But we must not forget our fundamentals. We also have to include our speeches, evaluations, table topics and all those regular things we do." Building skills to be effective evaluators, according to Arunsalam, is the secret to the club's existence over the past 93 years. "It's

friends helping friends, and it's learning by doing exercise," he said.

During his tenure as international president, Arunsalam said two huge projects are planned. The headquarters of Toastmasters, which has been in Santa Ana all these years, will be moving to Denver, CO. And a new program, Pathways, is being launched. This features new online programs to capitalize on technology. "There will be 300 competencies and skill sets to learn from," Arunsalam said.

He explained that he has seen the impact Toastmasters has had on his children, who he said have been involved since age 4.

They went through youth leadership and speechcraft programs. My daughter was selected to represent Sri Lanka as a youth delegate to the United Nations, and she spoke at the 25th general assembly," he said. "I have seen many Toastmasters' children become presidents of organizations, leaders in sports and their communities. The impact of Toastmasters is huge."

"I can learn to speak in Toastmasters," Arunsalam continued. "That is one small thing. But you can be a better human being and successful in life with all these skills you can develop in Toastmasters. That's why we call ourselves an education organization."

He said Toastmasters can be a lifelong journey, with members currently ranging in age from 18 to 105. "I see people changing in front of my eyes every day," he noted. "If you use your club to be the best you can be, you have the opportunity to change the world."

Above average rainfall, saturated soils and aging infrastructure cause sinkholes

The City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) received inquiries in late October from visitors and neighbors of Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park about waterlogged parkland and the appearance of sinkholes and settled grounds along streets and in parks.

High precipitation levels over the past two years have resulted in lush grass, beautiful summer gardens, and saturated ground. 2016 was officially the wettest year on record for the Twin Cities, and this year, we are already 4 inches above the average yearly precipitation. By Oct.

3, 2017, the Twin Cities had already exceeded the average rainfall for all of October.

These past wetter-than-normal years have resulted in high lake, river and creek levels, and also mean that groundwater levels and water tables are high.

Ground saturation and mowing

For many years the City of Minneapolis has collaborated with the MPRB to locate stormwater ponds on MPRB property. Since the surrounding soil can no longer absorb additional moisture, many of these ponds are flowing over into nearby parkland. In some areas around Lake Nokomis, parkland near the ponds was too saturated to mow, and the grass grew longer.

Stormwater pipes/sinkholes

During rain events, ground runoff enters underground stormwater pipes. During periods of heavy or extended rainfall, the extra water flow can

cause weakened areas of the aging stormwater pipes to fail.

This failure causes water to seep into the ground, where it moves through the spaces and cracks between the soil toward lower elevations. The water may eventually pool, cause soil erosion and result in a sinkhole. The movement of groundwater means that the sinkhole may not appear near the failed pipe. It may be located several feet, yards-or even blocks-away.

The City of Minneapolis is working on a plan to systematically look at their stormwater management system. City officials are aware that there are parts of the system that are undersized. However, putting in larger pipes is very expensive and letting water infiltrate into the ground at various locations is much cheaper. The amount of water that can be infiltrated reasonably is something that needs to be determined.

Settling, not sinkholes

In some areas around Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park, parkland is "settling." The soft, very porous, peat-like material ground that comprises much of the area slowly compresses over time, and patches of compressed soil may "settle" slightly lower than the surrounding ground. These areas are not caused by broken or weakened stormwater pipes and are not sinkholes.

The City of Minneapolis and the MPRB have identified a lack of groundwater monitoring devices in this area. While groundwater models are helpful, monitoring devices are key to understanding the variability of groundwater. MPRB and City staff have identified potential locations of these additional devices, including locations within parkland around Lake Nokomis. Installation was scheduled for the area. Finally, the groundwater pumping and flooding issues at Hiawatha Golf Course are not connected to the ground saturation and sinkholes at Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park. Although both share the same soft soil and are affected by high water, Lake Hiawatha does not empty into Lake Nokomis, so Hiawatha does not impact Nokomis.

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The 'Affluenza Season' is upon us; advice is to give less

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Nokomis resident and entrepreneur Brianna Harrington has a suggestion for the holiday season this year: give less! Harrington is not a modern-day Scrooge, but someone deeply concerned about the effects of hyper-consumption on our planet and its inhabitants. She believes that we would all be happier exchanging more moments, and fewer mementos—not just during the holiday season but all year long.

“Research shows that all the clutter we’ve accumulated in this country causes stress... Families now spend more time shopping than they spend enjoying products they already own.”

— Brianna Harrington,
Seek United

Harrington founded her non-profit organization Seek United in 2016, shortly after returning from a year in Dublin, Ireland, where she pursued a graduate degree in international development. “Research shows that all the clutter we’ve accumulated in this country causes stress,” she said, “depletes mental energy, leads to impulsive decision making, and is linked to higher rates of depression and anxiety. Families now spend more time shopping than they spend enjoying products they already own.”

Harrington wants to do something about all that. She experienced an “aha” moment while reading “The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up” by author Maria Kondo last year, and recommends it as a jump-



Brianna Harrington, Seek United founder, giving a community presentation at Patagonia in St. Paul. She said of her monthly Live Well Challenges, “They are meant to guide people to live more mindfully.” (Photo by Margie O’Loughlin)

with companies that want to create a happier, healthier work environment. She said, “Many of the Live Well Challenges are home-based, but there’s a lot of crossover from home to the workplace.”

Harrington continued, “The thing about clothing is very important. The fashion industry is the second highest polluting industry in the world—after oil. The trend now is for people to buy cheaply made items of clothing, to wear them (on average) no more than seven times, and then to discard them. This is called ‘fast fashion,’ and it has had a devastating environmental impact. What if companies created a work climate where it wasn’t seen as negative to wear the same clothes to work a few times each week? What if companies really paid attention to the amount of food waste they generate at corporate events?”

“As the holiday season approaches, consider using your creativity to give more shared experiences instead of more

things,” Harrington said. “The amount of waste that American families generate in November and December is thought to increase by as much as 25%, and it’s already too high the rest of the year. If you have to give a gift, try giving it un-wrapped, or wrapped in something re-usable like a piece of fabric.”

Harrington said, “Coming

“As the holiday season approaches, consider using your creativity to give more shared experiences instead of more things.”

— Brianna Harrington,
Seek United

out’ to family and friends as a minimalist can be a sensitive subject. If you see your family at Thanksgiving, try mentioning then that you would like to steer away from material gifts this year. Suggest an ‘experience gift’ like going to an art museum or the zoo, or a donation to a favorite non-profit. Then ask others if they’d like to do the same...”

ing off point for those who want to start living more sustainably. She said, “After reading Kondo’s book and seeing a film about the highly polluting fashion industry called ‘True Cost,’ I decided that I wanted to create some actionable steps to address hyper-consumption. These actionable steps are called the Live Well Challenges, and they can be found on my website.”

“Each challenge is one step that a person can take to effect a change in their own life,” Harrington said. “With each challenge, we become more aware of how small changes add up to make a big difference in the

world.”

The upcoming monthly Live Well Challenges will be Give Less in December; Mindful Goal Setting in January; Detox your Personal and Home Care Items in February. More information can be found at www.seekunitied.org.

Harrington is available for small group, community, or workplace speaking engagements, and can be reached at info@seekunitied.org. She is particularly interested in talking

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Dementia behavior consultant is carving his own niche

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

From his home office in the Longfellow neighborhood, Dr. Eilon Caspi is doing all he can to humanize the face of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Caspi, who holds a Ph.D. in gerontology, has worked his whole adult life in the aging field, starting as an aide in a nursing home where his grandfather lived in Israel 23 years ago. He has been growing his business as founder, owner, and director of Dementia Behavior Consulting LLC since 2015.

Caspi offers an array of services to people living with dementia, as well as their family care partners, staff, and other professionals in the healthcare system, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities. These services focus on preventing various forms of behavioral expressions, including those commonly labeled aggressive. Caspi believes that the majority of these distressing and harmful behavioral expressions are the result of unmet human needs intersecting with the person's cognitive disabilities.

Caspi said, "The quality of care provided to people living with dementia is only as good as the quality of timely support and education

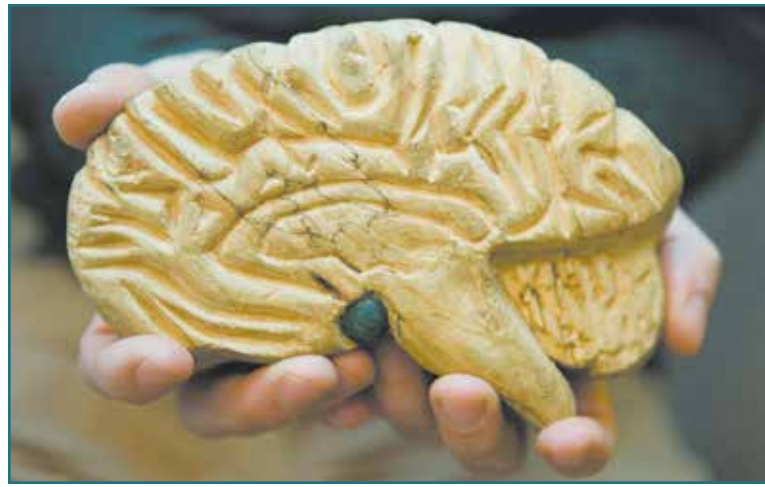


Dr. Eilon Caspi's goal is to optimize well-being for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

provided to family and professional care partners."

This conviction sets him apart from many specialists in his field. "I place the highest priority on equipping care partners with evidence-based knowledge and skills. This is what will empower them to provide effective, person-directed, dignified care to those living with dementia," Caspi said,

Caspi emphasized that the primary focus of Dementia Behavior Consulting LLC is on the reduction



Gerontologist and wood carver Dr. Eilon Caspi holding one of the brain hemispheres he has hand-carved from mahogany. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

of the harmful stigma commonly associated with dementia, instilling realistic hope, and providing personalized psychosocial approaches—not drug treatments such as antipsychotic medications. "These expensive medications have been shown in a series of research studies to bring only modest positive effects to a small portion of people living with dementia," Caspi said. "They often cause a number of adverse and serious side effects that outweigh the benefits." That said, there are unique circumstances when these medications may need to be used thoughtfully and carefully (including Gradual Dose Reduction Guidelines).

Caspi explained, "There are 5.4 million people in The US estimated to be living with a form of dementia. For those who receive a diagnosis, they will typically leave their doctor's office or diagnostic center (commonly called Memory Clinic), go home, read about their diagnosis online, and then they'll panic. How do you find models of hope when there is so much misinformation out there? My passion is bringing evidence-based, best care

practices to elders, families, and healthcare professionals in a timely way."

From Dr. Caspi's perspective, people living with dementia and those who are cognitively healthy have one very important shared asset: all human beings benefit from close, trusting relationships. "In many ways, people with dementia are just like the rest of us," he said. "Unfortunately, psychological needs are among the first to be overlooked in home care situations, and (about 80% of people living with dementia are cared for at home) as well as in long-term care facilities.

He continued, "While Alzheimer's disease and several other forms of dementia are progressive, highest practical psychological a high level of psychiatric well-being can be realized in many individuals when support systems and quality of care are optimized. Strengthening the support system to the person and her/his family care partners, timely evidence-based education, and reduction of fear and stigma—these are the things to focus on."

As a gerontologist and dementia behavior specialist, I use my wood carved brain hemispheres as educational tools. People and family members can better understand the importance of one of the most ancient parts of the brain, the amygdala, when they can see it (here in green). This part of the brain is known for attaching emotion to memory. The ability to feel a full range of emotions remains relatively intact in many people with Alzheimer's disease much longer than the ability to retain short term memory, speech, or comprehension. Focusing on the person's emotional needs is critical when interacting, supporting, and caring for these individuals.
Dr. Eilon Caspi

It's a known fact that the age pyramid in this country is shifting in a big way. The Baby Boomer generation contains about 76 million people in the United States. As they age, the number of people living with dementia is expected to soar. Some of the risk factors that may raise the likelihood of developing certain forms of dementia include poor diet, sedentary lifestyle, lack of cognitive stimulation, smoking, high blood pressure, high stress level, lack of personally meaningful social engagement, and lack of purpose in life. These factors are thought to be cumulative.

Caspi is looking for a senior volunteer (55+) to help him with office-based projects that will improve the lives of people living with dementia in Minnesota. To inquire, email him at eiloncaspi@gmail.com or contact him through his website at www.dementiabeaviorconsulting.com.

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Women's Woodshop

Continued from page 1

tools 101. There will be four new courses coming up this winter: Black Ash Basket Weaving, Custom Canvas Stretcher Bars, Patterned Cutting Boards, and a Shaker Stool Class.

While some classes are limited to women/non-binary folks, others are co-ed. "It's about inclusion and changing the dynamics of the woodshop," said Hirsch.

She offers men tips on how to be an ally on her website. Women and non-binary or gender non-conforming folks have various levels of experience with wood. When they ask a question, give them the answer they are looking for without additional information.

She also points out that women and non-binary crafters need space to learn. "I have witnessed many women being watched by male students when they are working. I think the intention is so that the man can step in if they need help. But actually, we need to do things ourselves to learn. We will ask you for help if we need it," Hirsch stated.

Instructors at the woodshop rotate based on availability, each teaching from their own skill sets. TiAnna DeGarmo's Wall Shelf class teaches students how to make a through tenon joint using hand tools. Teresa Audet teaches a butterfly (bow-tie) joint class with hand tools; she studies in Japan and also does residencies across the country. Hirsch is the only consistent instructor offering spoon carving, power tools 101, and bowl turning each month.

Beginners from the neighborhood

Since its opening on March 25, 2016, at least 200 students have walked through the doors.

Many of them are from the neighborhood, such as Standish-Ericsson resident Nicole Stroot. So far, Stroot has taken the Spreader and Spoon classes and is looking forward to the Women of Color Power Tools 101 class in December. Stroot discovered the woodshop driving by one day on her way to get groceries.

"I think having a maker space and working with something that comes from the land gives people more respect for the Earth," remarked Stroot. "Jess has been my teacher for both classes. It's her shop and she makes it feel like you



belong there. I love her calm courage and grace."

Stroot describes herself as an enthusiastic beginner. "I had taken wood shop 1 and 2 in high school, but I graduated a long time ago. Without tools of my own, you kind of lose the skills," she observed.

"I love the idea of hand-carving, which I've never done before, because it's so mobile and affordable."

Stroot recalls being the only female student in those high school shop classes, and feeling intimidated at times. She has found the atmosphere at the Women's Woodshop to be very different. "Being encouraged to work with our hands and being able to ask as many questions as we have without feeling like it'll make us appear less intelligent is important. I also think it's empowering to see other people that look like you doing things you're interested in, knowing you're not alone," said Stroot.

Kingfield resident Jenna Rice Rahaim learned about the woodshop when a friend brought her to a spoon carving class for her birthday.

"I made a birch spoon that was perfect for sauces and stirring, and have been hooked ever since," said Rice Rahaim, who later arranged for a private co-ed class for her dad's 70th birthday.

Before that first class, Rice Rahaim was a complete novice, and six months ago she would have never guessed that she would be spending as much time in the stu-

When Women's Woodshop owner Jessica Hirsch was an undergraduate college student who was falling in love with sculpture, her instructor told her, "Sculpture makes you feel like a superhero. These skills you learn here can apply to all realms of life." Hirsch agrees. "Someone can learn how to make a cutting board, and apply those skills to fixing up their house," she pointed out. (Photo by Studio Zu)

something incredibly grounding about learning about wood and tools in such an intimate way," remarked Rice Rahaim. "We learn how to care for our tools and sharpen them and appreciate the craftsmanship with which they were created.

"We also come to feel connected to the wood we're working with... aware of the differences between birch, cherry, or boxelder. Walks in the woods will never be the same after relating to the wood in such an intimate way."

A 'starter home'

Hirsch considers the location at 2237 E. 38th St. to be a "starter home" as it is a cozy operation. Almost everything is on wheels so the two classrooms can be re-arranged for each class.

Before this location, she had rented a studio in St. Paul but wanted to be closer to her home

in Central, near Powderhorn Park. She called the storefront listing on a whim thinking they would never let her have a woodshop in an office/retail space. "Luckily my landlord is a spoon carver and encourages me to chainsaw in the back parking lot," remarked Hirsch.

When she was starting out, Hirsch rented galleries to teach spoon carving, and it was a great way to test the waters without jumping into expensive overhead. "Now I offer my space for educators in the same way," she pointed out. "We have a Writing as Healing workshop going on right now, taught by Glenda Reed, and a Turn of the Century Shoe Making Class taught by Martha Brummitt."

Complimentary layer of sawdust

Community members are encouraged to drop by for a sale on Dec. 3, 11am-6pm. It will showcase women and non-binary makers ranging from ceramicists to weavers.

Additionally, the shop is normally open 10am-4pm, Tues.-Fri., with classes on the weekends. "If the lights are on, come on in!" encouraged Hirsch. The front window is packed with goods for sale made by instructors and awesome makers. Please note that most objects come with a complimentary layer of sawdust.

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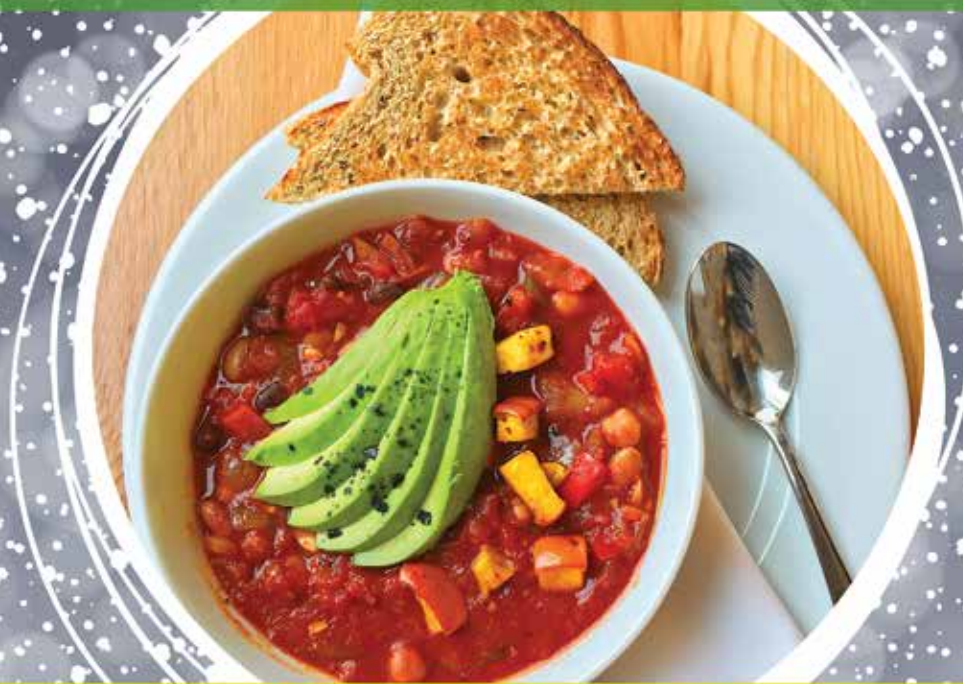
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Skate parks

Continued from page 2

give our award-winning Minneapolis Park system a skate park infrastructure second to none," observed Forsline.

He pointed out that Minneapolis has developed some of the best skateboarders in the world, despite little public support. "We saw Alec Majerus take silver in July at the 2017 X Games at US Bank Stadium. Minneapolis skateboarding is known and respected worldwide," said Forsline. "It is time for our own public entities to recognize this and support our local skate scene."

What the parks could be

Currently, 5,000-square-foot skate parks exist at Morris, Armatage, Brackett, Elliot, Bottineau and Creekview parks.

"These six parks never inspired skateboarders, yet some of the skate parks are the busiest features in their respective parks," remarked Forsline.

In the plan, these parks would be updated and expanded, when possible.

"Morris has limited space, so it would be important to prioritize a skate park for beginner and younger skaters, but have some creative and unusual features to still challenge more advanced skaters," said Forsline. "A community stage would be a nice multi-use feature to include in this skate park space."

"The skate park in Morris is in poor shape," observed Longfellow resident Bill Welk. "I have not been there for several years due to the condition of the skate park and overall poor layout. The skate park features pre-fabricated concrete obstacles sat on an asphalt surface. Over time the heavy concrete obstacles have sunk into



The skate park at Morris Park. "Morris has limited space, so it would be important to prioritize a skate park for beginner and younger skaters, but have some creative and unusual features to still challenge more advanced skates," remarked Paul Forsline of City of Skate. (Photo provided)

the asphalt and created gaps between the ramps and the asphalt. Not to mention that the rough asphalt eats up speed as a skateboarder pushes across; however, the aged asphalt is wonderful at removing layers of epidermis should a trick not go according to plan."

Brackett's existing skate park has always been a well-

used skate park, despite having a rough asphalt surface. "With more space allocated here, having both street and transition skateboard features would be important," said Forsline. "We have to keep the existing old playground rocket feature as a landmark. Maybe build the skate park around the rocket? A NASA and/or space themed

skate park would be cool. A glowing skateable moonscape would be awesome."

To accommodate the number of skaters in the city, the plan calls for adding skate parks at Nokomis, Northeast Athletic Field Park, Central Gym Park, and Cedar Field Park, and the potential Underpass Park and Skyway Commons Pocket Park.

A skate park at Nokomis is a part of the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Master Plan, but it is currently underfunded. It would be located to the west of the recreation center, and the initial design integrates natural elements. Skate bowls flow with-

"The skateboarding community in Minneapolis is pretty tight-knit."

**— Bill Welk,
Longfellow resident**

in the landscape. A skate plaza replicates nature with granite, bark textures, and shade trees. Plus there's a high priority on integrating water management features.

"The Nokomis Park is in a great location. It is set to be built in an area between the two lakes," pointed out Welk.

In addition to creating spaces for skateboarders, planners recognize that inline skaters and BMX riders will use these parks.


"The skateboarding community in Minneapolis is pretty tight-knit," observed Welk. "I like that skateboarding is always there for me when I want it. I can go skate by myself or with a group of people. There isn't a set time, a season, or reliance on another people to skateboard."


The challenges the community faces include a lack of public parks and long winters, according to Welk, who was part of the steering committee meeting on the Skate Park Activity Plan.

Quality skate parks: a great asset

"Skateboarding is only going to grow in popularity, and a city with a skateboarding plan is going to benefit," pointed out Forsline, whose children skateboard. "Quality built skate parks by our park system will be the most heavily used features in our park system, and will, therefore, be a great value for our tax dollars. Well-designed skate parks should be inspired spaces that the community and skaters are both proud of.


"I hope every Minneapolis child has the opportunity to discover the challenge and creativity of skateboarding at their local public park and throughout our city."

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Day of the Dead celebrated at Roosevelt High School

As told by JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ, Spanish Immersion Photos by MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

This was the first year that Roosevelt High School organized an event for El Dia de los Muertos, the Day of the Dead. The idea was to celebrate our Latino diversity and multicultural traditions at Roosevelt High School with the broader community. La Catrina is the most popular icon of the Day of the Dead festivals from around the world. She is known as the 'ambassador of death,' a beautiful skeleton lady dressed in elegant clothes. In Latin American countries, we react to death with mourning, but also with celebration and joy. We know that death is among us, and we have learned to accept it.

As a teacher, I want to make sure that my students acquire the language and culture of Spanish speaking countries through meaningful exposure. Re-enacting some of the legends and traditions of El Dia de los Muertos was such an opportunity.



To include all of the students, we created a collection of legends that are told across Latin America. The legends were chosen by the students themselves, and this was the beginning of a writing process in both English and Spanish. Many of the students' essays appeared on the altars they made for the Museum of the Dead, which was set up down in the basement.



In many homes and cemeteries, altars such as these are prepared to honor the dead.



Student Romina Tello dressed as La Catrina. The story of La Catrina inspired me to involve the high school students: to make them aware of the beauty and the richness of our roots and to help the students show that to others with pride. México is not the only country in Latin America that celebrates the Day of the Dead. In many other countries as well, it is believed that the dead come back and re-join their families on Oct. 31, and depart again on Nov. 2.



Student Marie Peterson offered face painting to visitors of all ages. Following the presentations and and tours, which were given in both English and Spanish, pozole was served to guests at no cost. Pozole is a traditional Mexican corn soup made on special holidays.

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Holiday Party for seniors planned

Join Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors and Minneapolis Community Education for their annual Holiday Party for Seniors on Tues., Dec. 19 at 10:30am at Holy Trinity Lutheran, 2730 E. 31st St. Enjoy live music, lunch, and door prizes! The event will be held in the basement gymnasium, and doors will open around 10am. The event will last until noon or later. All seniors who reside in greater Longfellow and Seward neighborhoods are welcome to attend this free event (however, a suggested donation of \$2 is appreciated). Pre-registration is not required. Call Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors at 612-729-5799 for more information.

Alzheimer workshop on communicating

The Alzheimer's Association will present a free workshop on Communication Techniques and Holiday Tips on Tues., Dec. 5, 6:30-8pm at Minnehaha Senior Living, 3733 23rd Ave. S. Learn new techniques for communicating with your loved one with early to late stages of Dementia/Alzheimer's? This free workshop is hosted by a representative from the Alzheimer's Association. There will be time for questions and answers.

Senior Exercise Class every week

An exercise class for seniors meets every Monday morning at 10am at Faith Ev. Lutheran, 3430 E. 51st St. The class is sponsored by Nokomis Healthy Seniors.

Christmas Boutique set at St. Albert

The Rosary Altar Society of St. Albert the Great invites you to their annual Christmas Boutique, at the corner of E. 29th St. E and 32nd Ave. S. Hours are Sat., Dec. 2, 2-6:30pm, Sun., Dec. 3, 9am-noon, Sat. Dec. 9, 4:30-6:30pm, and Sun., Dec. 10, 9am-noon. Lots of Christmas treasures await you, along with delicious St. Albert's fudge, Christmas cookies, and many bake sale items.

Holiday concert set at Living Table

Living Table United Church of Christ, 3805 E. 40th St., will host a holiday concert with local artists and the choir on Fri., Dec. 29, 7pm. There will be a free-will offering and refreshments. Call the office at 612-729-7556 on Tues.-Thurs. between 8am and

noon for more information.

Special Cuban art display open

Through Jan. 14, anyone interested in Cuban art and culture will have the rare chance to see—and acquire—works of 70 Cuban artists* in a colorful setting that reflects an experience one might have visiting galleries and art centers in Havana. "Made in Cuba! Recycling Memory and Culture, Part II" at Squirrel Haus Arts (3450 Snelling Ave.) will feature art from the 1960s to the present.

The work includes photography and posters, folk art, paintings, drawings, prints, small sculpture, ceramics and wearable art—and themes that range from the vaguely political to spiritual to American pop culture, viewed afar from the Cuban nation, even though only 90 miles from the U.S. mainland.

The exhibit's regular hours will be 12-5pm, Fri.-Sun.

AA and NA meets

Every Monday night there is an AA meeting at 7pm at Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church (4101 37th Ave. S.), 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. Note, Monday AA group WILL meet on Christmas Day, Dec. 25.

Faith Book Club meets Dec. 2

The Faith Ev. Lutheran Book Club meets the first Saturday of every month from 10-11am at the church, 3430 E. 51st St. The book for Dec. 2 is "Winter Solstice" by Rosamunde Pilcher. All are welcome.

Sign up for Winter Base Camp

Base Camp has the cure for all cases of cabin fever and hibernation this winter, specially designed for kindergarten through grade 8 (age 5 to 15 years). Sign up for three days of Winter Discovery Day Camp, where staff will keep bodies and brains from freezing up with exciting activities in their spacious and cozy 72-degree building. Each day of camp will include both guided mornings (indoor rock climbing, indoor/outdoor team challenges, craft projects) as well as opportunities for campers to choose their own adventures in the afternoons (Lego robotics, archery, open gym/bounce house).

Dates for the Winter Discovery Day Camp are Wed, Dec. 27

Fun / community was Spooktacular theme



Providence Place Senior Living held their Spooktacular on Oct. 28. (Photo provided)

Children, families, and tenants all turned out on Oct. 28 for the 4th Annual Spooktacular Halloween Open House at Minnehaha Senior Living and Providence Place Senior Living, 37th St. and 23rd Ave. Many families turned up in costumes and played the games which included a fishing booth, a duck pond, pumpkin bowling, and pumpkin golf. There were also themed costumes (one family had a circus theme with a ringmaster, a lion who jumped through a hoop, a lion trainer, a strong man, an acrobat, and a popcorn vendor). The "circus" family walked through the facility entertaining tenants and surprised them with a lion act (a child dressed up as a lion jumped through a hoop that a "lion trainer" was holding).

There was a shadow room, a haunted house, craft rooms with pumpkin painting and door hanger crafts, games, and cookies and cider for all who attended.

"Our tenants and residents got a big kick out of seeing the children in all of their creative costumes! Lots of our tenant's grandchildren turned out, and lots of neighborhood kids turned out to show off their Halloween costumes. One highlight was when people oohed and awed when they saw a giant T-Rex dinosaur enter the doors of Minnehaha. They were also delighted to see babies dressed up as unicorns, owls, pumpkins, and other fun costumes. We had over sixty children and their families walk through our doors and celebrate with our tenants this year." said Molly Blomgren, Community Life Director.

It was also the kick off for their annual food drive for the area food shelf. Food shelf donations are being accepted up until Thanksgiving at both facilities.



A giant T-Rex dinosaur visited the Oct. 28 Spooktacular. (Photo provided)

through Fri., Dec. 29. The camp runs from 9am to 3pm each day. An optional early drop-off after 8am and late pickup by 4pm is also available each day for an additional cost. Cost of the camp is \$35/day, \$90/full series (added \$5 for early/late option each day).

Registration is available for individual days or the full series. You can find out more about the camp, and sign up

online, at <https://scoutingevent.com/250-winterdiscoverydaycamp2017>.

Adoption support group meets Dec. 5

The Adoption Support Network holds monthly support groups at Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church (4101 37th Ave. S.), for parents with adopted teens.

Next meeting will be held on Tues., Dec. 5, 6:30pm.

Adoptive parents are provided with a confidential, non-judgmental environment where they can support each other and share resources. Teens are invited to meet other teens who understand what it's like to be adopted. The teen group is not a drop-off group—parent(s) must attend the parent support group.

For more info and to RSVP, contact Ginny Blade at 651-646-5082 or gabbyblade@nacac.org (parents); or Christina Romo at 651-644-3036, ext. 17, or christinaromo@nacac.org (teens).

Gamblers Anonymous meets Wednesdays

Gamblers Anonymous meets Wednesdays from 6-7pm in the Hope Room at Living Table Church, 3805 E. 40th St. Anyone with a desire to stop gambling is welcome.

500 Card Club meets

A 500 Card Club meets at Faith Ev. Lutheran, 3430 E. 51st St., the first Monday of each month beginning at 1pm. Next get together is Dec. 4. All are welcome.

Concert on Dec. 10 to bridge cultures

The CD Release of "Just One Breath" by Dan Rein, a musical translation of the poetry of Omar Khayyam, will take place Sun., Dec. 10, 7pm at Hook and Ladder, 3010 Minnehaha Ave.

Rein sings the thousand-year-old poetry of Omar Khayyam in Persian and English. His voice and dutar (two string long neck lute) will be accompanied by Liz Draper on upright bass, Mikkel Beckmen on washboard and percussion, Adam Kiesling on fretless banjo, and Andy McCormick on musical saw.

Kiesling, Draper, and Beckmen will perform old-time American music as an opening act. Join in for a social hour from 6-7pm with appetizers provided by Gandhi Mahal Restaurant.

Rein has studied Iranian traditional music for 25 years and has teamed up with some of the best Twin Cities musicians of American roots music. With the help of Iranian friends, he has created his own translation of this iconoclastic Persian poet. Music was composed by Rein on a dutar, the instrument that Khayyam would have heard. Singing in the original Persian, alternating with English gives a unique and rare access to this ancient, yet timely poetry.

Tickets are \$12 advance, and

Continued on page 12

In Our Community

Continued from page 11

\$15 at the door and are available at www.thehookmpls.com.

Gifts from the Heart planned Dec. 9

Courageous heARTS, 2235 E. 38th St., will hold their annual Gifts from the Heart Sat., Dec. 9, 9:30-11:30am. This event is designed exclusively for younger children in the K-4th grade. Artists will have the opportunity to make a variety of gifts for family members at creation stations. Some of the stations will have a planned project and others will offer a variety of materials for their imaginations to "let loose." The cost is \$15 per child.

Parents are encouraged to drop their kids off and do their own shopping during this time. The kids will be making up a storm for you, and we want to encourage the element of surprise!

Celebrate Winter Solstice Dec. 21

Nourish your heart's longing for renewal by tapping into the seed of potential that begins every year at the Winter Solstice, Dec. 21, 7-8:30pm at the Art Box, 4200 E. 54th St. This contemplative, participatory and embodied evening enters the fertile embrace of darkness as the starting point for new life. Music, dance, movement meditations and reflective time led by Emily Jarrett Hughes with guitarist Greg Herriges and the Wisdom Dancers. Everybody welcome, and no experience is necessary. Best suited for ages 12 and up. The cost is \$10.

Christmas fun planned at Epworth

Epworth United Methodist Church, 3207 37th Ave. S., will hold an Advent workshop on Sun., Dec. 3, noon-3:30pm. Santa will stop by for pictures, in addition to lunch and arts and crafts for the family. All ages welcome.

Caroling is planned for Dec. 10, 7pm. Please meet at the church.

NA group meets every Friday

A Narcotics Anonymous group meets every Friday evening at 7pm at Faith Evangelical Lutheran, 3430 E. 51st St. All are welcome to attend.

Advent Services planned at Faith

Faith Ev. Lutheran Church, 3430 E. 51st St., will host Mid-Week Advent Worship Services on Dec. 6, 13, and 20 at 12pm and 7pm. A soup supper will be held at 5:30pm before the 7pm service on Dec. 20 only.

Fare For All sells Holiday Pack

Fare For All, a local non-profit

food program created to make frozen meat and fresh fruits and vegetables more affordable and accessible to families, will be selling Holiday Packs for \$30 at Holy Trinity Church on Wed., Dec. 6 from 4-6pm. Each Holiday Pack includes a 7-9 lb. spiral cut ham, a whole chicken, beef meatballs, roasted chicken wings, garlic herb chicken, mixed vegetables and a Dutch apple pie.

Fare For All sells packages of fresh produce and frozen meat at 38 locations throughout the year in Minnesota. With prices ranging from \$10 to \$30 per package, everyone can save up to 40 percent on their food purchases. The program has no income requirements and is open to everyone who is looking to save money.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church is located at 2730 E. 31st St. For additional dates and a map of Fare For All locations, go to fareforall.org or find them on Facebook.

Cabin Fever Wed. back at Epworth

Epworth United Methodist Church, 3207 37th Ave. S., continues Cabin Fever Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30am. There is space for kids 0-5 years to play with others. Large and small motor activities, crafts, books, and a healthy snack are provided. Kids must bring a caring adult. Coffee and conversation for adults. This free program ends in mid-March.

Blind Ministry meets

The Blind Outreach fellowship will meet on Sat., Dec. 9, at Faith Ev. Lutheran Church, 3430 E. 51st St., from 12-2pm. Lunch is served at noon followed by a Bible study and fellowship.

Food Addicts Anonymous meets

Food Addicts Anonymous meets every Friday, 8pm, at Living Table United Church of Christ, 3805 E. 40th St. No fees are required, and everybody is welcome.

Mt. Olive plans Advent Procession

Mt. Olive Music and Fine Arts presents its annual Advent Procession Service on Sun., Dec. 3, 4pm. Mark the season with a solemn procession and a series of lessons and carols for Advent, and enter this season of hope in the darkest time of the year. Candles, incense and beautiful music all invite the listener to engage in this profound liturgical season. Mt. Olive Lutheran Church is located at 3045 Chicago Ave. S. This event is free and open to the public.

For further information on this event, and on the Music and Fine Arts program, please contact Dr. Cherwien at 612-827-5919, by email at cantor@mountolivechurch.org, or online at www.mountolivechurch.org.

LCC announces 2018 calendar

Take out a pen and your 2018 calendar! Longfellow Community Council has scheduled its Board

Cast and crew gathered for Roosevelt's 'Almost, Maine'



Cast and crew members posed for photos during a rehearsal for the romantic comedy, "Almost, Maine," that they performed at Roosevelt High School Nov. 16-18. Roosevelt is in its third season of bringing theater back to the community and involves students in grades 9-12. Their annual Growler Gala fundraiser to support the program will be held at Hook and Ladder Theater and Lounge in February, and their spring musical, "Into the Woods," will take place in April. For theater information and updates, visit [Advocates of Roosevelt Theater Arts on Facebook](http://AdvocatesofRooseveltTheaterArts.com). (Photo courtesy of the Roosevelt Theater program).

and committee meetings for the 2018 year.

Board meetings are held monthly at Brackett Park, 2728 39th Ave. S. (except in June, July & August). Scheduled dates are Jan. 18, Feb. 15, Mar. 15, Apr. 19, May 17, June 21, July 19, Aug. 16, Sept. 20, Oct. 18, and Nov. 15.

The River Gorge Environment Committee meets monthly at Longfellow Park, 3435 36th Ave. S. Scheduled dates are Jan. 10, Feb. 7, Mar. 7, Apr. 4, May 2, June 6, July 11, Aug. 1, Sept. 5, Oct. 3, and Nov. 7.

The Community Connections, Neighborhood Development & Transportation Committee meets monthly at Longfellow Park, 3435 36th Ave. S. Scheduled dates are Jan. 9, Feb. 6, Mar. 6, Apr. 3, May 1, June 5, July 10, July 31, Sept. 4, Oct. 2, and Nov. 6.

National Night Out is Aug. 7.

Holiday Basket now in 47th year

The 47th annual Roosevelt High School Operation Holiday Basket provides a holiday meal to those in the community that have expressed a need. Last year 300 local families received a turkey and box of non-perishable food items to make a holiday dinner. The baskets will be packed and delivered by Roosevelt students (with the help of the YMCA) on Dec. 22.

To donate food items or money, please drop off at Oxendale's Market (5025 S. 34th Ave.) or Roosevelt High School the month of December. If your family would like to request a basket or have questions, please contact ckjome@mpls.k12.mn.us.

Soccer training set at Matthews

Futsal / Soccer Training at Matthews Park Rec Center with Coach Pete Munene will be held throughout the winter. This training is fun, engaging and supportive for beginner to advanced players. The program focuses on developing athletic, technical and ball handling skills that will allow players to play with more

confidence and creativity.

The Matthews Park Youth Soccer Training and Futsal Free Play is designed for ages 10-13 who have participated in recreational or competitive soccer and are looking to improve their skills. Munene will help a child develop through skill-building activities. The majority of session time will be devoted to supervised futsal play. Players should bring a soccer ball and clean indoor soccer or court shoes.

The program for children ages 14-16 is designed for those who have participated in MPRB or competitive soccer programs in the U14-U17 range. Each 90-minute intensive training is divided into 30 min. of speed, strength, and agility training; 30 min. of technical/skill-building; and 30 min. of small-sided futsal play. Players should bring a soccer ball and clean indoor soccer or court shoes.

This program is sponsored by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board at Matthews Park Rec Center, 2318 29th Ave. S. Call 612-370-4950 for registration information. Each class is limited to 18 participants:

- Free Play III (77566), ages 10-13, Mondays, Jan. 8 to Feb. 12, 2018, 6-7pm, \$50, 6 Sessions
- Soccer Training & Futsal Free Play IV - 77567, Ages 14-16, Tuesdays, Jan. 9, 2017 to Feb. 13, 6-7:30pm, \$60, 6 Sessions
- Soccer Training & Futsal Free Play V - 82151, Ages 10-13, Mondays, Feb. 19 to Mar. 26, 6-7:00pm, \$50, 6 Sessions
- Soccer Training & Futsal Free Play VI - 82152, Ages 14-16, Tuesdays, Feb. 20 to Mar. 27, 6-7:30pm, \$60, 6 Sessions

Submit your news to the Messenger

If you are an organization located within the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger delivery area, you can submit your event, special program, or noteworthy news to us for consideration to be printed in the Community Briefs section. Submit your item by email to editorial@deruyternelson.com.

The deadline for the next issue is Mon., Dec. 11 for the Dec. 21 issue.

Lake Nokomis Shoreline Enhancements Community Meeting #1 Notice

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) will host a community meeting regarding shoreline enhancements at Lake Nokomis to inform the public about the project and gather feedback regarding the proposed improvements. Shoreline enhancements will seek to stabilize the shore and promote a more naturalized park setting and diverse plant community.

This first community meeting will mainly share project goals, site analysis, and share ideas on any improvements. All are welcome to attend, please join us and share your thoughts. Thank you!

Meeting #1: November 30th, 2017

Start Time: 6:00 pm

Place: Nokomis Community Center, 2401 E. Minnehaha Pkwy, Minneapolis, 55417

For project information contact: Jon Duesman, MPRB Planning Department at 612-230-6471



Apartment building for seniors facing homelessness to open in 2018

Funding puzzle falls into place for Minnehaha Commons, a 43-unit building operated by Alliance Housing

By TESSA M. CHRISTENSEN

Minnehaha Commons, a four-story apartment building for seniors struggling with homelessness, is now fully funded and on track for construction in 2018.

The building (formerly called Frey Flats) will be constructed on the vacant lot at 3001 E. Lake St. and offer 43 studio units to single adults age 55 and over. The land was once home to McMahon's Pub, which burnt down in March 2010, killing six people in the apartments above the bar.

For many, the new apartment building is a fitting way to continue to shelter the same people who once rented low-cost apartments above McMahon's Pub.

Only this time around, the units will be managed by a non-profit that's well known in the community for maintaining a high standard of housing.

Alliance Housing was born out of the vision of St. Stephens' Catholic Church with the goal of creating tangible, long-term housing solutions for homeless families and individuals.

The nonprofit (not religious affiliated) organization was incorporated in 1991 and took advantage of vacant and available properties at low cost in South Minneapolis. Alliance works with people who either can't afford the high market-rate rents or who have difficulty renting because of a prior



Minnehaha Commons, a four-story apartment building for seniors struggling with homelessness, is now fully funded and on track for construction in 2018. The building (formerly called Frey Flats) will be constructed by Alliance Housing, Inc. on the vacant lot at 3001 E. Lake St. and offer 43 studio units to single adults age 55 and over. (Illustration submitted)

eviction, poor financial history, or criminal background.

Alliance's programs and activities include affordable housing development and management, as well as supportive housing programming for families. Its 450 units of housing serve a continuum of single adults to families.

Waiting a year for housing

According to Alliance Housing Inc. (AHI) Executive Director Barbara Jeanetta, the interest list for single adult housing is over 200, and the wait is up over one year.

Fifty-eight-year-old Carl Rogers knows what it is like to wait a year to get housing. He spent the last year homeless, bouncing between shelters and the streets before he got into an Alliance boarding house.

He finds that many people assume you've done something to be homeless and that you're homeless for a reason. But for Rogers, it's hard to find work because of his disability and criminal record. That, combined with his race, makes it hard to find housing, as well.

"I think there are a lot of people like me who end up

being homeless. A lot of times, they can't find an affordable place in the area," said Rogers, who is grateful to now have a place where he pays \$335 a month for a room. "I consider myself one of the lucky ones."

Southside resident Charles MacMillan, age 57, has also found it difficult to find housing he can afford, despite having a job. "The thing about Alliance is they're willing to work with you even if you have a criminal record," said MacMillan, who rents a duplex with two others. He pointed out he's been clean from alcohol and drugs for 17 years and doesn't expect a handout. "It's a place to start out to help you get better in your life," he observed about Alliance.

Number of homeless seniors is growing

Rogers and MacMillan are among the growing number of adults over 55 who are facing homelessness in Hennepin County. The problem is expected to get worse as the number of Baby Boomers over 55 grows in the next decade.

"Last I checked, there were approximately 1,200 homeless adults over age 55 that are homeless (shelter stays)," said Jeanetta. "It's likely higher given the number of people who bounce around with friends or stay outside."

Jeanetta has found that most people don't understand the level of chronic homelessness among adults over 55.

"Many of these adults have never had a place of their own or certainly not for many years," said Jeanetta. "There is a high level of alcoholism and mental illness. Housing has proven to mitigate the problems from both."

Alliance plans to have a capable, experienced service provider on staff at Minnehaha Commons through Touchstone Mental Health that can address underlying mental health conditions, and support whole person wellness and self-sufficiency.

There are good examples of how stable housing and a supportive community envi-

ronment are a foundation for a more positive lifestyle and opportunity to make other positive change. The lack of it leads to other chaos.

A 2012 report sponsored by the Family Housing Fund, "Financial Implications of Public Interventions on Behalf of a Chronically Homeless Family" documented significant savings of public dollars in emergency medical care, foster care, substance abuse treatment and incarceration when people have stable and supportive housing.

In addition, these elder adults are easy victims of assault, theft and other crime that further sets back opportunities for stability.

A shelter bed at Hennepin County cost \$30 a day. A hospital stay at Hennepin County Medical Center for alcohol/drug use treatment is a minimum of \$4,169 a day. A night in jail is \$378 per day.

A room at an Alliance Housing facility costs \$9-15 a day.

According to the Wilder Foundation's homeless survey, seniors are the fastest growing segment of homeless people. Alliance Housing is uniquely positioned to successfully house this population because of its previous experience serving seniors in rooming houses. Alliance's tenant service coordinators and property managers build trusting relationships with tenants, discuss problems, identify options for maintaining housing stability and increasing self-sufficiency, and assist tenants to choose their community services.

Alliance Housing's model offers a solution for housing stability and makes it possible for individuals and families to create homes for themselves, regardless of income and background by developing and managing housing that is: inclusive, affordable, relational, and flexible. Alliance Housing also challenges the environment that limits its residents' opportunities. Neighbors and tenants alike say Alliance's properties are the "best on the block."

Alliance also manages Hiawatha Commons (2740 Minnehaha Ave.) in Longfellow, a four-story, brick apartment building located a short walk from the Hiawatha Light Rail station on Lake St. This transit-oriented, mixed-income project was designed for low-wage workers who work in the neighborhood or at the airport, Mall of America and downtown. The building was opened in 2006, and its 80 units stay leased consistently.

Minnesota Housing recently announced that Alliance Housing would receive \$5,146,302 in deferred funds for Minnehaha Commons. Other funders include the city of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, the Metropolitan Council, the Federal Home Loan Bank, and private investors.

Neighborhood Churches Welcome You!

Bethlehem Covenant Church
3141 43rd Ave. S. • 612-721-5768

www.bethlehemcov.org
Pastor Matt Kennedy
Contemporary Worship - 8:45am
Sunday school for all ages - 10:00 am
Traditional Worship - 11:00am
Español - 1:30pm
Wednesday Meal - 5:45pm
Wednesday Kids choirs and Bible studies 3:45 - 5:45pm
Youth Activities 6:30 - 8:00pm
Kids Pageant December 17 - 9:00 and 10:30am
Candlelight Christmas Eve Services - 10:30am and 10:00pm

Epworth United Methodist
3207 37th Ave. • 612-722-0232

www.epworthumcpls.org
Pastor Steven Reiser
Sunday Worship: 10:30 am (Childcare Provided)
December 3, Noon - 3:30 pm: Advent workshop. Santa with pictures, lunch, arts and crafts for the family.
December 10, 7 pm: Caroling - meet at the church.
December 24, Christmas Eve services: 10:30 am and 7 pm candlelight. (Wheelchair Accessible)

Hiawatha Church
4155 41st Ave S - 612-721-2201

www.hiawathachurch.com
Sunday Morning Worship Gatherings, 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Christmas Eve Service, 9 a.m.
New Year's Eve Service, 9 a.m.

Living Table United Church of Christ

Where there is a place set for you!
3805 40th St. E. • 612-729-7556
www.livingtable.org
Sunday Worship 10:30 am
Adult Education 9:30 am Sunday and 6:30 pm Wednesday
Pastor: Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe
Minister of Music: Kevin Werner Hohlstein
Choir rehearses at 7:30 pm Wednesday - Join us!
Celebrate with us during the 12 Days of Christmas Concert with local artists and choir December 29 at 7PM
Free will offering and refreshments
Open and Affirming

Minnehaha Communion Lutheran
4101 37th Ave. S. • 612-722-9527

www.minnehahacommunion.com
Pastors Dan and Sally Ankerfelt
Sunday Worship - 9:45 am
Sunday School - 9:45 am
December 17: 9:45 am Sunday School Christmas Program, 4 pm Longest Night Service
December 24: 4 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service (Wheelchair Accessible)

Spirit Garage
The Hook & Ladder Theater & Lounge

3010 Minnehaha Ave. • 612-827-1074
www.spiritgarage.org
Worship: Sundays, 10:30am
A Garage Band Xmas Concert IX
Sunday, December 17, 3pm & 5pm
Free Admission, Cookies and Treats!
Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24:
Morning Worship, 10:30am
Evening Worship, 8pm

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
Christmas Eve Masses at 5:00 and 10:00 pm
Christmas Day Mass at 10:00 am (Handicapped accessible)

St. Peder's Evangelical Lutheran
4600 E. 42nd St. • 612-722-8000

www.stpeders.org
Julie A. Ebbesen, Pastor
Sundays: 9 am Worship (childcare available)
10 am Coffee & Fellowship
Dec 17: 9 am Song Service
Xmas Eve Candlelight Services: 2 & 5 pm 3:15 pm in Danish language (Handicap accessible., Braille)

Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls
5212 41st Ave. S. • 612-724-3691

www.trinityfalls.org
Pastor Matt Oxendale
Sunday Worship 10:30 am
Sunday School/kids & adults 9:15 am
Christmas Eve Candlelight 10:00 pm
AA Sun & Tues 7:00 pm

Night Before New Year's Eve

Want to celebrate the New Year with your kids but don't want the late bedtime hassle?

The Night Before New Year's Eve party on Sat., Dec. 30, is a family-oriented, free event chock full of activities, including a "midnight" countdown at 7:15pm. Enjoy a kid-friendly dinner, carnival games, music, and dancing, marshmallow roasting over a bonfire, face painting, and much more! Join in the fun at Lake Nokomis Community Center, 2401 E. Minnehaha Pkwy.

Annual State of the Neighborhood Meeting 2018

The Nokomis East Neighborhood Association State of our Neighborhood community gathering will be held Wed., Jan. 17, 6-8pm, at Morris Park Recreation Center, 5531 39th Ave. S.

Hear from NENA, our business community, elected officials, and other community leaders. This neighborhood conversation will address several topics important to the Nokomis East community. NENA and our guest speakers will discuss plans to continue fostering a vibrant, active Nokomis East in 2018.

New Nokomis East business grants

NENA is now offering the Marketing Matching Grant and the Business Partnerships Grant, ex-

NENA (Nokomis East Neighborhood Association)

4313 54th St. E.

Night Before New Year's Eve planned Dec. 30

Upcoming meetings and events:

11/30/17: City of Mpls. Comprehensive Plan Input Session, Morris Park Rec. Center, 5531 39th Ave. S., 6:30pm

12/8/17: NENA Housing, Commercial, and Streetscape Committee, NENA Office, 4313 E. 54th St., 6:30pm

12/13/17: NENA Green Initiatives Committee, NENA Office, 6:30pm

12/21/17: NENA Board Meeting, NENA Office, 7:00pm

12/30/17: Night Before New Year's Eve, Lake Nokomis Community Center, 2401 E Minnehaha Pkwy 7:30pm

- Web: www.nokomiseast.org • Facebook: www.facebook.com/Nokomiseast
- Twitter: twitter.com/NokomisEast • Email: nena@nokomiseast.org • Phone: (612) 724-5652

clusive to businesses located in Keewaydin, Minnehaha, Morris Park, and Wenonah neighborhoods.

Businesses seeking to update their branding, website, marketing, or looking to attract more customers can apply for a Marketing Matching Grant of up to \$2,000 for their project. This grant matches \$1 for every \$2 spent by the participant.

Two or more Nokomis East businesses that seek to engage in a short or long-term marketing or public engagement partnership can apply for up to \$5,000 in matching funds through the Nokomis East

Business Partnership Grant program.

Contact Program and Communication Manager Lauren Hazenson at lauren.hazenson@nokomiseast.org or go to www.nokomiseast.org for more information.

Volunteer!

Meet your neighbors and shape the future of the neighborhood in just a few hours. NENA needs outreach volunteers to gather community ideas for the Community Snapshot. The Community Snapshot is a chance for Nokomis East residents to work together to

identify the future needs, opportunities, and assets in our community.

As an outreach volunteer you will:

- attend Nokomis East community events,
- meet residents, and
- gather community input

Interested? Want to learn more? Contact Tyra Payer at tyra.payer@nokomiseast.org or 612-724-5652.

NENA loan programs

NENA is now offering two home improvement loan programs. Homes in the Keewaydin, Minnehaha, Morris Park and

Wenonah neighborhoods are eligible. Loan applications are processed on a first-come-first-served basis.

Owners of one to four unit residences can apply for home improvement loans of up to \$15,000 to make improvements to their properties. Owner-occupants and investors may apply. The interest rate is either 3.5% or 4.5% depending on income. No income restriction applies.

A limited amount of Emergency Repair Loan funds are available for emergency repairs. Only owner-occupied households are eligible. Income restrictions apply. The maximum loan amount is \$7,500. The loan is 0% interest, and there are no monthly payments. The loan is due in total on the sale of the property or transfer of title.

For more information or to request an application for either loan program, call the Center for Energy and Environment at 612-335-5884, or visit the CEE website.

Sign up for NENA News

Your Guide to News, Events, and Resources! Get your neighborhood news delivered to your inbox every other Wednesday. Sign up today at www.nokomiseast.org. Once you sign up, you'll receive updates on news and happenings in your neighborhood.

The Messenger staff would like to wish you a joyous holiday season and a happy new year.

Classifieds

Messenger

Want ads must be received by the Messenger by December 11 for the December 21 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, 125 1st Ave. NW, PO Box 168, Minneapolis, MN 55369. Want ads must be mailed to the Messenger before Dec. 11 for the Dec. 21 issue. Ad copy can be e-mailed to denis@deruyternelson.com. Call 651-917-4183 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Messenger's website at www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com

COMPUTER REPAIR/SERVICE

Harmony PC computer repair, service, instruction. Service in your home. 25 years exp. State Courts, Microsoft. Woman-owned. www.harmoniopc.us 651-605-5804. 2-18

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Concrete • Garages
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651-222-8701
www.nillesbuilders.com

EMPLOYMENT

Volunteer & Earn Money! - Seniors Corps is looking for volunteers to assist seniors in your community. Volunteers receive a stipend, mileage reimbursement & other benefits. Contact Kate Lecher 651.310.9447 or kate.lecher@lssmn.org 12-17

HANDYMAN

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-17

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The grain to glass distillery movement is thriving in Longfellow

Article and photos
by STEPHANIE FOX

When Chris Montana grew up around the Longfellow neighborhood, in apartments just off Lake St., few would have guessed that he would become a maker of high-end vodka.

He attended South High School before heading off to college for a degree in English. He then spent time working with Wellstone Action leading to a job with Representative Keith Ellison's office in D.C. Inspired by the political life, he applied to Hamline Law School, was awarded a full Presidential Scholarship, and graduated four years ago.

He joined Fredrikson & Byron law firm, and like many young lawyers he ended up working 12-hour days. But, he still found time for his hobby of home brewing. "I am a fastidious home brewer," he said. "I like porters and stouts; I'm not into IPAs." It was a good life, but it took an unexpected turn, thanks to his brewing hobby.

In 2011, Mark Dayton signed into law "the Surly Bill." The law allowed production breweries to sell pints of their own brew on site. The number of breweries in Minnesota started to grow, from 30 to more than 100. But, said Montana, "While people focused on the beer, but there was a micro-distillery provision in the law," lowering the license fee for distilleries in Minnesota from \$30,000 to \$1,000 for small distillers.

"I got this idea, and it just morphed," he said.

Montana shared his idea with his wife, Shanelle, a Minnesota farm girl, whose parents Mike and Mona Evens still grow corn on their farm near Cold Spring. It was decided the family would open up a craft micro-distillery. The Montanas would run the distillery in Chris's beloved South Minneapolis, and the Evans would grow the corn that would become vodka, gin and more. It would be a real farm to glass production.

Montana procured a \$60,000 loan from Seward Redesign, a neighborhood-based non-profit development consortium. They chose the name Du Nord (French for 'north') in honor of Minnesota and the region, planning to locally or regionally source their ingredients, whenever possible.

Montana bought equipment and started setting up stills in the industrial neighborhood between Hiawatha and Minnehaha Ave. on 32nd St., sharing a building with Shega Foods, an Ethiopian injera bakery. (This will be important, later).

Then, he said, he had to nego-



The sign outside Du Nord.

tiolate his way through a maze of regulations and rules. Some days, he'd leave the law firm, driving to the soon-to-be distillery, to meet an inspector or another official. "I had to come down here, take off my jacket, put on coveralls, then change back."

It was too much. "I had a brand new kid; I was sleeping 2-hours a night. I was under-capitalized, creating a new business. But, I jumped in with both feet," he says. He left the law firm in 2014 to become a full-time distiller.

When Du Nord Craft Spirits opened its doors in 2013, it was the first mini-distillery in Minneapolis, joining the new move to high-end craft vodkas and gins that began with the 100-year old macro Minneapolis distillery Phillips, that introduced the first American fancy vodka, Prairie Vodka, almost ten years ago.

Phillips sells an estimated 1.5 million gallons of alcohol of various types every year. Micro-distilleries like Du Nord have to keep their production below 20,000 proof gallons to keep their \$1,000 license. In the future, if they grow to produce up to 40,000 proof gallons, their license cost would double. (A proof-gallon is the equivalent of a gallon that's half alcohol and half water.) This year, Du Nord has turned out about eight thousand proof gallons.

Montana had learned about the science of distilling, he says, but what helped the most was his understanding of the law and the lobbying process. While the tax laws for distilleries had changed, spirits makers were still not allowed to sell their products on site. The Minnesota Distillers Guild, whose president was Du Nord's co-owner and wife Shanelle Montana (also a professional renewable energy and public policy advocate,) lobbied to change that.

In 2014, the state legislature passed a liquor bill finally allowing distillers to open cocktail rooms, a distiller's version of a brewery tap-



Casks of craft spirits.

rooms where distillers could sell shots and cocktails to show off their products.

It's an important part of marketing for places like Du Nord, says Montana. "The cocktail room generates income and gives people access to your product. If we didn't have the cocktail room, we wouldn't exist."

"Someone might spend a couple of dollars to try a new micro-brew, but \$30 for a bottle of vodka or gin, that's a different threshold. But, if they have a chance to try it in a cocktail, they might want to splurge on a bottle. It's a way to say, here's a product and here's how to use it."

Small distilleries are in a unique market category, Montana says, based more on getting people to make a move from standard drinks to high-end craft products.

"Big Liquor, they have their own market. We don't compete directly with them. We don't even compete with other local micro-distilleries like Tattersall. We both need to let people know we exist. We all need to pick up the customers who are new to the craft products. If someone is breaking away from big liquor booze, they might try Tattersall, and next time they will try Du Nord."

A couple of years ago, Montana talked his in-laws into switching their corn crop to a non-GMO variety. The corn gives the product a slight sweetness not found in regular wheat distilled alcohol. There are bins of corn, ready to be milled down to flour and made into mash. They use a cold cook process, a fermentation process that takes longer than hot methods.

"The corn is hard," Montana says. "It doesn't accept water in the same way as many other grains. It takes 8-days to cold cook rather than a couple of hours."

"Corn has a lot of oil and not much protein. The alcohol binds to the oil, so you get a lot of flavor," he says.

Du Nord's Cocktail Room, which opened on Jan. 9, 2015, is a relaxed and cozy space that serves mixed drinks at tables or the bar, with a view of the distillery through



Christ Montana in front of some distilling equipment.

a set of windows.

L'étoile Vodka has a complex flavor caused by the corn-based unconverted sugar. Fitzgerald Gin, the name inspired by the iconic local novelist, has 80 pounds of botanicals like angelica, juniper, coriander seeds, and lemon, in each batch. Both received gold medals at the Denver International Spirits Competition. They also serve silver medal winner Apple Du Nord, a 30 percent concoction reminiscent of apple pie.

There's Café Frieda, a new coffee-flavored liquor named after one of Chris's high school English and theater teachers, a mentor, he says. In her honor, he gives a \$2 discount to teachers.

Du Nord may soon be coming out with their own bourbon-style whiskey (name yet to be chosen) and a pear brandy.

Montana is also interested in creating more exotic versions of booze. Du Nord's next-door neighbor, Worku Mindaye, owner of the injera bakery, Shega, returned from a trip to his homeland with a bottle

of a local specialty liquor, arque. It's a traditional smoky, grassy tasting drink, made over open fires in clay pots, mostly in villages and mostly by women. But, it's unclear how to proceed, since there are no clear rules for making arque. It's even unclear what the base grain (wheat, sorghum, maize?) might be. Montana's on the lookout for more information, he says. "There might not be a big market for it, but it would be fun to make."

For now, the cocktail room is open, and Du Nord's bottles are available on the shelves in local liquor stores. Montana foresees a healthy growth in micro-distilleries for the next decade. He is also spending time traveling to D.C. to lobby for tax breaks for businesses like his. And, he keeps busy with his three young children, one only 3-months old.

For now, the cocktail room outsells the distillery, but he is confident that this will flip. Micro-distilleries and Du Nord, he says, are in it for the long term.

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MakeRoom Artist Residency launching in Longfellow in 2018

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Longfellow resident Thomas Wegner has created an opportunity he calls the MakeRoom Artist Residency, and he is ready to start taking applications for 2018. The residency will offer one artist (or two collaborating artists) the time and space to focus on their art for ten days—free of charge.

The MakeRoom Artist Residency will provide use of the common spaces of Wegner's home, a private bedroom with two twin beds, a work desk, design books, and high-speed internet. The artist residency will not provide tools, materials, additional studio space, or specialized equipment. Children and pets are not allowed.

Thomas Wegner is a self-described maker. His pleasant home is full of functional things he has designed and built by hand. Wegner said, "I often make something when I need it. For instance, if I need a stool to put my feet up, I don't go out to a big box store and buy it. I make it myself. I've been making things for as long as I can remember."

Wegner's natural eye for design drew him to design school after a first career spent working in social services on the west coast. A 2010 graduate with an interior design degree, he said, "I've always had lots of ideas, but when I went to design school, I really learned how to move my ideas off paper and into reality. Design combines problem-solving, use of materials, and the skills necessary to put something together."

Wegner has put something very special together with the MakeRoom Artist Residency, literally making room in his own home for others to nurture their creative talents. Individuals or collaborating pairs who are writers, illustrators, painters, photographers, designers, filmmakers, or performance artists living outside of the Twin Cities are welcome to apply for this free, 10-day residency. Applicants do not need to be making their livelihood from their art, and they may be emerging or established artists/makers.

Ideally, the residency will take place in February or March, but Wegner said he could be flexible with the timing. While he thinks that winter is the perfect time to come to Minnesota to hunker down, focus, and be creative, he recognizes that some visitors may prefer to come in warmer months.

The MakeRoom Artist Residency will offer free lodging, a welcome dinner, a light breakfast each day, and the opportunity for an artist or pair of collaborators to focus on their work, gain inspiration, and take in the rich cultural life of the Twin Cities. If a person's medium is very big or messy, the 10-day residency could also be used as a networking opportunity to connect with artists or administrators in the creative community.

The person(s) selected for the MakeRoom Artist Residency agree to attend a welcome dinner, add to the project archive, and present their work at a ca-



Thomas Wegner is a self-described maker. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



One of the many creative projects that fill Wegner's home. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

sual in-home reception before a small group of friends. There is no cost to apply, and the application can be found at www.make--room.com. (Note: two dashes in the web address)

Wegner is known as a gracious, well-seasoned host, having welcomed many guests into his home through Airbnb. "I have found complete joy in being a host these last few years," he said. "As an interior designer, my artwork is all three dimensional. It needs to be sat in, lived in, viewed, and experienced."

"A huge benefit that's come out of hosting is that the world seems like a friendlier place," Wegner said. Since the emergence of Airbnb, millions of people around the world have become hosts and guests and, in those moments, have experienced the simple gift of hospitality. In many cases, strangers have become friends. This platform, being a host, it has been incredibly enriching for me."

Wegner concluded, "The idea for the MakeRoom Artist Residency came from these two elements in my life—being both a maker and a host. Over time, it became clear that creating an artistic residency program was the perfect combination of the

two. Coming to my home in Longfellow as a resident artist is different than going to an established institution. I'm not asking the participant(s) to follow my agenda; it's very much for them to get what they need out of the experience."



Thomas Wegner, maker, host, and creator of the MakeRoom Artist Residency, surrounded by objects and elements of his own design. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

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