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Longfellow Girl Scout Troop 16566 learns 'every voice matters'

By TESHAM CHRISTENSEN

Eleven Dowling Elementary fifth graders in Girl Scout Troop 16566 are concerned about safety on the streets around their school, and they went to city hall on Nov. 29 to ask the City Council to do something about it.

Nine of the 11 troop members also serve on the safety patrol at Dowling.

"First of all, we would like to have 4-way stop signs at the intersection of E. 38th St. and Edmund Blvd., and at the intersection of Dowling St. and Edmund Blvd., and at the entrance to the school parking lot at Dowling St. and 48th Ave.," said spokesperson Hannah Dobish, age 10, during the City Council budget hearing. "I do safety patrol on those corners, on different days, and I can tell you that cars go way too fast and careless through all these intersections."

"Secondly, we propose to make Edmund Blvd. a one-way, southbound street, starting at Dowling St. until Folwell Dr." Dobish continued during her two-minute speech. "All the school buses line up along Edmund Blvd., and the street is just too narrow to have traffic in both directions plus parents trying to drop kids off and cross in front of buses. And if someone is parked on the street, then two-way traffic is near impossible."

"We, as Girl Scouts and as



Members of Girl Scout Troop 16566 pose outside Minneapolis City Hall after touring it, attending a reception with female department heads, and speaking during a city council budget hearing on Nov. 29. Girl Scout members include Dowling Elementary fifth-graders Hadley Dobish, Violet Mueller, Emilie Numrich, Maura Davis, Yossi Enestvedt, Suzi Priest, Soledad Serena, Khloe Albertson, Hazel Murphy, Abby May, and Giovanna Zanabria. Troop leaders are Leah Drury and Karrie Mueller. (Photo submitted)



Girl Scout spokesperson Hannah Dobish, age 10, asks city council members to consider street safety improvements around Dowling Elementary School, and all other schools in the city during a council budget hearing on Nov. 29. (Photo submitted)



Ward 12 Council Member Andrew Johnson chats with members of Girl Scout Troop 16566 in the city hall chambers during a visit on Nov. 29. The Girl Scouts learned about the importance of citizen involvement in government. (Photo submitted)

Girl Scouts share ideas about improving safety on streets around Dowling Elementary during city budget hearing

safety patrol, agree that if we can get this short stretch of street, turned into a one-way street, it would be a great benefit to the whole community, to keep kids safe."

The Girl Scouts didn't stop there.

"Ideally, we hope the city can look at all intersec-

tions around schools in Minneapolis, and make sure that all schools have as many stop signs and safety considerations as possible," said Dobish. "In this day of distracted driving with cell phones, we think it is necessary for these precautions to keep kids safe."

"Thank you for listening,

and for helping us figure out how to make our ideas a reality and improve our city!"

The Girl Scouts were the first on the meeting agenda, because, as City Council President Barb Johnson, explained, she had been a Girl Scout and a troop leader.

"In my four years of lis-

tening to the public while considering the budget, these speakers really stood out; they clearly identified their concerns, brought forward potential solutions, and even had an accompanying illustration (a first!)," remarked Ward 12 Council Member Andrew Johnson. "They tied their localized concerns (at Dowling school) to a broader ask for more city-wide attention to school safety. I could tell that the full City Council was just as impressed with them as I was."

The council ultimately passed a budget that included two new positions dedicated to improving pedestrian safety, and part of their work will be focused on schools. The ideas from the Girl Scout Troop were also duly noted and are being looked into, according to Johnson.

Girl Scout members include Dowling Elementary fifth-graders Dobish, Violet Mueller, Emilie Numrich, Maura Davis, Yossi Enestvedt, Suzi Priest, Soledad Serena, Khloe Albertson, Hazel Murphy, Abby May, and Giovanna Zanabria.

Dobish's mom, Leah Drury, serves as co-leader of the troop that formed when the girls were in first grade. "Marian Wright Edelman's quote, 'You can't be what you can't see,' has always resonated

Continued on page 4

Snelling Yards development in preliminary stages; input sought

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Snelling Yards is the name of a parcel of land between 44th and 45th streets, and Hiawatha and Snelling avenues. The City of Minneapolis has owned the land for more than 60 years, using it most recently as a storage facility.

According to Steve Minn, project principal with Lupe Development, his company along with partners Wall Construction and Ecumen (a non-profit that focuses on innovative housing for seniors) was awarded exclusive development rights for the property in August of this year.

"We partnered with the Longfellow Community Council for a meeting in October that was minimally attended," Minn said. "Afterward, our partners huddled and agreed that this project was not going to succeed without neighborhood input and par-

ticipation. We mailed a letter to every resident in the immediate impact area (125 residents) that explained the project and invited them to our next neighborhood meeting held Dec. 11."

He continued, "We want to clarify to the neighborhood what affordable housing means from a development standpoint. Our company has holdings of more than 1,000 affordable rental units across the Metro. The average income of our renters is \$32,000-\$38,000 for a household of two, and up to \$44,000 for a household of four. We create housing for people who go to work every day."

To underscore the impact of the affordable housing shortage in the Twin Cities, Minn said, "We have a flagship development

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The Snelling Yards as they appear today on Snelling Ave. between 44th and 45th streets. If the two, five-story buildings that comprise the Snelling Yards Development are approved and constructed, they will be completed in 2020 at the earliest. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

(Inset) Diagram of proposed development at the Snelling Yards. (Provided by Lupe Development)

For some, homelessness is sometimes just an illness away

By JAN WILLMS

You have no privacy.
You have no place to rest.
If you are sick, you have no place to lie down.

These are some of the most significant challenges of being homeless, according to Fernando Anderson.

Anderson is a young man who grew up in St. Paul's Rondo area. "My dad was active in the community," he said. "He was an election judge and a delegate for the DFL."

But medical issues and unpaid student loans set Anderson on the road to homelessness.

"I was going out to college in Mesa, AZ, but I kept getting sick," Anderson recalled. He was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis, an auto-immune disease that attacked his stomach. "I was hospitalized two to three times, and I am supposed to have a couple of surgeries," he noted. "I was bleeding inside."

Anderson decided to return to Minnesota. He fell behind on school loans. He hoped to get enough money from a tax refund to get back on his feet, but the government took the refund.

Anderson now resides in a homeless shelter at Nicolett and 28th, sponsored by the Simpson Methodist Church. "It's one of the better shelters," Anderson said. "They offer free clothes, and people from restaurants donate and cook food."

He said the shelter resembles a dorm, with a men's section and women's section. People sleep in bunk beds.

"Altogether there are about 70 people in that shelter," Anderson said. "But because it is cold out, the shelter has been full. There are couches and a dining room, and they have been letting people sleep on the couches. They have reached a maximum of 73 people." The shelter lets people stay from 5pm until 9am, and then everyone has to leave for the day.

"I am in a situation where I am supposed to be resting," Anderson continued, "but I have to leave. And sometimes I have nowhere to go. I was frozen out of my car the day before yesterday, and it was really cold. I was stuck outside at the shelter for an hour and a half because they don't let you come back in."

Anderson said people who are sick are not separated from those who are not, and the situation can be difficult.

"The other day a person with Stage 4 throat cancer passed out. She has been working, but she doesn't get a chance to rest. I think the person was just exhausted," he said.

Anderson said he thinks what would help most in reducing homelessness is a change in laws so that credit checks and bankruptcy checks could not prevent people from getting housing.

"The fellow who bunks above me has been working at Valvoline for ten years, but he can't get into a place because of his background and credit. He has a son, who stays with his cousin, because he can't get housing, even though he has been saving up."

Anderson said some people who are in the shelter are working, trying to save up enough to find a place to live. "They pay application fees, but are then denied for poor credit or a checkered past," he said.

There is definitely a stigma to



Fernando Anderson at Seward Co-op in the Seward neighborhood. It's a place he often stops by for healthy food options while he is homeless. (Photo by Jan Willms)

being homeless, according to Anderson. "Society thinks a lot of homeless people are on drugs or alcohol. I am not, and I have a clean rental history, but my credit is bad. And so that has prevented me from getting housing."

"A lot of people see people like us, and they think we don't have skills or don't want to do anything. I have had my own business since 2009. It's a small business; I do a little bit of landscaping."

He said that in his situation, he was working but not earning enough to prove he could pay rent.

Bernadette, who did not want to give her last name, said that she is concerned about women in general who are forced to live in a shelter.

"We like to have our dignity," she said. "Some women do not know how to take care of themselves, and others do, but we are all lumped together. Some of us are older, and we have raised our children, and we are used to doing for ourselves. Some thought they would be able to stabilize themselves, but things got worse, and they have fallen through the

cracks." Bernadette stressed the importance of hygiene in a shelter, as she commented that some think because you are homeless you are not clean.

"Some of the women in shelters need to be in recovery; others are ill and having a hard time. They should separate us into categories, rather than all in the same place. I do think those who are ill should have a priority in getting housing," she said. "What is needed most is for women to get themselves back on their feet, and get help with the steps needed to get housing."

Anderson said he understands how people's spirits can go down. "I know that discouragement everyone is feeling. I have felt it myself." Anderson recalled the work he has done from volunteering in the block club with his father to working with Save Our City Kids, Step Up, the U of M. "I have delivered papers, cut grass, raked leaves, helped seniors and been involved in community engagement work," he said. But he is concerned about his need for two more surgeries and his credit difficulties getting

in the way of moving forward. "I see people much sicker than I am who are not getting affordable housing. So I am not optimistic about any person in my situation who is going to pull themselves up by their bootstraps."

And yet, Anderson does look toward a brighter future. He said he is passionate about teaching

people about sustainable living, agriculture and ending hunger. "I want to empower people to take care of themselves," he said. In that vein, he has started a website at www.youcaring.com/fernando-1039216. He is hoping that by raising himself out of homelessness, he can help others to do the same.

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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F.E.M.A. focuses on physical and mental martial arts training

Non-profit builds community by empowering the helpless and at-risk, while offering classes for everyone

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

The Five Elements Martial Arts (F.E.M.A.) and Healing Center is like no other martial arts school that Longfellow resident Kristy Papenfuss has been involved in.

It isn't about competition or testing-based. The school incorporates both Chinese and Japanese elements. The focus is on mind, body, and spirit, she pointed out. Students learn martial arts moves, while also learning about the cultural and historical philosophies of martial arts. Plus, they learn meditation skills.

"I think it's valuable for everyone to learn how to calm themselves and to be present," Papenfuss observed. "It is important for children to learn that from a young age, too."

Her daughter, Sage, has been involved in the F.E.M.A. Little Elements class on Wednesday nights since she was three and one-half. Papenfuss appreciates how her five-year-old has learned better coordination, in addition to physical body awareness and strength. Plus, she's learning how to take care of and protect herself. Those physical skills are balanced with how to be kind.

Martial arts without ego

F.E.M.A. Executive Director and Head Instructor Koré Grate has been a part of F.E.M.A. since its start 28 years ago.

"I think the biggest challenge is to try to put into words what F.E.M.A. does to help this planet be a better place one person at a time," remarked Grate. "I keep creating new ways to get students to come in and see who and what we are. Outreach only goes so far... it's when a person comes in and watches a class do they see what goes on and get excited to join."

As the website states, "Essentially, martial arts are about learning how to face conflict and work with others."

"Our dojo is a wonderful place to learn and experience, not only the martial arts, but creative ways to deepen, strengthen and expand body, mind, and spirit," said Grate. "Our system of martial arts is set up to train people to help others by teaching once they have knowledge and experience."

"We train both externally and internally, learning to listen to our bodies, minds, and spirits, using compassion as our guide."

F.E.M.A. focuses on the Wu Chien Pai limitless style founded by Dr. Alex Feng. This eclectic style includes Taiji and Qigong, Gong Fu (Kung Fu), Judo and Jujitsu, healing arts and meditation, and Iaido (Japanese Sword).

Self-defense, empowerment, and wellness programs are also

Continued on page 11



F.E.M.A. head instructor Koré Grate (left) practices swordplay with student Su Sandon during an Iaido class. "There is a wonderful dichotomy in Iaido," observed Iaido co-instructor Aric Stewart. "Beginners tell me they love it because, being solitary forms, they are not pressured by anyone else to have to react or perform in a particular way." (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

Snelling Yards

Continued from page 1

called the Mill City Quarter along the Mississippi River near Downtown Minneapolis that we're trying to replicate with the Snelling Yards. It consists of 150 units of what we call 'affordable workforce housing.' We have 0% vacancy there, and more than 1,200 names on the waiting list. In the last 12 months, 20 units became available and were rented in less than four hours. Finding affordable housing is nearly impossible in the Twin Cities right now. The pace of replacement just can't keep up with the pace of loss."

Affordable housing is created in the following way. Developers of an affordable housing project can take a federal tax credit equal to a percentage of the cost incurred for development. Developers typically propose and complete a project, certify its cost, and rent to tenants who meet certain income guidelines. The tenants must demonstrate their income eligibility each year. The developers agree to limit rents for 30 years, following rent tables that

are indexed to an area's median income. After 30 years, the developers may raise rents to market rates—ending their commitment to providing affordable housing. Affordable housing is meant to bridge the gap between market-rate housing, and what lower income earning renters can afford.

The Snelling Yards Development is designed as an inter-generational campus of affordable workforce and senior housing oriented to the existing Hiawatha Corridor transit infrastructure. The five-story workforce housing building will have 125 one and two bedroom units, underground parking for 69 cars, and above ground parking for 22 cars. The five-story senior housing building will have 128 one and two bedroom units, underground parking for 69 cars, and above ground parking for 40 cars.

The intent is also to create the first connective block of bike and pedestrian access between the Sabo Bridge and Minnehaha Park, in what is being envisioned as a substantial "Greenway of the Future" along Hiawatha Ave.

"Our development team believes that the Snelling Yards will

be a demonstration project of extraordinary value," Minn said. "We will provide durable cement exterior materials, architectural grade metal, high-performance sound mitigation, and quality interior finishes that rival market rate properties. Our design choices will compliment the neighborhood, including over-sized warehouse-style windows in accordance with some of the surrounding buildings."

The Snelling Yards Development website states that, "Longfellow has a substantial aging-in-place population living in single-family homes, and an even larger workforce population that wants quality, affordable housing at a variety of price points. We believe that our housing options will add vibrancy to the neighborhood, and address a chronic shortage of affordable housing in the community."

If the project goes through as proposed, it will include a combination of green spaces and public amenities, coupled with high quality, sustainable development practices. On the Snelling Ave. side, the two buildings will share a Green Commons and a pocket park built over an infiltration stormwater management system. The system will remove no less than 70% of the total suspended solids in stormwater (90% if the project is selected by the Mississippi Water Management Organization for demonstration purposes.)

The development team plans to incorporate a 40 kW photovoltaic solar collection system on at least one of the two buildings. The system would be made possible by the Minnesota-Made Solar Rewards Program, and subject to the award of certain federal and state tax credits. Few housing development teams in the Twin Cities have the combined solar and tax credit experience to build such a system into an affordable housing project.

For more information on the Snelling Yards Development, or to hear results of the public meeting held at the Longfellow Recreation Center on Dec. 11 (after the Messenger deadline), email cameron.flakne@gmail.com or call him at 612-843-4068.

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Longfellow Girl Scout Troop

Continued from page 1

with me as a parent, and now as a Girl Scout troop leader," observed Drury.

"I hope that by exposing the girls in the troop to even a small sliver of what happens in City Hall and in Minneapolis government," Drury added, "it will contribute to their growing world view and leadership skills—and we will see strong female leaders emerge from this experience in the not-so-distant future!"

Striving towards highest honor

In addition to attending and speaking at the city council meeting, the Girl Scouts also toured city hall and had dinner with some of the females working behind the scenes to make things happen in city government.

Their excursion and work preparing for it earned them each an "Inside Government" badge. They are also striving to earn the Bronze award, one of the highest honors a Girl Scout Junior can earn. It requires working together as a group to identify a need in the community, and put in 20 hours of service to do something that will have a lasting impact.

"Our troop has been talking all fall about, 'What can we do to help our city?' And we decided to keep it local and connected to our school, since we spend so much time there!" explained Dobish, who met council member Johnson during a block part in her Ericsson neighborhood earlier this year. During that conver-

"My hope is that by exposing the girls in the troop to even a small sliver of what happens in City Hall and in Minneapolis government, it will contribute to their growing world view and leadership."

— Leah Drury

sion, Johnson suggested that her Girl Scout troop visit city hall, and then helped arrange it, timing it with the city's budget hearing.

Every voice matters

Troop 16566 is part of the Lake Nokomis/Stone Arch Service Unit in the River Valleys Girl Scout Council. This year, the national council has launched the G.I.R.L. (go-getter, innovator, risk-taker, and leadership) experience. The focus is on four areas of leadership: STEM, Outdoor Skills, Entrepreneurship and Life Skills.

"Our troop is working towards being future leaders, and they were so honored to have the women leaders of our city take time to eat pizza with them," remarked Co-Leader Karrie Mueller, who lives in Morris Park. "The girls also enjoyed hearing about our women leaders' childhood 'aha' moments which propelled them into the leadership/civil service positions they hold today."

The leaders the Girl Scouts met with included: Minne-

apolis Health Commissioner Gretchen Musican, Director of Public Works Robin Hutcheson, Deputy Director of Public Works/City Engineer Lisa Cerney, Regulatory Services Operations Director Kim Keller, Director of Civil Rights Velma Korb, Director of Human Resources Patience Ferguson, and Deputy City Coordinator Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde.

"The girls learned about how they can make an impact on a local level, and that there are many people behind the scenes all working to make Minneapolis work and are continually working to improve the city. Meeting the women in charge of the departments of engineering, regulatory services, civil rights, and more, opened up their view of the ways to be involved," stated Drury. "Seeing the hallways full of people waiting for their turn to speak to the council, and listening to some of the speakers share their requests for the city budget, also made quite an impact about the importance of citizen involvement and how every voice matters."

Johnson remarked, "As these girls grow up and choose career paths they are passionate about, I hope they consider public service—they can be the civil engineers, public health professionals, firefighters, animal care and control veterinarians, department leaders, and council members of tomorrow!"

He added, "The younger you are, the longer you'll have to live with the decisions being made, so help make them!"

Highlights of Girl Scout Troop 16566's visit to Minneapolis City Hall

Hannah Dobish

"I liked the huge statue called Mississippi and that it was good luck to rub his toe. I needed that good luck before I talked in a microphone in front of the City Council. I also learned that there are way more jobs involved in running the city than you think. I liked learning about animal control!"

Yossi Enestvedt

"There were a lot of women working there at the top, like the woman engineer who had worked there a long time, and it was cool to see a lot of women in the room who were in charge along with the men. It was an experience that was amazing to me, and I want to go back again!"

Maura Davis

"[The best part was] seeing some of the cool things such as the statues and the tiles engraved by people and the fake marble in the building. I also enjoyed going to the city council meeting and seeing the cool designs on the wall and listening to people speak. While we were eating pizza, I also enjoyed hearing important women talk to us about their jobs and getting to ask them questions."

Soledad Serena

"Some of the highlights about visiting City Hall were: Learning about the jobs of the people who work at City Hall, visiting the library, and learning about some of the history of City Hall."

Violet Mueller

"Got to meet some really cool people like the mayor-elect, but the most amazing was all the GIRL POWER that runs our city- yeah! The man of the Mississippi statue was pretty cool, too, and it turns out he has a lucky toe."

Khloe Albertson

"The people that worked there were the best part because I like the job that they do. It seems like a really cool job."

Emilie Numrich

"I really liked that I was able to see the whole City Hall and learn how it was built. It was exciting to have some of my friends speak to the City Council. I really liked meeting the new Mayor. Thank you to the City Council members for allowing us to do this. I am glad that my City Council Member Andrew Johnson was a nice as I thought he would be."

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

In 2018, NENA, along with many others, have plans to make our neighborhood even better. Come to the State of our Neighborhood meeting to learn more.

On the Agenda:

- State Representative Jean Wagenius
- Council Member Jeremy Schroeder (Ward 11)
- Council Member Andrew Johnson (Ward 12)
- Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission Member Isaac Russell
- LaShawn Ray, Principal, LNCS Keewaydin School
- Heather Wambach, Patron Experience Supervisor, Hennepin County Library Nokomis and Roosevelt
- Suzanne Stephenson, Librarian, Hennepin County Library
- Nokomis East Neighborhood Association
- Nokomis East Business Association

Nokomis East Green Fair

You may know that sustainable, energy-efficient practices at home and work help retain the natural beauty of our community, reduce waste, and can even save you some money. However, sometimes the wealth of information available can seem daunting. Join us in January for a one stop shop and get individualized attention

NENA (Nokomis East Neighborhood Association)

4313 54th St. E.

Annual State of the Neighborhood Meeting 2018

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- 1/8, 6:30pm: NENA Housing, Commercial, and Streetscape Committee, NENA Office, 4313 E. 54th St.
- 1/18, 6:30pm: NENA Green Initiatives Committee, NENA Office
- 1/18, 7pm: NENA Board Meeting, NENA Office
- 1/17, 6pm: State Of Our Neighborhood, Morris Park Rec. Center, 5531 39th Ave. S.
- 1/27, 12pm: Nokomis Green Fair, Nokomis Community Center, 2401 E. Minnehaha Pkwy.

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and advice.

The inaugural Nokomis East Green Fair will be Sat., Jan. 27, 12-3pm at the Nokomis Community Center, 2401 E. Minnehaha Pkwy.

The event will feature information booths and demonstrations to assist you with creating a more green lifestyle. Learn how to make your yard more climate change resilient, lower your car's carbon footprint while improving gas mileage, and other useful tips. A child play area with activities will be provided for families attending the fair. The first 100 visitors to the Green Fair will receive a FREE kitchen compost pail!

Does your organization or business have a sustainability focus? Exhibitor booths are free for this event! Contact Program and Communication Manager

Lauren Hazenson lauren.hazenson@nokomiseast.org to receive out an application.

For home-based business professionals

There will be an event held in Nokomis East to bring together area home-based business professionals on Tues., Jan. 16, 6:30pm in the lower level event center of McDonald's Liquors, 5010 34th Ave. S.

Nokomis East Business Association (NEBA) has announced an important initiative to identify and attract to membership the growing number of home-based professionals who live and work in the Nokomis East neighborhoods (Keewaydin, Wenonah, Minnehaha, Morris Park). NEBA believes it exists to serve, represent, and promote not only business professionals who operate

out of commercial space, but also those who work from their residences.

The January gathering will be coordinated by NEBA board members. Those who attend will be encouraged to share their thoughts surrounding how they envision a group of area home-based professionals may best serve all those involved. It is hoped there will be a spirited exchange of ideas, and that those present will take ownership of how they would like to see the group evolve within NEBA. If you work predominantly from home and are self-employed or work for others, you are welcome to attend.

The event will include a facilitated discussion surrounding five broad categories believed to be of concern to many home-based workers. Refreshments will

be provided.

Preregistration is encouraged. To register or for additional information contact NEBA board member Bob Albrecht, 612-910-2272 or Bob@BobAlbrechtRealEstate.com.

Fix-It Clinic coming

Got broken stuff at home? Learn valuable repair skills at an upcoming Fix-It Clinic. Residents bring in small household appliances, clothing, electronics, mobile devices and more, and receive free guided assistance from volunteers with repair skills to disassemble, troubleshoot, and fix their items.

Hennepin County will be holding a Fix-It Clinic Sat., Feb. 10 from 12-4pm at Cross-town Covenant Church, 5540 30th Ave. S. Fix-It Clinics teach valuable troubleshooting and basic repair skills, build community connections and reduce the number of repairable objects that are thrown in the trash.

For more information, visit www.hennepin.us/fixitclinic or contact program coordinator Nancy Lo at nancy.lo@hennepin.us or 612-348-9195.

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Mactír Irish dance owner loves freedom of running her own business

Dancers learn life skills—time management, teamwork, critical thinking, communication—while learning routines

By TESSA M. CHRISTENSEN

For Mactír Academy of Irish Dance studio owner Emily Wolff, opening her own business has been one of the most rewarding experiences of her life.

"To have the opportunity to do something I love every day feels like a dream come true," remarked Wolff, who runs the dance studio at 2241 E. 38th St.

"My advice to other small business owners is to always push yourself out of your comfort zone, try new things, and keep trying them. Your business needs will always evolve, and you have to be ready to adapt when that happens!"

She also encourages new business owners to have a long-term vision for the business at the start. "Build your business mission and philosophy from day one, and then let that drive how your business grows and evolves," stated Wolff. "When you are in times of major growth or change, go back to that mission and philosophy to help push you forward."

For Wolff, the most significant challenges she faces center



Mactír Academy of Irish Dance studio owner Emily Wolff lives just four blocks from the studio in Corcoran. (Photo submitted)

on the business side of things. "While I can run the accounting side of things, and track costume inventory, it's certainly not my favorite thing to do,"

she remarked. "However, it's all well worth it to have the freedom to run my business the way I choose to run it. When you are the owner and director of the



Mactír Academy advanced dancers perform their opening number at the 2017 Irish Fair of Minnesota. Left to Right: Bella Johnson, Julia Amerongen, Mallorie Moe, Zoe Sullivan, Aislin James, Lillian Pettigrew, Kendal Ellingson, Caoimhe Woodburn, Hannah Martinez, Abby Moe, and Maddy Lemay. (Photo submitted)



Some Mactír Academy's beginner and intermediate dancers greet the MC before a St. Patrick's Day show at Hale Elementary. Left to Right: Amelia Schmidt, Silje Wicker, Connor Luby, and Berit Wicker. (Photo submitted)

school, you set the tone for how your dancers and families make an impact in the community."

She also loves the hands-on nature of what she does.

"I never opened a dance school so I could sit in my office all day," said Wolff. "Teaching classes six days a week and working with people of all ages is just the type of environment where I thrive. I love that I can showcase both my creativity and my leadership, skills!"

SENA good fit for school

Mactír Academy opened in the spring of 2013 in the "Eat Street" area in the Old Arizona Building along Nicollet. The school moved to its current location in the Standish-Ericsson neighborhood in June of 2015.

While it was a pure coincidence that the dance studio ended up in the SENA neighborhood, it has been a great fit for the Mactír community. Wolff had set out to find a larger space and knew she wanted the school to remain in Minneapolis as it is the only performance and competitive school that is based Minneapolis.

"Our dance families absolutely love the neighborhood, and we have built fast connections with the elementary schools in the area, with many of our dancers attending schools in the neighborhood," remarked Wolff.

Over 125 students take classes for all ages and abilities. The youngest dancers, the "Wolf Pups," start as young as three years old. From there Mactír offers beginner, intermediate, and advanced level classes to children and teenagers. Dancers attend classes anywhere from 1-4 times per week depending on their age and level. Mactír offers both competitive classes and team performance classes, based on the time of year.

There is also a thriving adult program at Mactír. Three levels of adult classes are offered, and beginner adults can start throughout the year with the six-week skills classes on Mondays.

Learning life skills

As a child, Wolff grew up two doors down from the editor of "The Irish Gazette," Jim Brooks. He had a daughter about her age, and the two were friends. When Irish Dancing became popular again in the early 1990s with

the start of Riverdance, a school opened in St. Paul.

"I was four years old, and my parents really didn't have a strong Irish heritage, but they thought it would be something fun for me to do with my friends," noted Wolff. "Our classes were held in bar basements and church gyms, but we were having so much fun."

The school she started at has long since closed, but she kept right on dancing. Now she's been dancing and teaching for 25 years.

"I love that Irish Dance is about so much more than dance," observed Wolff. "Yes, it keeps me fit, and my mind working in unique ways, but it's the life skills that I have learned that are the most valuable to me, and something that I try and instill in my dancers now. From time management, to communication, to teamwork, to critical thinking, Irish dance has so many more benefits than people realize."

Wolff also loves the social aspect of Irish Dance.

"Irish dance is such a unique sport. It can be done in so many different environments," she pointed out. "I have performed and competed all over the country from a nursing home in Alexandria, Minn., to dancing at the largest Irish Festival in the world with International musicians. Irish Dancers can dance in the most informal settings, and the most elegant of affairs and still fit right in."

Striving for excellence

According to Wolff, Mactír Academy strives to be the premiere team-based competition school in Minnesota, where dancers and families choose their own journey. That may be going to a couple of feiseanna (competitions) a year, performing with local and international bands, or competing in the Irish Dance World Championships.

"Our dancers are taught to always strive for excellence in and out of the dance studio and take those skills with them wherever life takes them," stated Wolff.

The school's next big performance season will be in March. "St. Patrick's Day is our busiest day of the year!" said Wolff. "You can catch us at the Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul on Mar. 17 and 18, and also in the Minneapolis Parade on Mar. 17."

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Urban Forage taproom fulfills dream owner didn't think would be realized

Locally foraged fruits and other items provide unique, chemical-free wines and ciders not found anywhere else

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Just as he forages for the ingredients to make cider and wine, so Jeff Zeitler foraged for building materials to set apart the recently opened Urban Forage Winery and Cider House taproom (3016 E. Lake St.).

Above the bar hangs a collection of salvaged doors, while a decorative screen that graced the space in years past is on a wall. A long list of building materials came from the nearby Habitat for Humanity ReUse Store.

Jeff was particularly delighted to open up a wall and find an old shelf made out of a packing crate, evidence from the past of another making something new out of what they had.

"We have a good product we believe in," said Jeff's wife, Gita Zeitler. "It's local. We have no plans to be big, but we want to stay small and local and chemical free. We want to stay as unique as we are now."

Unexpected surprises

Jeff made his first batch of hard cider while he was a college student at the University of Minnesota over 20 years ago. "I started out making wine when I was 19 to make alcohol, but I stayed with it because I like wine without sulfites," Jeff remarked.

He had long dreamed of opening his own cider house, but it didn't feel real until they purchased a foreclosed building along E. Lake St. five years ago. By renting out the main level, Jeff and Gita could help offset costs and make wine and cider in the basement. Soon after buying the building, Jeff was laid off from his job as a landscape architect for the first time, which left more time to devote to his dream job.

When he arrived at the building one day in January 2016 and discovered his tenants had abruptly moved out, and he was recently laid off again, Jeff realized it was time to go for it. He began the massive undertaking of remodeling the building to transform it into a tap-



Drop by the recently opened Urban Forage Winery and Cider House to try one of four beverages on tap. The taproom is open Thursdays and Fridays from 4-10pm, and Saturdays from noon to 10pm. It is the city's first winery since Prohibition. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

room.

"I was basically unemployed and working at a non-profit for two years," he said, adding that nothing would have been possible without his wife keeping them afloat financially.

While Jeff hired out the electrical, plumbing, heating and the elevator work, he did the rest himself, beginning with the demolition. Jeff adjusted the entire front of the building, adding large windows and a door for the elevator and removing the awning to make the building "pop."

"Before, there was nothing that really stood out on our block," remarked Jeff. "You notice us now."

When they first purchased the building, Jeff and Gita spend days

tearing up the linoleum to reveal the maple hardwood underneath. In one spot was a large grease stain from when the space was used as a machine shop. Jeff sanded and sanded the messy area, and today he considers it the best spot on the floor.

"That's what makes renovation fun to me—the unexpected surprises like that," Jeff stated.

He does advise other new business owners to be patient and fearless. "Everything takes longer than

you think it will take," he observed. And it costs more, too. At one time, the Zeitlers found themselves unable to pay their workers on time as they waited for financing to kick in. "It's very stressful," said Jeff, "but now that it's up and running it feels worth it."

Would he want to do it again? "No way!" he answered.

They had been stymied for a time, thinking they needed a law change to operate an urban winery. But after hiring an attorney, they

discovered there was still an old law from 1934 on the books that they could operate under.

When they opened the taproom in November, they became the city's first winery since Prohibition.

They're also the only cider house that makes real cider versus apple juice that has been mixed with a malt beverage.

Continued on page 7

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Urban Forage

Continued from page 6

Sophisticated tastes

In the transitional time between starting Urban Forage and opening the taproom, Jeff focused on figuring out what beverages people like best. When offered some gin botanicals (the spices that give gin its distinctive flavor) from Lawless Distillery, he created Gin Botanical on a lark, not sure whether it would be good or not. "That became a best seller," remarked Jeff. "People love the Gin Botanical."

The botanicals include juniper berries, coriander, black pepper and lavender along with other herbs. The unique beverage mixes gin and apple flavors to make something different, a spin on the classic gin and tonic.

Given the nature of foraged fruit and natural yeasts, Jeff is never quite sure what flavors will come out of his stainless steel fermenters. One might be sour, while another is dull, and the third high in tannins. To achieve a good and consistent flavor, Jeff blends different batches.

"People say Minnesotans all want sweet wine. I don't think that's true—at least not in the Longfellow neighborhood," observed Jeff. "You have people with sophisticated tastes in Minneapolis."

Jeff experiments with the foraged items he's offered, including lilacs, dandelions, apricots, hops, mulberries, cherries, pears, apples and more—which allows him to create flavors you can't find anywhere else.

For the first time this year, the Zeitlers didn't have to go out and pick all the fruit they used, but instead, people brought them apples.

"We take the excess of the city and turn it into wine and cider," Jeff stated.

Being sustainable is important to the Zeitlers. "I don't want to leave the world worse than I found it," explained Jeff. "We all have a



The fermenting and bottling operation takes up the basement of Urban Forage's 100-year-old building at 3016 E. Lake St. Owner Jeff Zeitler makes wine throughout the year, although the harvesting is done spring through fall. (Photo by Tessa M. Christensen)

responsibility to leave a light footprint." Rather than purchase carbon offsets or ride a bicycle everywhere, Jeff focuses on something he can easily do.

"There a lot of fruit just going to waste on the ground. I want to use what's all around us that no one is paying attention to," he said.

Wild yeasts give distinct flavors

Jeff begins each batch by letting the wild yeasts ferment and start the process, which gives it the distinct flavor English and French ciders are known for. Then he adds a robust commercial yeast as needed to finish it

off. He pasteurizes products to make them shelf-stable instead of dosing them with chemical additives. He avoids adding anything unless he needs to, using the Integrated Pest Management strategy of only adding sulfite if needed. He never uses potassium sorbate because he finds the taste disgusting.

Urban Forage can't realistically obtain an organic designation because of the many places they get fruit from, but 98 percent of what they use hasn't been fertilized, Jeff said. They're just neighborhood trees that owners have been ignoring benignly.

Grateful for neighborhood

Jeff is grateful for the neighborhood's support and noted that many of their customers come from Longfellow. "Thank you for supporting your local businesses," said Jeff.

"We hope you come out and drink and make us improve all the time."

He and a few other distillery owners are brainstorming ways to promote themselves and bring in more people to the neighborhood businesses, especially considering that they're not located far from the light rail line.

The taproom is open on Thursdays and Fridays 4-10pm, and Saturdays noon to 10pm. Food trucks are frequently parked outside on the weekends. Dry cider and semisweet will always be on tap, and two other varieties will rotate in and out.

On the third Thursday of the month, drop by for Writer's Open Mic night. On Mondays, Sara Milner holds Yoga classes; show up and pay \$10 at the door for the one-hour class.

Up until March is the art show, "Fire and the Flame: Honoring 35 Years of Zorongo Flamenco," by local artist and The League of Longfellow Artists (LoLa) founder Anita White.

Urban Forage products are also for sale at over 40 liquor stores in the Twin Cities area.

"This is the realization of a dream I didn't think I'd ever actually realize," said Jeff.

That said, if he were given access to organic apples, he'd be happy to make a small batch of cider from just those apples and get an organic label for it.



In November, Minneapolis Mayor-elect Jacob Frey (far right) helped cut the ribbon during the grand opening celebration at Urban Forage. Also pictured, owners Gita and Jeff Zeitler with children Jaya and Akhil. (Photo submitted)

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Fresh coffee, fresh new look, is the order of the day at Dunn

By JAN WILLMS

There is a fresh new look to Dunn Brothers Coffee at 4648 E. Lake St. Following a transition in ownership last April, Cassie German has taken over as manager of this location.

"The changes have taken place in the last couple months," German said. "It was looking tired, and we spruced it up with a new remodel."

"We did some painting, put in some new carpet and light fixtures," added District Manager Angie Peterson. "And all the art that is posted is from our origin trips."

"We go on origin trips, traveling to different countries in South America, like Nicaragua and El Salvador," explained Greg Rosenberg, senior franchise business consultant. "The photos on the walls are from the actual farms we buy our beans from."

"We also added a mural," Peterson said. "It was great while we were doing it. All the customers got to see it and were excited about it."

According to German, the coffee shop was only closed for a couple of days during the transition in ownership. They kept it open during the remodeling. "We did everything we could to keep going during remodeling," she said. "We did the painting after hours."

She said the remodeled shop now has a booth area, which opens up the space a little bit. "It feels good to be here in an environment that is fresh and clean," she noted.

Peterson said the outdoor sign has been updated and an awning that had made the coffee shop a bit darker has been removed. And new patio furniture is ready to be set outside when winter is over.

Dunn Brothers had its beginnings 30 years ago, based in Minneapolis. "The original franchisee then bought the company, and there are currently 85 locations in seven different states," said Rosenberg. Dunn Brothers has been at its Lake St. location since 2005. "Dunn Brothers Coffee now owns this location," Rosenberg continued.

As manager, German said she has been in the coffee world for about 17 years. She lives in the



(l to r) Greg Rosenberg, Cassie German, Angie Peterson. (Photo by Jan Willms)



The new remodel features some comforts of home. (Photo by Jan Willms)

Longfellow neighborhood and said she was excited to manage this location.

"It has been fun to watch it all come together," she said. "It went fast after the painting was done, and I see familiar faces every day. There are a lot of college students and bikers who come by, and we become basically like a family."

German said she thinks what sets Dunn Brothers aside from other coffee shops is its authenticity. "It's a combination of the people we hire and roasting our beans in the store that makes us stand out," she said. "We are really good at knowing the whole process, and if we were not authentic, we wouldn't be here."

"Hiring the right people is crucial," she stated. She said a couple of the past employees stayed

on, but many returned to school or traveled.

German said having parking space available is very beneficial for customers. "Some need just to get in and get out," she said.

"We also just launched online ordering," Peterson commented. "Anybody living in the neighborhood or living upstairs can place their order, then come and get their coffee."

"Sometimes people wander in wearing their pajamas, from the apartments upstairs," German said. "They just order their coffee and come and get it."

Dunn Brothers bakes its own pastries except for anything requiring a deep fryer. It has two ovens

in the location. A limited number of sandwiches are also brought in. "We have fresh breakfast sandwiches and burritos," Rosenberg said. Soups are also served.

"Our hours are 6am to 6pm seven days a week," said German. "We will expand our hours over the warmer months." She said the current staff is under 10 employees.

German said she found the biggest challenge so far to be getting everybody trained and on the same page. "That has been the biggest puzzle piece for me," she said. "There are always things like equipment problems or the Internet going down, but that is normal stuff that happens with running a business."



The new look of Dunn Brothers Coffee, 4648 E. Lake St. (Photo by Jan Willms)

She said the most rewarding part has been the customer support.

"Dunn Brothers is a part of their community, and they had to transition with us. The regulars are back and bringing in those that haven't been in for a while."

She related a story about a customer who brought in a friend, and the friend commented that he did not think the shop looked that much different. "Are you kidding me? It looks totally different," the customer responded.

"I love it," German said about being the manager. "It feels good to see people from all walks of life coming through our doors. We hope everyone will come and check us out."

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Epworth United Methodist

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www.epworthumcpls.org
Pastor Steven Reiser
Sunday Worship: 10:30 am
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Upcoming:
December 24: Worship, 10:30 a.m. and
Candlelight Christmas Eve Service,
7:00 p.m.
January 7: Epiphany Sunday Service,
10:30 a.m.
January 19: "The Talk" at Living Spirit UMC,
7:00 p.m.
January 26: "The Talk" at Epworth UMC,
7:00 p.m.

Hiawatha Church

4155 41st Ave S • 612-721-2201
www.hiawathachurch.com
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www.livingtable.org
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www.minnehahacommunion.com
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December 24: Candlelight Christmas Eve
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Spirit Garage

The Hook & Ladder Theater & Lounge
3010 Minnehaha Ave. • 612-827-1074
www.spiritgarage.org
Worship: Sundays, 10:30am
Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24:
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www.stpeders.org
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Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls

5212 41st Ave. S. • 612-724-3691
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In Our Community

Messenger

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

Beer and Bible planned at Epworth

Whether you're new to the Bible, new to beer, or well-versed in both, you're invited to join the Beer and Bible group once a month at Merlin's Rest, 2601 E. Lake St. The next event is Wed., Jan. 10, 6:30-8:30pm. All walks of life and faith welcome. Come and enjoy great discussion and fellowship —beer is optional.

Holiday concert scheduled Dec. 29

Living Table United Church of Christ, 3805 E. 40th St., will host a holiday concert, "Community, Carols & Candlelight," on Fri., Dec. 29, 7pm. A free-will offering will be taken.

The Living Table UCC Choir, Music Minister Kevin Werner Hohlstein, and friends Jennifer Eckes, Shon Parker, and Jennifer Scovell-Parker will provide a night of Christmas and winter favorites. The evening will end with a community sing-a-long.

During intermission, you will be able to bid at the Dessert Silent Auction, a table of wonderful baked goods provided by members of Living Table.

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.

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.

Faith Book Club meets Jan. 6

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 Jan. 6 is "The Cellist of Sarajevo" by Stephen Calloway. All are welcome.

Pasta Dinner and fundraiser planned

Minnehaha Food Shelf Fundraiser – The Annual Pasta Dinner will be held on Wed., Jan. 10, 5-7pm. Treat yourself to a great dinner and help your neighbors at

the same time. Once again Fat Lorenzo's donates their delicious pasta to the Minnehaha Food Shelf Fundraiser. There will be an accordion band for entertainment and a raffle for great door prizes. Join in for good food and fun at Minnehaha United Methodist Church, 3701 East 50th St. Tickets are \$10 per person and children 12 years and younger are free.

Home-based professionals meet

There will be an event held in Nokomis East to bring together area home-based business professionals on Tues., Jan. 16, at 6:30pm in the lower level event center of McDonald's Liquors, 5010 34th Ave. S.

Nokomis East Business Association (NEBA) has announced an important initiative to identify and attract to membership the growing number of home-based professionals who live and work in the Nokomis East neighborhoods (Keewaydin, Wenonah, Minnehaha, Morris Park). NEBA believes it exists to serve, represent, and promote not only business professionals who operate out of commercial space but also those who work from their residences.

The January gathering will be coordinated by NEBA board members. Those who attend will be encouraged to share their thoughts surrounding how they envision a group of area home-based professionals may best serve all those involved. It is hoped there will be a spirited exchange of ideas, and that those present will take ownership of how they would like to see the group evolve within NEBA. If you work predominantly from home and are self-employed or work for others, you are welcome to attend.

The event will include a facilitated discussion surrounding five broad categories believed to be of concern to many home-based workers. Refreshments will be provided.

Preregistration is encouraged. To register or for additional information contact NEBA board member Bob Albrecht, 612-910-2272 or Bob@BobAlbrechtRealEstate.com.

NA group meets twice weekly

A Narcotics Anonymous group meets every Wednesday at 7:30pm, and every Friday evening at 7pm at Faith Evangelical Lutheran, 3430 E. 51st St. All are welcome to attend.

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. The next get together is Jan. 8. All are welcome.

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 happens weekly and ends in mid-March.

Healing Waters meets Wednesdays

The Healing Waters Qigong Practice Group meets every Monday year round, from 3:30-4:30pm, at the Lake Hiawatha Recreation Center, 2701 E. 44th St. Healing by the water, through the water, and for the water, learn simple Spring Forest Qigong healing movements, and guided meditations for health. Every week they practice sending their healing to the world and blessing Lake Hiawatha. There is a suggested donation of \$5 per meeting.

Brunch Bunch to gather Jan. 6

Join the Epworth Brunch Bunch Sun., Jan. 7 at noon, at Dumpling (4004 Minnehaha Ave.) to try one of the many great eating establishments in our neighborhood. Bring a friend and get ready for some fun conversation while trying some yummy food!

KRSM starts airing

A new community radio station began broadcasting at the end of November on 98.9 FM to a potential 300,000 Minneapolis listeners.

KRSM Southside Media Project is a low-power FM radio station that operates out of Waite House Community Center as part of the Community Media Initiative by Pillsbury United Communities.

The station, which began live streaming online in March of this year, will share 65 hours per week of original programming in 6 different languages created by a team of over 100 volunteers and hosts.

The weekly schedule includes shows about mental health, community organizing, relationships and sexuality, entrepreneurship, history, music and more.

The station will also feature syndicated content such as lessons in Ojibwe language, histo-

ry, and culture created by partner stations on Native reservations around greater Minnesota as well as Spanish-language content from Democracy Now.

"From advocating with media justice partners nationally to working in our local communities, we've been able to build a station from the ground up," said Advisory Board member Danielle Mkali. "It's an opportunity to learn and listen to our own stories, which means that we are shaping our world together. Community radio can be a healing and community-building space."

KRSM is designed to provide a platform for elevating the voices, narratives, and cultures of communities that have a history of being marginalized, misrepresented, and erased by traditional media. Over half of the shows are run by women, 73% are hosted by Indigenous and people of color, and 80% of the hosts have had no previous experience working in radio.

The station also serves as an on-ramp to jobs in the media industry by offering free training opportunities and access to professional grade equipment.

New programming to expect soon includes a monthly radio novella from El Colegio high schoolers as well as a show run entirely by people incarcerated in prison. The full show schedule is available online at krsradio.org, and listeners can access programming through the website, mobile app, or 98.9 FM.

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.

Adoption support group meets Jan. 2

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., Jan. 2, 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 ginnyblade@nacac.org (parents); or Christina Romo at 651-644-3036, ext. 17, or christinaromo@nacac.org (teens).

Local project receives \$250,000

Minnehaha Commons, which is being built at 2740 Minnehaha Ave., has been granted \$250,000 to support the construction of 43 studio apartments for low-income adults age 55 and older who have experienced homelessness and other barriers to accessing stable housing.

This grant is one of the \$2.4 Million that the Metropolitan Council is awarding in Livable Communities grants to metro-area communities to build and preserve affordable housing. The grants were approved by the Council in early December.

"Our region is facing a crisis in affordable housing," said Metropolitan Council Chair Alene Tchourumoff. "The Council can support affordable housing through the Livable Communities program, which provides grants to communities who are working to build and preserve their supply of affordable housing."

"We know that people need housing options in all life stages and of all economic means—in our region, the supply of affordable housing is not keeping up with demand. Failing to turn that trend around will threaten the region's ability to grow and prosper and its ability to compete with other metro areas for jobs and residents."

Volunteers needed for pond tourney

The chill in the Minnesota air brings extra excitement as plans are made for the Labatt Blue U.S. Pond Hockey Championships to be played Jan. 25-28 on frozen Lake Nokomis.

They are looking for referees and volunteers to join the 2018 Pond Crew. You can be a part of the "Best National Amateur Sporting Event" without even lacing up your skates. Hundreds of helping hands are needed to continue making this event the absolute BEST! This year's event marks the thirteenth year, and we look forward to continuing with our incredible USPHC Pond Crew tradition!

If you haven't signed up yet, what are you waiting for? Now is the time to sign up and join in. Players are also welcome to join the Pond Crew and get in on the tourney action from a little different angle.

The four-on-four outdoor hockey competition for women and men will include more than 250 teams coming together from nearly all 50 states, Canada, and many countries worldwide to play hockey the way nature intended.

With more than 600

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In Our Community

Continued from page 9

games in 3 days, they need referees to make it happen. Referees stand off-rink and mainly serve as scorekeepers and make goal-tending calls; hockey knowledge is required. They will provide a training session before the event. New in 2018, referee pay has increased to \$15 per game. You may choose to donate your earnings to our worthy charitable partners, and they will receive the benefits of your labor.

For other volunteers, there is no better way to get in on the action than as a member of the USPHC Pond Crew! By volunteering your time, on the pond or inside the massive warming tent, you will play an essential part in providing an unmatched experience to players, sponsors and the tens-of-thousands of fans on the pond.

Garden Club plants seeds Jan. 10

January is cold and dreary. Only the seed catalogs keep gardeners cheerful. But wait, you CAN be planting seeds now. You CAN actually be playing with potting soil to your heart's content.

Take part in an exciting method of seeding called winter sowing. Yes, you plant in January or February and put the newly planted seeds outside in winter weather. Sound fun? Scary? Impossible? Does it work?

Come to the Longfellow Garden Club, 7pm, Wed., Jan. 10, at Epworth United Methodist Church, 3207 37th Ave. S. Bring a clean 1-gallon plastic milk/water jug and take home a start

on your 2018 garden. The garden group provides seeds and soil.

See more about the Longfellow Garden Club at www.facebook.com/LongfellowGardenClub.

Concert / reception scheduled Jan. 14

Mt. Olive Music and Fine Arts presents "Arias, Songs & Keys" on Sun., Jan. 14, 4pm, at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 3045 Chicago Ave. S. A reception follows the concert in the church's Chapel Lounge. This event is free and open to the public; a free-will offering may be received to support the Music and Fine Arts program.

This delightful afternoon of arias, songs, and piano music will feature local freelance professional singers Chandler Molbert and Tricia Van Ee, with pianist Jill Dawe, performing works by Schubert, Vaughan Williams, and Brahms. Also featured will be Mount Olive's recently acquired Steinway piano.

This is the third event in the 2017-2018 Mount Olive Music and Fine Arts season. For further information on this event and on the Music and Fine Arts program, please contact Dr. Cherwien at the church office by phone at 612-827-5919, by email at cantor@mountolivechurch.org, or online at www.mountolivechurch.org.

Nokomis shoreline project alert

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) announced a new project that will enhance the Lake Nokomis shoreline as part of a long-term effort to in-

crease the amount of natural landscape within the park and reduce impacts from invasive plant and animal species.

The first public meeting for the shoreline enhancement project was held in late November. At the meeting, interested community members had an opportunity to review current site conditions and weigh in on potential changes along Lake Nokomis's northern and eastern shoreline.

Comments from that first meeting will help shape proposed improvements and concept designs, which will be offered for public feedback at a second public meeting. Information regarding the second public meeting will be published once a date and location have been confirmed. Visit www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care_improvements/park_projects/current_projects/lake_nokomis_shoreline_enhancements and sign up for email updates to stay informed.

Demolition at Minnehaha Academy

Demolition has begun at Minnehaha Academy's Upper School Campus, 3100 W. River Pkwy. The school secured the necessary permits from the City, and crews hope to remove debris from the site by Christmas. Following debris removal, the destroyed portions of Minnehaha Academy's Upper Campus will be pulled down.

Before demolition, construction crews had to stabilize the athletic and arts wings of the school. Originally, they were not designed as stand-alone buildings, and with the central portion of the school gone, the wings

needed to be reinforced.

Parkway Pizza plans party Dec. 23

There will be a Kids Holiday Party at Parkway Pizza, 4359 Minnehaha Ave. S., on Sat., Dec. 23, from noon-12pm. Kids will get to decorate their own holiday sugar cookie. This event is free to attend, and no RSVP is necessary.

January events at LS Healthy Seniors

Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors' monthly Senior Social/Health Talk will be held on Tues., Jan. 16, 10:30am at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 E. 31st St. The presentation is entitled "Explore China." The birthplace of Tai Chi, gun powder, Taoism, and the magnetic compass, China is a dynamic country rich with history and tradition. Explore the Great Wall, Eastern China, and some of the recent cultural and political changes. Presented by Howard Root, a recent traveler to China.

After taking a break for the holidays, Tai Chi Easy exercise classes will resume on Jan. 22. Classes are held on Mondays from 10:30-11:30am at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 E. 31st St. and cost \$5/class (discounts available for low-income seniors).

There will be no Diabetes Support Group in January.

Our Winter Senior Art Class Series, "Origami - the Japanese Art of Paper Folding," starts with the first class on Wed., Feb. 7. The class will be

on Valentine Cards and Heart Ornaments and will be held from 1:30-3:15pm at Trinity Apartments, 2800 E. 31st St. Participants don't need to be residents of the apartments to attend. Registration is required by Feb. 1 by calling 612-729-5799. The class costs \$4 and include all materials.

Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors is also looking for "Friendly Visitor" volunteers and volunteer drivers to help seniors live independently. Call them at 612-729-5799 or email to info@LShealthyseniors.org for more information on activities, services or volunteer opportunities.

Healthy Seniors plan upcoming programs

The Nokomis Healthy Seniors have planned their upcoming series Health and Enrichment Program series.

"Crime Prevention" is the topic for Wed., Jan. 10, 1:30-2:30pm, at Nokomis Square Cooperative, 5015 35th Ave. S. Presented by Community Police staff Jennifer Neal, learn more about preventing crime. The program is free and no reservations are required.

"Letters to Your Family: What Documents to Pass On" is scheduled for Wed., Feb. 14, 1:30-2:30pm. This free program is also at Nokomis Square Cooperative.

On Thur., Mar. 1, the program will be "Visit with and Learn about Companion Rabbits." This program will take place at Bethel Lutheran Church

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Classifieds

Messenger

Want ads must be received by the Messenger by January 15 for the January 25 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 **Jan. 15** for the **Jan. 25** 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

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F.E.M.A.

Continued from page 3

offered. The next Five Fingers of Self-Defense and Empowerment for women and girls 13 and older is set for Mon., Mar. 19, 6-8pm. The class is also available as a customized self-defense course for groups and businesses.

"I often tell people that F.E.M.A. is martial arts without ego—martial arts without bravado or macho attitudes," remarked Standish-Ericsson resident Aric Stewart, who has been training at F.E.M.A. since 1998. "Sensei Kore is an extremely talented martial artist who teaches everyone from four-year-old children to 60-plus-year-old black belts with exactly the kind, supportive pressure they need to keep motivated."

He points out that F.E.M.A. is a 501(c)3 non-profit with a mission to help spread the benefit of martial arts training to all that can benefit from it, specifically targeting at-risk communities.

"We have highly discounted classes for these communities, never turn people away for financial reasons and do regular outreach into the community itself to help bring the safety and self-confidence martial arts training can bring to those who may need it most," said Stewart, who serves on the F.E.M.A. Board of Directors.

'I can do that too'

When Grate was nine, she saw a young girl around her age at the Vallejo State Fair doing a Karate demo. "She was so strong and powerful, and the only girl in the large group of boys and men," recalled Grate. "I thought, 'I can do that too!'"

Five years later, she found a school in her hometown and started training. That was 46 years ago.

In 1988, she moved to Minneapolis to be with the "love of



Once a year, F.E.M.A. offers a Chinese calligraphy class to coincide with the Chinese New Year. They also offer weekly classes for women, girls 6-18 and family class: adults, boys and girls 8 and up, and children ages 4-7. (Photo submitted)

her life," Jan, to whom she is now married.

"I was a brown belt at the time in Wu Chien Pai under Dr. Alex Feng," said Grate. "It was truly difficult to leave my teacher, my family, and friends, but I knew it was something I needed to do, and I was in love."

She got to Minneapolis in January, could barely walk on the icy sidewalks, and could not find a school that emulated the same principles of her school in the Bay Area. She did a shout out for "anyone know anyone in Minneapolis that does Martial Arts?" at a national women's martial arts camp, and someone told her about another woman who had just moved to Minneapolis and was looking for a good school. The two got together in October of 1989 and brainstormed a way to gather women and train.

Their first class was Nov. 15, 1989, at Matthews Community Center. Thirteen women showed up, but only two had experience. As the most experienced person, Grate found herself as head instructor—a role she had not planned on.

The non-profit school was first called the Feminist Eclectic Martial Arts and promoted the goal of empowering women through martial arts.

"Originally we started as

a women-only program, which was greatly needed at that time," explained Grate. "In those years all the leadership/teachers were advanced women students—empowering by example."

As time went on, they realized the vision needed to be expanded to include all genders, and the school was renamed Five Element Martial Arts and Healing Center. The school is run democratically, and all students are encouraged to be a part of every process.

One comment Grate heard from a student stands out above all the rest. "If it weren't for F.E.M.A., I would have committed suicide," said a young girl at the end of a self-defense class. "My heart broke wide open, and I knew I had to keep teaching, keep the school going," stated Grate.

After holding classes at the Matthews Community Center cafeteria, F.E.M.A. moved to The Peoples Center, the Podany Building, and then Patrick's Cabaret before finally landing at its facility at 3743 Cedar Ave. S.

F.E.M.A. added its girl's program in the 1990s, and then laido and Taiji that included all genders. Last year, Grate realized they had classes for women, girls 6-18 and family class: adults, boys and girls 8 and up, but



Standish-Ericsson resident Aric Stewart (left) started training under Shifu Kore' Grate in 1988, learning the Japanese sword technique of laido. He now helps Grate instruct the laido program at Five Elements Martial Arts. (Photo submitted)

none for younger kids so she created the Little Elements Class for ages 4-7. "It's a Taoist principle to 'go with the flow,' so I try to pay attention to the 'requests from the universe' to keep F.E.M.A. growing," said Grate.

Empowering community through classes

Stewart first got involved in martial arts while he was studying abroad in Japan as a way to connect with people and understand another layer of the culture. When he returned home, he began taking Japanese sword classes or laido at F.E.M.A. Stewart is now a second-degree black belt in Nishyoryu laido and co-instructs F.E.M.A.'s laido program.

"I have gained so much from my training that it is very hard to pick what I appreciate most," remarked Stewart. "Thinking of winter, I am often extremely grateful for the sense of center and balance and body control that training has taught me. I don't slip on ice nearly as much as I did, and when I do, I am in control."

"But I think it is the sense of calm and direction I can feel even in the midst of chaos that

I appreciate most. During an emergency, external or self-induced, I find my martial arts training allows me to focus, remain calm and make clear decisions in the midst of the stressful moment where such decisions can be critically important."

Stewart serves on the F.E.M.A. board because he believes in the value it provides to the neighborhood and its students—from offering self-defense classes to at-risk communities to helping empower those who may be feeling powerless. "By helping the safety and self-confidence of community members, we empower the community as a whole," he stated.

He encourages people to check out F.E.M.A.'s diverse classes. "There is something that is bound to appeal, and that you would find benefit from," said Stewart. "I personally feel like even casual martial arts training can benefit anybody! It is never about learning how to fight. It is about improving one's self so that a fight never has to happen."

Find more online at femartialarts.org or call 612-729-7233.

In Our Community

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(home of Nokomis Healthy Seniors), 4120 17th Ave. S. from 11am-noon. No reservations are required.

The group returns to Nokomis Square Cooperative on Wed., Mar. 14, 1:30-2:30pm for the free program "Gentle Transitions: Decluttering Your Home." Learn about how to declutter your home, to make your transition out of your home easier and less stressful.

"The Wonderful World

of Faberge" will be presented by Carol Rudie of the Russian Museum of Art on Apr. 11, 1:30-2:30pm at Nokomis Square Cooperative.

Midtown Farmers Market requests your financial support

What a year 2017 was at the Midtown Farmers Market! Nearly 50,000 customers came out to support the livelihoods of 75 local farmers and entrepreneurs, and they provided access to over

\$35,000 worth fresh local food to those most in need. They also created a vibrant space for local artists on the market stage, to eat, shop, and enjoy the richness of the community.

None of this was possible without public support! Midtown Farmers Market is hoping that you reflect on your visits to the market—the vendors and neighbors you connected with, the entertainment you enjoyed, the fresh local food you savored—and consider what you value about those experiences. The market is requesting your help in reaching their year-end fundraising goals.

As a community-supported market, vendor fees cover less than half of the costs of making the market happen. They rely on donations from supporters to sustain things like the SNAP/EBT (formerly called food stamps) program, cultural events, phenomenal live music, poetry and dance by local artists, access to restrooms, places to sit, the composting and recycling program, and all of the little details that make the market such a great place to shop, eat, and gather. • \$10 buys 20 bilingual (English/Spanish & English/Somali) outreach flyers.

• \$25 buys ingredients for one cooking demo.

- \$50 allows compensation for one musician for sharing their time and talents on the market stage.
- \$100 supports the equipment costs of the SNAP/EBT token program for one week.
- \$150 pays the restroom rental fees for one Saturday.
- \$200 would buy a chair cart to make set-up and tear-down a breeze for our volunteers.
- \$500 would buy a new tent to keep our musicians, and community table partners, shaded and dry.

Every dollar has an impact! With your support, Midtown Farmers Market can keep vendor fees affordable for the farmers and entrepreneurs you love connecting with, and continue to work together to build the kind of community we all want to live in. You can make donations by going to www.midtownfarmersmarket.org and clicking on the donate button toward the bottom of the page.

Support groups meet monthly

The Nokomis Healthy Seniors sponsors a monthly support group geared towards those who have diabetes. It meets on the first Friday of every month,

1-3pm, at the Nokomis Public Library, 5100 34th Ave. S. The group is free.

A Caregiver Support Group meets on the fourth Thursday of each month, from 1-2:30pm, geared towards those who care for an older adult. No RSVP is necessary, and the group meets at Nokomis Healthy Seniors, located in Bethel Lutheran Church, 4120 17th Ave. S.

A Low Vision Support Group, facilitated by a staff member from Low Vision Resources, meets the second Tuesday of each month, from 1-2:30pm. The meeting is held at Nokomis Square Cooperative, 5015 35th Ave. S.

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., Jan. 15 for the Jan. 25 issue.

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'Made in Cuba' exhibit showing at Longfellow gallery

Exhibit at Squirrel Haus Arts takes counter approach to Cuban exhibit on display at the Walker Art Gallery

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

A mixed media exhibit called "Made in Cuba/Hecho en Cuba: Recycling Memory and Culture Part II" is showing at Squirrel Haus Arts in the Longfellow neighborhood. The exhibit opened in November and will stay up through Jan. 14. The work of 70 artists is featured, exploring a wide range of themes and disciplines, including posters, photography, folk art, ceramics, and wearable art.

Sandra Levinson, executive director of New York's Center for Cuban Studies, curated the exhibit and was in town for several related events in early Decem-

ber. "What we really wanted to do was bring vibrant, accessible Cuban art to the Twin Cities," she said. "There is a show about Cuban art running concurrently at the Walker Art Center called 'Adios Utopia.' We have some of the same artists on view, but also many others. We also have original works of art for purchase, not digital prints of original work."

According to Levinson, the exhibit at the Walker makes a point of showing Cuban-born artists who mostly opposed the Cuban Revolution and immigrated to the US. The show she brought from the collection of the Center for Cuban Studies

makes a counter-point. Levinson said, "I'm critical of the show at the Walker. We felt it was important to provide a simultaneous exhibit with a broader view of contemporary Cuban artists who still live in Cuba, like Alberto Lescaj and Jacqueline Brito. Our show doesn't have a political agenda."

Another strong feature of the exhibit is that it shows the work of self-taught artists. "We have collected so many pieces over the years by artists who taught themselves how to be expressive," Levinson said. "Their work is very authentically Cuban, and speaks to the rhythm of daily life on the island."

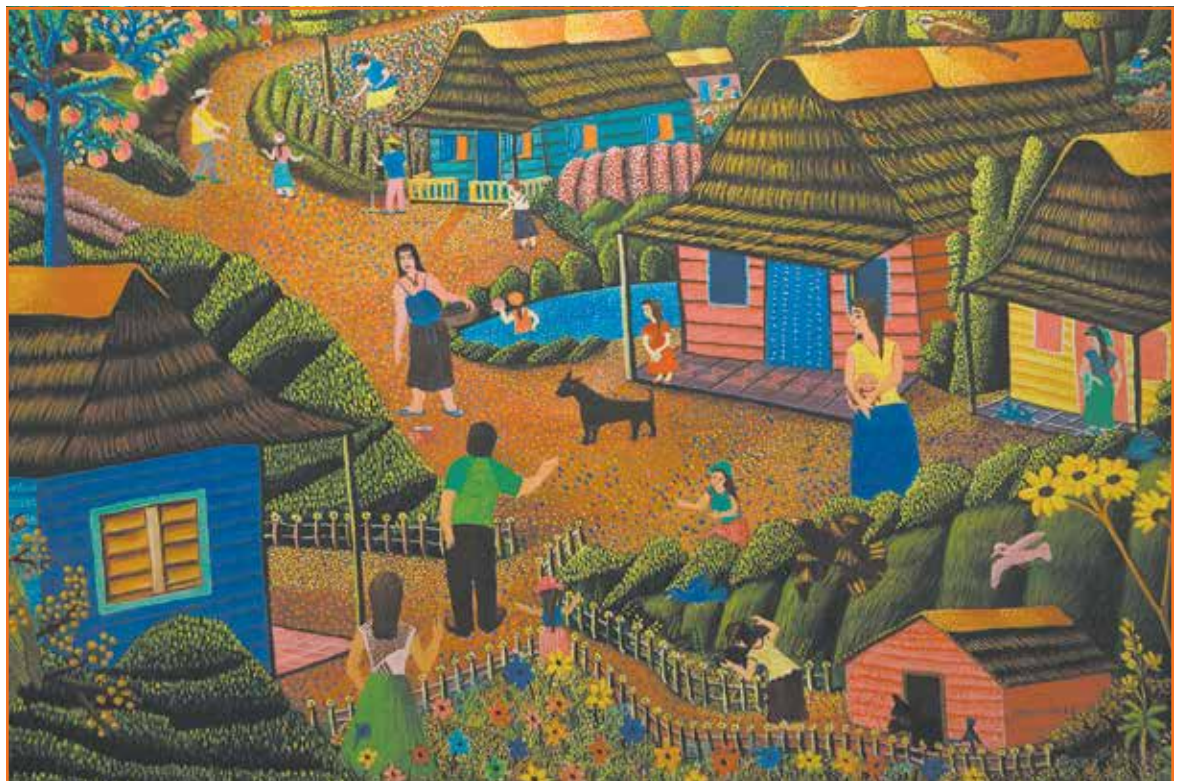
One of the most recognizable elements of Cuban art is political posters. Volunteer Kate Bix explained the popularity of posters in Cuban culture, both as a form of expression and as a form of art. She said, "The Cuban people have always celebrated with posters. One of the most popular artists to document the Cuban Revolution was Raul Martinez, and we have some of his pieces in the show. You can see how he told the story of the 1959 Cuban Revolution to the people of the island, who were largely illiterate before the Revolution took place. He used vibrant colors

and almost comic book-like themes to communicate what was happening."

Squirrel Haus has been an arts incubator and community gathering space in Longfellow since 2015. Owned and operated by Michael and Donna Meyer, it continues to evolve into a gallery, rehearsal space, set design location, event center, and meeting/workshop venue. It is also the permanent studio home of artists Donna Meyer and Maris Gilbert. Gallery hours are Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 12-5pm. Squirrel Haus is located at 3450 Snelling Ave. in Minneapolis.



Minnesota native/exhibit curator Sandra Levinson has been traveling to Cuba as an independent traveler and as a tour guide since 1969. When asked how many trips she has taken, Levinson said, "I stopped counting once I got to 300." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



This painting by Isabelle de las Mercedes is an example of one of Cuba's self-taught artists who developed her art to a high level. Her work is shown at the Havana Museum of Fine Arts alongside other self-taught artists like Noel Guzman Bofill, and both are recognized internationally. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



Viewer Cristina Lopez said, "I appreciate the grounding in Cuban cultural context that this show provides." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

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