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Monitor



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Is German Immersion School affecting neighborhood positively or negatively?

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Some residents who are living east and north of the Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS) at 1031 Como Ave. say the noise and traffic generated by the school are negatively affecting their quality of life.

School representatives counter that they have given a new vitality to a vacant property, and increased the livability of the neighborhood.

"We think we bring a positive energy to the neighborhood," said volunteer school board president Kelly Laudon, who has two children at the school.

Neighbors don't feel involved in TCGIS decisions

Several neighbors attended the TCGIS board meetings in March and April 2017 to voice concerns about how the school "monopolizes" the available street parking and doesn't have a large enough parking lot for its needs. They feel that the school doesn't involve the neighborhood in its planning processes, creates traffic problems, is allowing rubber mulch from the playground to build up on neigh-

boring properties and the street, and is contributing to noise pollution in the neighborhood.

Kris Anderson has lived in her home along Van Slyke Ave. across from the school for 28 years. Her biggest concern is whether or not it is appropriate to have such a densely populated organization operating in a residential neighborhood.

"The impact of so many people in such a small space has completely changed the character of the neighborhood when school and after school programs are in session," said K. Anderson. "I am deeply concerned by the fact that the community feels excluded from school planning, and that no consideration seems to be given to the impact of the school on their neighbors."

"We want TCGIS to be a responsible neighbor," said Josh Dworak, who has lived on the school's east side along Argyle for seven years. "We would like a way to have effective communication with the school to resolve issues that affect our daily lives. We want the school and everyone associated with the school to respond in



On Bike Day, Twin Cities German Immersion School fourth graders rode around Como Lake and the neighborhood and ended at the Como Park Playground. They also passed a mock bike test and received a very official German-Austrian "bike license." (Photo submitted)

a way where they take responsibility for their impact on the neighborhood seriously and treat their neighbors as they would like to

be treated in their own neighborhood."

School officials counter that they have been responding to con-

cerns since they were brought up by neighbors at the March school board meeting.

Continued on page 4

Como Elementary has similar mission to its first mission 100 years ago

By JAN WILLMS

It has been 100 years since Como Park Elementary, 780 W. Wheelock Pkwy., first opened its doors to students. The current school population of 600 students in grades pre-K through 5, is getting ready to celebrate.

"We have a big celebration planned for June 2," said Christine Vang, the school principal. "That is when we also host our annual Como Park Elementary carnival, and we plan to incorporate the 100th anniversary with that event. We have been writing to a lot of constituents in our community and dignitaries from the state, and we hope to have them come and help us celebrate."

The school is unique in its design and was the first building ascribed to architect Clarence "Cap" Wigington. He was the first African-American municipal architect in the nation. He would go on to design several buildings in St. Paul, including Harriet Island Pavilion (since renamed the Clarence W. Wigington Pavilion), and the Highland Park Water Tower. He also created several of the St. Paul Winter Carnival ice palaces in the late 1930s and 1940s, which showed his more imaginative side.

The original Como Park Ele-



A Como Elementary classroom, circa 1951. (Photo provided)

mentary had eight classrooms and a kindergarten classroom, according to Vang. "Today we have four sections of all-day kindergarten, and three sections of pre-K," she said.

Vang said the original building was expanded in the 1970s, and the newer part housed special education programs. There was Como Elementary Education and Como Elementary Special Education, with services available for children with special needs, autism, or with learning disabilities. Vang said the school has now integrated these

programs and is now one Como Park Elementary program. At about the same time as the school had a new addition, a planetarium was built. Como Park Elementary is the only school in the district with a planetarium on site.

Vang said she has done some research on the early days of the school, gathering information from the Minnesota Historical Society and also talking to alumni.

"The initial population of the school was neighborhood children," Vang said. "Earlier on, many of the students said they would



A recent Como Elementary school picture. (Photo provided)

go to school in the morning, then walk home at noon for lunch and return to school for the afternoon. Now, many of the kids come from other neighborhoods and are bused in. We serve breakfast to all the kids, who eat breakfast in their classrooms, as well as the noon lunches."

Vang said Como Park Elementary is moving into the technology era of teaching and learning. Teachers use a Promethean board to interact with their students, and all students have iPads. There are two computer labs for student use.

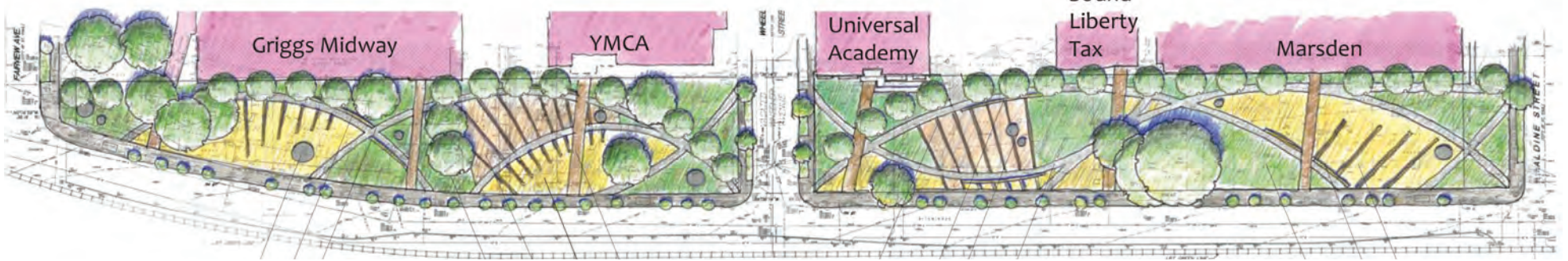
"We connect with Como Zoo, and our upper grades are also connected with Big River Journey, which gives them the opportunity to go on trips and learn about the river," she explained.

Vang said that in preparing for the 100-year celebration, she has found from her research that the concept of Como Park Elementary has not changed that much from its beginning.

"I found pictures of students receiving dental services back in the

Continued on page 4

After 115 years, Dickerman Park finally to take shape?



The length of Dickerman Park stretches in front of five major structures: the Griggs Midway Building, the new Midway YMCA building, University Academy, Metro Sound Liberty Tax building, and the Marsden Building. (Illustration provided)

First phase construction of Dickerman Park may actually begin soon.

The space that will be known as Dickerman Park was originally donated to St. Paul in 1910, but never functioned as a viable public space. In fact, some businesses used the designated park land in front of their buildings as their own, including parking spaces and a school playground.

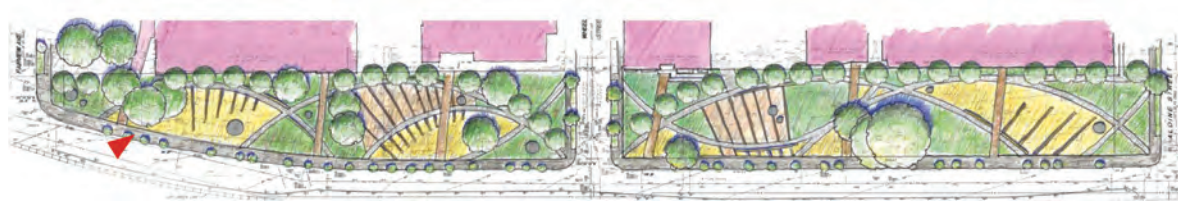
Dickerman Park will incorporate a quarter-mile stretch of land running north of University Ave. between Fairview Ave. and Aldine St.

According to the Dickerman Park Design Advisory Committee, "The advent of the Green Line, the associated redevelopment in the Fairview Station area, and the lack of visible public green space along the corri-

dor make Dickerman Park an incredible opportunity to create an authentic landmark gathering space reflective of the surrounding community."

A multi-generational stand of White and Burr Oak trees still exists within the park's boundaries. The oak trees are iconic. The trees are celebrated in the park's redesign through the planting of low-growing brightly colored gardens underneath each tree. The gardens span the park's width, drawing attention to the oaks and beginning a dynamic rhythm of spaces perceptible from University Ave.

Phase one of construction will include site improvements such as concrete walks, plaza space, lighting, seating, bike racks, native plantings, and lawn within the 1.1 acres of designated park land between Fairview Ave. and Wheeler St.



This conceptual drawing of Dickerman Park appeared in the conceptual plan from January 2015. (Illustration provided)

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The annual Como Neighborhood Garage Sale takes place Sat., May 20. District 10 will produce a map of all homes participating, so shoppers know where to go and what they'll find when they get there. You can download the map from our website: www.district10comopark.org.

Out-of-the-ordinary yards

Looking to do something different in your yard? At District 10's Sunday Series event May 21, expert panelists share cutting-edge ideas, practical advice, and answer questions about making your yard more useful and attractive for you, your neighbors, and wildlife. Topics include:

- Creating a "bee lawn": James Wolfen, University of Minnesota Turf Management
- Doing more with native plants: Tina Dombrowski, Como Park Conservatory
- Edible landscapes: Jennifer Porwit, Ramsey County Master Gardener
- Fruit and ornamental trees: Joe Baltrukonis, Ramsey County Master Gardener
- Pollinator-friendly habitat: Judi Petkau, Big River Big Woods Wild Ones

This free presentation is Sun., May 21, from 1-2:30pm, at Orchard Park Recreation Center, 875 W. Orchard.

Wait, there's more outdoors!

Immediately after the May 21 Sunday Series presentation, the Como Community Seed Library holds its May Share Seed and Plant Exchange. Swap your extra plants, seedlings, and seeds for some-

Como Community Council Corner

By MICHAEL KUCHTA, Executive Director

Annual Como Neighborhood Garage Sale set May 20

thing new. Share stories and adventures with other gardeners. Soak in demonstrations that will build your toolbox of skills and your seed-saving resources. The exchange, from 2:30-4pm, also is free and also is at Orchard Park, 875 W. Orchard.

Get over your social anxiety

On Sun., June 4, District 10 hosts a "community social" in South Como from 4-7pm at Orchard Park Recreation Center, 875 W. Orchard Ave. The event will feature food trucks, outdoor activities and—most importantly—a chance to hang out with more neighbors than will fit at your house. You can find more details on our website: www.district10comopark.org.

Working together to improve Como Lake

Runoff from local streets and landscapes carries leaves, grass clippings, soil, salt, and pet waste to Como Lake. Find

out what the latest research tells us about the lake's water quality and overall health, the challenges a shallow lake like Como faces—and how we, as residents, can become part of the solution. The Capitol Region Watershed District unveils the latest findings on Como Lake's ecology during District 10's final Sunday Series event for 2017.

The free presentation is Sun., June 11 from 1-2:30pm at the Como Lakeside Pavilion, 3rd Floor, 1360 Lexington Pkwy. N. It is co-sponsored by Capitol Region Watershed District, Como Active Citizens Network, Como Dockside and, of course, Como Community Council District 10.

Congratulations

District 10 residents elected 10 members to the Como Community Council board on Apr. 18:

- Chair: Ryan Flynn
- Secretary: Tim Post
- Sub-District 1: Cari Ness Nesje
- Sub-District 2: Maggie Zim-

merman

- Sub-District 3: Mike Ireland
- Sub-District 4: Andrew Johnson
- At-Large: Wesley Farrow, Haley L. Fruen, and Adina Weseman

(Nesje, Johnson, and Fruen are newly elected to the board. Flynn, Post, Zimmerman, Ireland, Farrow, and Weseman are incumbents who were re-elected.)

In addition, Kevin Dahm was elected to fill an At-Large vacancy. Dahm previously was a board member representing Sub-District 4.

In case you missed it

District 10's website has up-to-date information on:

- The construction delay along Wheelock Pkwy.
- The city's latest plan to get rid of boulevard stumps and replace hundreds of ash trees it has cut down this year
- MnDOT's "final preliminary design" to make Snelling Ave. seem less like a freeway and, instead, make walking and bicy-

cling safer and less intimidating on the long stretch between Midway Pkwy. south to Hamline University

You can get the details at www.district10comopark.org. While you're there, sign up for our weekly email newsletter.

Streetcar Station open Sundays

The Historic Streetcar Station is now open every Sunday from noon-4pm. District 10 board members staff the station. You can drop in to pick up organics recycling starter kits, see the new paint job inside, learn a little bit about the history of Como Park, or just share comments and suggestions with us. The Streetcar Station is at the northeast corner of Lexington and Horton.

Upcoming District 10 Meetings

- Como Community Council May Meeting: Tues., May 16
- Environment Committee: Wed., May 31
- Neighborhood Relations and Safety Committee: Tues., June 6
- Land Use Committee: Wed., June 7

Community members are always welcome to attend and participate. All meetings begin at 7pm at the Como Park Streetcar Station, which is at the northeast corner of Lexington and Horton.

Development Roundup

By JANE MCCLURE

216-unit apartment building to go up on Hampden Ave.

Another apartment building will be going up in the West Midway. A four-story, 216-unit building will start construction at 787 Hampden. St. Paul Leased Housing Associates, an arm of Dominion Development, is taking on the project on a three-acre site just north of the Green Line light rail.

The property was rezoned from industrial to traditional neighborhoods use in 2016. Existing industrial buildings will be demolished. The building will have underground and surface parking. The property is on a triangular lot.

The project needed a variance to allow balconies along Hampden Ave. The zoning re-

quires a minimum 10-foot front yard setback, but the balconies will extend out five feet, for a variance of five feet. Each level of the building will have balconies.

Affordable housing is planned. The structure will be built around a green space courtyard and swimming pool for the residents.

The zoning variance request met no opposition, and there was no comment by St. Anthony Park Community Council.

The variance for balconies won St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals approval Apr. 24. That decision is final unless it is appealed to the City Council. No appeal had been filed as of *Monitor* deadline.

Variance approved for banquet center in Energy Park

The Falls Event Center at Bandana Square is moving ahead, thanks to a variance from the St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) in April. The variance is for 1217 Bandana Blvd. N.,

which is known as the "chimneys" building.

The building was built as the blacksmith shop for the Northern Pacific Railroad as part of the Como Shops complex. Its Utah-based developer wants to turn the property into an events center and reception hall. It most recently has been office space.

The chimney building and a second building have more than 22,000 square feet of floor area and a 40-space parking lot. The new use requires 109 spaces. A parking lease is proposed with the nearby Best Western Plus Hotel, but that building and its parking facilities are more than 300 feet away. That drives the need for a variance.

Travel complications kept the applicant from attending the BZA hearing. Midway Chamber of Commerce and Como Community Council representatives spoke in support. One person sent a letter opposing the variance.

The variance was approved with the condition that there be

a five-year shared parking agreement. If the shared parking goes away, the applicant will have to find other parking. Another condition is that added parking would need site plan approval in the future.

City continues jobs, economic development focuses

Continued jobs growth and stepped-up economic development efforts have been a focus for St. Paul city officials. Mayor Chris Coleman emphasized jobs growth in his final State of the City speech this spring. City Council members heard more about the St. Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED) jobs strategy at a policy session last month.

Jobs have caught up to pre-recession levels, said Coleman. In his final months in office, his administration is working on more jobs growth, especially along the Green Line and other transit corridors.

PED Director Jonathan Sage-Martinson told the City Council that a variety of efforts are underway to attract more jobs and businesses to the city, by the city, and with partner agencies. The city is also making changes to the way it markets city-owned properties as it works to attract redevelopment and more jobs. That marketing effort is likely to include city-owned land along University Ave., near Lexington Pkwy., and Albert St.

Comparing third quarter 2015 to third quarter 2016, 984 jobs have been added to the city, to make a total of 180,837.

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German Immersion School

Continued from page 1

Laudon pointed out that this was the first time that neighbors had been to a school board meeting to complain since she joined the board in Feb. 2014.

St. Paul resident Ted Anderson was hired as the school's superintendent in July 2016 after previously working at a school in Berlin for four years, and recalls speaking with two neighbors earlier this school year regarding the noise level at the playgrounds. "The other issues brought to the board were new," he stated.

No parking for residents

"School staff and visitors monopolize neighborhood street parking near the school to the point where residents cannot access to their homes from the street when school is in session," said neighbor K. Anderson. "This affects our ability to have our own visitors. It affects our ability to access our homes from a level surface—there is a hill behind the houses on the alley side, which makes it difficult to unload groceries, landscaping materials, building materials, sports equipment, and what have you. It affects access to our homes by handicapped individuals, again related to the hill on the alley side and also the availability of parking. Day after day, every street parking spot on Van Slyke Ave. is occupied by school staff and visitors."

Since hearing about the parking problem in March, the school responded by asking parents and staff to make sure that one parking spot per home was left open.

"I feel that we are making headway," said the school's executive director in late April.

While K. Anderson and her husband Kevin agree that things are getting better, they're still frustrated.

"As you can imagine it is discouraging to have a 'neighbor' who is so completely unaware of their impact on the surrounding residents," said K. Anderson.

Como Elementary

Continued from page 1

day," she noted. "We have a program today that provides dental services, and we also have vision screening for the kids. We offer weekend meals for 45 of our students, and we have a big collection of clothing for families to draw from. That was provided in the early days too. It has been a very community-oriented school from the beginning."

Vang is also celebrating her 10th anniversary as principal at Como Park. "I am an alumna of St. Paul Public Schools," she said. "I grew up in St. Paul, starting school here when I was in the third grade.

She is also frustrated that every discussion with the school seems to start from scratch as there have been three different administrators in the past four years, and a lack of continuity in which staff member is designated to handle community relations.

In the past, an assistant director held TCGIS/Como Community Partnership meetings every other month, which she appreciated.

Recognizing this as a need, TCGIS is planning to establish a community liaison, according to school representatives.

Laudon also pointed out that since moving into the neighborhood, two to three board members have been neighborhood residents, which has been done to remain connected with the neighborhood. Specifically, Jenneke Oosterhoff who lives along Como Ave. is appointed as a community-at-large board member and doesn't have any children attending the school.

When the school learned from a community member that the District 10 Community Council planned to talk about the school at its April Land Use Meeting, the school's director wrote up a letter that day outlining the steps they were taking following the March complaints, and school board member Natalie Yaeger, who lives in the neighborhood, read it at the meeting.

"We hope that these steps are contributing to improved conditions in the neighborhood and we are committed to collaborating with neighbors on practical, practicable solutions to these issues," wrote TCGIS's executive director in the letter.

Resident K. Anderson remains frustrated that the school has "no parking" signs up on its side of the street on both Como and Van Slyke.

Laudon explained that this is done for the safety of students, and to ensure that pick-up and drop-off run smoothly and quickly. Parents are not allowed to linger on the street, but instead pull up, drop their children off and leave. And, each drop-off and pick-up is spaced out over

I graduated from Como Senior High, then went to college and got my teaching license. I taught elementary school for seven years in St. Paul and then went to work for the district. I got my administration license, then came back." Vang said the school is a great building and that the school enjoys a wonderful relationship with the community.

The June 2 celebration (5-7:30pm) will feature many activities, games, and food. Alumni are expected to return, and special hats have been ordered for them to wear.

Wigington, who died in 1967 after a long and successful career in architecture, would be proud of the school he designed that continues to flourish today.

"We want TCGIS to be a responsible neighbor. We would like a way to have effective communication with the school to resolve issues that affect our daily lives."

— Josh Dworak

20 minutes to help space out the number of people arriving and departing, according to Laudon.

To improve things for parents and ease traffic in the neighborhood, TCGIS partnered with Great River School two years ago and began running three buses to transport students.

Playground materials toxic?

In March, Dworak helped neighbor Arturo Sanchez shovel a 5-foot by 5-foot by 4-inch-deep pile of rubber mulch material from his alleyway that had drifted over from the TCGIS playground.

Dworak is concerned about the "chunks of tire and deteriorating rubber" found in the school's environmental rain drains, streets and neighboring properties. "Basically, TCGIS has installed a rubber tire dump on the playground that is polluting Lake Como and the Mississippi Watershed," stated Dworak. "The neighbors smell deteriorating rubber on days where the temperature gets above 50 degrees."

Executive Director T. Anderson said they "really regret the extent to which the rubber playground material has been transported off our property, and we have stepped up our efforts to mitigate the problem with the installer and manufacturer. The crumbling is excessive and has resulted in significant amounts being transported onto Mr. Sanchez's property and into the alley during routine snow removal." They have cleaned up the alley and plan to work with Sanchez to clean up the area around his bushes.

T. Anderson countered that the rubber mulch is not toxic, and is included on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's list of acceptable landscaping products. "We have been assured by the installer that the material is safe," he said.

He added the playground was designed in cooperation with the Capitol Region Watershed District to keep rainfall on the property and flowing into the ground to reduce run-off into Lake Como. The rubber mulch is supposed to help with that. However, the school is concerned about how fast it is deteriorating and is discussing that with the manufacturer, pointed out T. Anderson. Once it warms up, the installer will take measures to

strengthen the surface.

Environmental issues have always been a priority at TCGIS, say school representatives. There is a recycling program and students separate their trash into a compost bin at lunch.

Excessive noise levels

Some neighbors near the school think that the noise it generates is excessive, reaching levels that may damage hearing.

"I have frequently heard that I moved in next to a school, what did I expect?" pointed out K. Anderson. "It is extremely disappointing that I have never heard any school official recognize that this institution moved into a residential neighborhood and that they have any responsibility to preserve the character of that neighborhood."

Dworak works nights, and the noise from the school playground prevents him from being able to sleep during the day. Anderson says that the noise is far too persistent and unpleasant to open windows, and prevents free use of neighboring porches and yards.

School representatives pointed out that they continue to remind kids to refrain from excessive yelling and screaming, but their program also recognizes that children need not just mental stimulation but physical activity to thrive.

Among the various options the school is considering is erecting a sound barrier, but they also recognize that a wall could have unintended consequences and create more barriers, said Laudon.

"The values we hold as a school community drive how we want to respond to the neighborhood," observed Laudon. They teach students to gather information, interpret it, and then come up with solutions. "You don't rush to solutions, you think about all the options," Laudon stated.

'We hear you. We see you.'

The tuition-free German Immersion School opened its doors in the fall of 2005 with kindergarten and first grade at the old Union Hall along Eustace Ave. As it grew by adding a new kindergarten class each year, it moved to a larger but 90-year-old office building at 1745 University Ave. In the 2012-2013 school year, TCGIS reached its full configuration as a K-8 school.

The next year, it moved its 370 students to the recently renovated former home of St. Andrews Catholic Church and parochial school in the Warendale neighborhood along Como Ave.

The charter school's small class sizes help ensure individualized attention for up to 24 students per class. The school

"We are hearing you. We are seeing you. We want to think globally and broadly as we respond."

— Kelly Laudon,
TCGIS Board Chair

offers full-day immersion kindergarten, English instruction beginning in third grade, and Spanish language in the seventh grade.

Each year, 87% of parents volunteer in some capacity at the school.

Earlier this year, the Minnesota Department of Education recognized the school as one of its 2016-2017 Reward Schools.

The K-8 charter school currently serves 524 students. The largest classes are the youngest, which have three sections. As they rise through the school, TCGIS will need more space. The board has just begun its five-year strategic planning process to identify solutions to space needs.

While they expected attrition as students got older and moved away, all available spots are filled as soon as they open, even in the higher grades, pointed out Laudon. "It's been some unexpected success," she said. They have found that some families are actually choosing to move to the Twin Cities because they want their children to attend this school. Those same people often opt to move into the neighborhood when homes open up, in part because of the European mentality of having homes near their work and school to cut down on driving, she explained.

The school's mission is "innovative education of the whole child through German immersion," remarked Laudon. Its vision: Andere hören, andere sehen, weltoffen denken und handeln. Roughly translated, they work to hear others, see others and think broadly from a global perspective, she explained.

To the neighbors, Laudon said: "We are hearing you. We are seeing you. We want to think globally and broadly as we respond."


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The partnership between Hamline Elementary and Hamline University brings an abundance of opportunities for learning and connection. One of the newest additions to the partnership is the Math and Coding Literacy Project—a weekly program serving approximately 30 students, grades K-5, with lessons designed by Hamline University faculty and taught by Hamline University students.

After budget cuts meant the loss of Hamline Elementary's Gifted & Talented specialist at the end of last year, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Sayonita Ghosh-Hajra, saw an opportunity to fill that gap and in so doing, instill a love of math.

"I love to teach," Ghosh-Hajra said, "and most of the time when I say I am a mathematics professor, I get comments like, 'Math is hard' or 'I'm not good at it.' The only way that belief can be changed is through showing children that math is fun, that math is everywhere, and that whatever we do, we need math."

The project expanded after a conversation between colleagues. Assistant Professor of English, Jen England, explains, "Professor Ghosh-Hajra and I were discussing the value of community-based learning projects. She mentioned her work with Math Connections, and I mentioned my work with girls' technology camps. From there, a conversation about a collaborative project at Hamline just emerged."

The program is divided into K-2 and 3-5 cohorts, each group meeting once a week for 45 minutes. The coding lessons

Hamline Elementary School

By JESSICA KOPP

Hamline Elementary and HU team up for math literacy project



A Hamline University student helps a group of kindergarteners to understand shapes. (Photo provided)

are designed in a collaborative fashion, with England leading a group of university student volunteers through the process. "The coding volunteers and I met several times early in the semester to create an overall plan for our portion of the project," England said. "Because there are no K-12 coding standards to 'map' our lessons onto, we decided to focus on HTML and web development/design. For the volunteers, I think

this has provided an important opportunity for thinking about the ways we develop literacies and the ways we communicate new topics to different audiences. For the kids, I think this has shown them they don't have to be computer scientists to learn and create code and that reading, writing, and design are all important factors in coding."

If you observe this program in progress, you're going to see

a lot of learning and a lot of wiggling. "We're not going to be laying on the tables, okay?" says Olivia, a 19-year-old business management major, with a smile on her face as she organizes her group of five kindergarten students. They begin the lesson on shapes by identifying the names of shapes by their number of sides, up to ten, and then they are invited to draw shapes on the whiteboard with 14, 15, 16 sides. As one student draws, the rest of the group counts out the sides. They learn words like "vertices" and "edges" and say things like "an octagon is just a heart" and "that's a funny shaped shape." The kids laugh before turning to their own papers to draw the more familiar polygons, manipulatives at their fingertips for inspiration.

The classroom is characterized by collaborative learning, exuberant giggles, and Olivia's patient, engaging, and encouraging nature. "Math isn't everyone's favorite," Olivia says, "so I like the opportunity for hands-on learning in a small setting. It's hard for them to sit still but I love working with these cuties!"

The rest of the K-2 group, eleven first and second graders,

is divided among three university students and patient explanations, enthusiastic high-fives, and smiles are everywhere.

Andi Eckl, a first-year student, got involved in this project because she loves helping kids, "Math is fun to teach because when kids understand math, they have this sort of confidence in their intelligence. And that is an amazing thing to see." The most rewarding part of her work in this program is when kids understand the lesson.

Because Eckl hopes to work with kids in the future, this opportunity has been particularly special, "It has confirmed all my aspirations and provided for a really fun time getting to know these kids. They have a lot of personalities, and it is cool to be able to connect with them where we can laugh together and talk about weekend activities—and also learn about math."

The Hamline to Hamline Collaboration allows for innovation, growth, and inspired ideas and the professors responsible for this inspired idea see a bright future for the project. Professor Ghosh-Hajra looks forward to finding grants that will expand the project to include more elementary students. England hopes to expand the curriculum and connect the kids' HTML work to a website connected to The Snelling Connection, a writing and journalism program for Hamline Elementary students advised by Hamline University students.

Stay tuned to see what happens next.

Next big Snelling Ave. road project: Hewitt Ave. to Midway Pkwy.?

By JANE MCCLURE

Improvements to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians on Snelling Ave. have been discussed for many years. Some area residents and business owners may remember serving on, or attending meetings of, a task force to discuss that issue on various parts of Snelling. Those meetings were part of a larger multi-modal study released in early 2013. But a lack of action in Hamline-Midway and Como neighborhoods has left some people asking, what's next?

Because Snelling is Minnesota Trunk Highway 51,



the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has jurisdiction over what changes

are made. Many people turned out Apr. 26 for two open houses at Ginkgo Coffeehouse to

share their ideas and listen to MnDOT proposals to make Snelling safer for bicycles and pedestrians traveling between Hewitt and Midway Pkwy. Ramsey County and St. Paul also had public works staff on hand.

The coffeehouse meeting gave community members another chance to weigh in about what they like and don't like, and what is still missing in the design. Several people said they appreciate the proposals thus far but would like to see even more done to keep bicyclists and pedestrians safer, especially since the area has so few north-south connections for biking and walking. Concerns were also raised about motor vehicle speeds on that stretch of Snelling, which is a series of bridges over other streets and railroad tracks.

This latest MnDOT project began in April 2016 and is to wrap up later this spring. MnDOT has worked to meet with stakeholders, gather data and work on the preliminary design. Even after a final design is released, it's not clear when a project could move ahead as funding would have to be obtained.

The changes proposed would vary from area to area. At Snelling and Hewitt, pedestrians and bicyclists would have widened sidewalks, one-way, seven-foot bikeways and dedicated spaces separate from motor vehicles. A median there could be removed.

At Snelling and Pierce Butler Rte., there would be a high-

er-visibility bike and pedestrian crosswalk, with elevated bikeway and sidewalks adjacent to the intersection. Bike and pedestrian refuges within the intersection and a traffic signal that includes crossing warnings and prompts for bicyclists would also be included. The changes, including extensive pavement markings, were outlined as a way to add to visibility and comfort for everyone using that stretch of Snelling.

Another dangerous area for bikes and pedestrians is at Energy Park Dr. and Snelling. That area would be transformed with high visibility bikeway and pedestrian crosswalks, an elevated bikeway and sidewalks adjacent to intersections, bikeway and pedestrian refuge areas within the intersection, and a traffic signal that includes crossing warnings and prompts for bicyclists. The protected sidewalks and two-way bikeway would extend onto the bridge.

At Como and Snelling, pedestrians and bicyclists would have widened sidewalks, one-way, seven-foot bikeways, and dedicated spaces separate from vehicles along Snelling at Como avenues. One goal of improvements here is to improve transit access, as the A Line rapid bus service and other bus lines connect here.

Final design would be ready in November. To see ideas and look at an interactive map, go to www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/snelling-study/documents.html.

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By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Lori Greene describes herself as a community-based mosaic artist. She owns and operates a mosaic arts business called Mosaic on a Stick, located for the past four years at 1564 Lafond Ave., in the historic Hamline Park Playground Shelter. It's a place where both art and community flourish.

To hear Greene describe the arc of her own career, one of the constants has been her willingness to follow her intuition. She had been close to signing a lease on another property in 2013, when the City of St. Paul called and asked if she would be interested in renting the playground shelter at Hamline Park. A long-time admirer of its architect, the city's first African American municipal architect Clarence Wigington, she jumped at the chance. It just seemed like the right thing to do.

"This rental situation has worked out well for us," Greene said. "We're able to be in a beautiful, historic building with plenty of room for working with glass, teaching classes, and selling glass-related materials and artwork. We're able to function as what we are, which is a community art space."

To her joy, people still come in to use the public restrooms and drinking fountains in the old park building. Some of them might even make a small mosaic while they're there. Greene said, "I've had more than two dozen conversations with people in their 70's and 80's who remember having gone to park dances here in their teens. They just want to look around, reminisce, and tell their stories."

Mosaic on a Stick frequently offers community art events in which people of all skill levels can participate. There's an art show coming up this month called, "Mother is a Verb," with pieces for



Mosaic on a Stick tessellates a good story

Greene said, "One of our most popular classes is where students learn to make a mandala, which is a circle of glass cut from repeating patterns. Making a mandala is a peaceful act. I feel happy when I'm making one, and I think other people do too – whether or not they know why." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

sale by community artists across all media. The opening celebration is Thur., May 11 from 6:30-9:30pm, and the show will run through Fri., June 30.

The title of the show seems fitting, as Greene had three small children herself when she launched Mosaic on a Stick in 2004.

Greene's early art training was in textiles, a medium about as different from glass as it could be. She graduated with a BFA from the California College of Arts in

weaving, having been drawn to that craft because of her ancestral Choctaw Indian roots. She eventually found her way to glass in grad school at the Maryland Institute College of Arts. "I started making mosaic there before I even knew

what it was called," Greene said.

As a community-based mosaic artist, Greene noted that, "I make art for, and with, other people. Sometimes I design a project, and community members help me to create it. Sometimes I work

with people on a project design, and then I make it. Sometimes it's a mixture of both."

Greene plans to make a four-sided sculpture of a woman for the outside of her building, and have it installed by this fall. The sculpture will stand about 10' tall. Her goal is to work with women of color in the neighborhood to develop the idea and to do the mosaic tiling. She said, "I want it to be their story—our story."

Greene's work can be seen all around the Twin Cities at North High, Minnehaha Academy, HCMC, the Seward Co-op, the Global Market, and the Ronald McDonald House, to name just a few. Her work is unmistakably colorful, pattern-based, and often tells a story. In other words, it's hard to miss.

Thirteen years ago, Greene was selected to participate in a program at Intermedia Arts in South Minneapolis that paired artists with community activists. During her initial interview, she was asked what her reason was for applying. Again, following her intuition, Greene said, "I know that people need art to heal, and spaces in which to make their healing art. I wanted to make a safe space one day for women, especially, to come and do their creative work."

It seems that is just what Greene has done. Mosaic on a Stick is a place where life meets art, and where neighbors meet each other.

In keeping with the community-mindedness that drives her work, Greene is now also hosting a "huddle" that came out of the Women's March last January. "We meet on the third Thursday of every month at 6pm," she said, "and anyone is welcome—it's an open group."

For more information about Mosaic on a Stick and its many offerings, contact Lori at 651-645-6600 or lori@greenemosaic.com.



Greene plans to make a four-sided sculpture of a woman for the outside of her building, and have it installed by this fall. The sculpture will stand about 10' tall. Her goal is to work with women of color in the neighborhood to develop the idea and to do the mosaic tiling. She said, "I want it to be their story—our story." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



Artist Lori Greene in front of her business on the SE corner of Lafond and Snelling avenues. Their close proximity to the Fairgrounds inspired the name that first came up jokingly, but stuck: Mosaic on a Stick. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



"Everything that I am," Greene said, "I am because of my parents, my grandparents, aunts, and uncles. The way I grew up, everybody was working for the benefit of the community; everybody was working for peace." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



The art supply and gift side of Mosaic on a Stick. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

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Party for the Planet at Como Zoo draws learners of all ages

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

In partnership with Excel Energy, Como Zoo and Conservatory threw a Party for the Planet on Apr. 22-23. On Earth Day weekend, children and their families learned about the "super hero" powers that animals have—like tarantula spiders that can re-grow legs and snakes that are masters of disguise, changing their colors to elude predators.

Visitors to the free, public event also learned how they could become conservation superheroes themselves. This year marked the 47th anniversary of Earth Day, a global celebration that reminds us of what we can do to protect our planet's resources.

Event Coordinator Lindsay Sypnieski said, "Our Party for the Planet was part of a national initiative through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, to which we belong. All across the country in the month of April, zoos and aquariums have been offering educational events with conservation themes. The Party for the Planet was a fun way to get people thinking about their role as stewards of the earth. Even if our actions are small, they have an impact that's either positive or negative."



Alexander Yang (pictured left), a high school senior participating in the Youth Education Program at Como Zoo and Conservatory, explained the importance of planting seeds to a young visitor. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

Como Zoo and Conservatory offers many opportunities to engage youth with the natural world, conservation issues, and leadership development.

One example, their Youth Engagement Program (YEP), is designed for 9th-12th graders who want to grow as leaders in their communities, and to make the world a better place by implementing meaningful conser-

vation projects.

YEP member Alexander Yang was on hand at the Party for the Planet, engaging young people in the value of planting seeds. A senior at Roseville Area High School and a devoted gardener, Yang said that YEP taught him a lot. His year-long YEP project has been about making seeds accessible and available to everyone.

YEP Coordinator Steph Kap-



Visitors enjoyed crafts and learned about habitat pressure facing panda bears in China. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

pel explained, "Our project is just completing its first year. We had ten students participate from across the metro area. We're currently accepting applications for the 2017-2018 school year. Funding comes from the state Legacy Amendment, and there is no cost for students to participate. More information can be found under the education tab at www.comozooconservatory.org.

"This year's YEP projects included a wide range of issues," Kappel said, "like storm water run-off, engaging more youth of color to use city parks, reducing waste, and improving recy-

cling. All of the projects were selected by students themselves, and they learned valuable skills along the way including project management, the ability to assess community assets, and grant writing. YEP is about making connections with other youth who share a passion for positive change."

Through education programs like YEP, Nature Walkers (for 13-17-year-olds), Lil' Explorer Thursdays (for preschoolers), and many others, Como Zoo and Conservatory is helping develop the next generation of conservation superheroes.



In an activity called "The Power of Flight", children learned how monarch butterflies fly thousands of miles each year to their over-wintering grounds in Mexico. The University of Minnesota's Monarch Lab had a table where children could mix soil and milkweed seeds to make a seed ball to take home. Milkweed is an essential source of food and shelter for monarchs. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

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• The annual spring play at Como was performed on Apr. 27-28 in the school auditorium. "The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon" was a fast-paced, modern, humorous medley of the Brothers Grimm fairy tales. Written by Don Zolidis, Como's performers were directed by Allison Hartzell. The talented cast included Anna Anzaldo, Amira Boler, Camryn Borrego, Alyssa Clark, Allison Goodale, Madi McPhee, Emilie Pagel, Heather Rogers, Lillian Rogers, Toby Sax, Amelia Schucker, Minna Stillwell-Jardin, Norah Vitalli, and Hunter Waldemarsen. Audiences enjoyed the lively, spirited comedy and participated in the production's interactive elements.

• Eli Freberg won a \$3000 tuition scholarship for an essay contest sponsored by the Minnesota Council on Economic Education (MCEE) and Country Insurance. The essay topic asked students to explore a topic connecting financial health and physical health. Freberg's essay drew upon his experiences and observations within St. Paul's diverse, immigrant community, and suggested expanding partnerships between financial institutions and educational settings. Freberg will



Eli Freberg was surprised with a big check for his winning essay by representatives from Country Financial. (Photo provided)

Spring at the Hamline Midway Library will include a wide array of opportunities to learn, grow, and have fun. Stop by the library, 1558 W. Minnehaha, to see what this community treasure has to offer you!

Preschool storytimes in English happen at the library on Fridays, 10:30-11am. The storytimes include songs, stories, fingerplays, puppets, and more, and they're a great way to build literacy and school readiness skills for young children. Upcoming storytimes are on May 12 and 19 and June 2, 9, and 16; there is no storytime scheduled for May 26.

The Kaleidoscope series presents dance from around the world in programs specially designed for preschoolers. On Tues., May 16, 10:30-11:30am, the series features Afoutayi Haitian Dance. On Tues., May 23, 10:30-11:30am, the featured performance is Pinocchio-Chan Kabuki.

All St. Paul Public Libraries will be closed on May 11 for a staff training. They're also closed May 27-May 29 for Memorial Day.

Registration is open for the Known by Heart Poetry Class series with Naomi Cohn. On Wed., May 17, 1-3pm, the focus will be Writing About Family. On Wed., May 24, 1-3pm, the class will play with writing about the body and the senses. Bring whatever you are comfortable writing with—a journal, notebook, or laptop. Register on the library website at www.sppl.org or call the library at 651-642-0293.

Chair Yoga starts up again on Thur., May 18, 10:30-11:30am. In this class taught by Nancy Giguere,

News from Como Park High School

Compiled by ERIC ERICKSON, Social Studies Teacher

Performances, awards, AP Exams, and end of year activities



Actors from Como's production of "The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon," are pictured from left to right. Top row: Anna Anzaldo, Madi McPhee, Heather Rogers, Minna Stillwell-Jardin, Camryn Borrego. Bottom row: Norah Vitalli, Amelia Schucker, Camryn Borrego, Amira Boler, Hunter Waldemarsen. (Photo by Mike Krivit, www.krivit.com)

study business at the U of M next year in the Carlson School of Management.

• French students participated in the annual A Vous la Parole French speaking contest held at the University of Minnesota on Apr. 27. Sponsored annually by the Minnesota Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French, with support from the U of M's French Department, the contest recognizes excellence in French speaking skills. This year's contest drew over 1200 student entries.

Students performed French poems, songs, a theater piece or original skit, and read a text in French for judges who evaluated

their language and performance skills. Students are given ratings based on a four-star system with four stars earning blue medal status. Como students earning blue medals were: Trenton Philippi, Joe McCune-Zierath, Eli Freberg, Mellisa Orfori, Aubin Eymard, Ulysse Corbin, Chloe Hollister-Lapointe, Hang Nguyen, Trinh Nguyen, Lay Lay Zan, Aiyanna Aeikens, and Patrick Noren.

• 110 students currently studying U.S. History at Como spent the afternoon of Apr. 25 in an Underground Railroad simulation with leaders from the VocalEssence WITNESS program. The "Exploring Freedom" workshop uses the sacrifice and lifework of Harriet

Tubman to connect students with U.S. History and racial discrimination in an upbeat, informative, and interactive manner. Through African drumming, storytelling, group challenges and break-out sessions, the students learned the context of the Underground Railroad and challenged their ideas about what freedom means today, and how we go about achieving it.

• Como's MJROTC cadets traveled to Whitetail Regional Park on Apr. 15 to participate in an Orienteering Meet where maps and timed routes challenge navigators to problem solve while enjoying nature. Senior Nghiep Nguyen placed 1st in the advanced division among 80 competitors from various ROTC programs. Also placing high in the standings and earning Honorable Mention were Va Lee, Thi Ra, and Ma Win.

• The first two weeks of May is an intensive time for students enrolled in Advanced Placement classes, as AP Exams are administered for 20 different courses at Como. In total, over 500 student exams will be taken at Como. The AP exams students choose to take are a culminating assessment of the study and knowledge gained from the rigorous and enlightening college-level courses. AP courses are instructed by Como teachers and regulated by the AP College Board.

• Senior Marie Wulff represented Como at the Athena Awards Banquet on Apr. 19 as a top student-athlete in the St. Paul Area. Wulff was a captain in soccer, a captain in robotics, and lettered in track for two seasons. Her resume of academic accomplishments and volunteer service are extensive. Highlights include status as an AP Scholar, A Honor Roll with Distinction, leadership in the National Honor Society, tutoring, mentoring, peer mediation, and international service trips. Wulff's family, coaches and Como administration attended the luncheon with her at the Envision Event Center in Oakdale.

• The 2017 Como Prom, "A Night on the Town," will be held on Sat., May 20 at the U.S. Bank Stadium, the new home of the Minnesota Vikings in Minneapolis. The Grand March begins at 7pm at the stadium's giant legacy doors. The junior and senior classes of Como are excited for the event and look forward to celebrating in the new venue.

• Planning is well underway for the Como's Graduation ceremony on June 6 at Roy Wilkins Auditorium in the downtown RiverCentre. The annual senior all-night graduation party, sponsored by the Como Booster Club, will take place at school after the ceremony to provide a safe, fun environment to celebrate with friends. Dancing, arcade games, henna artists, basketball, swimming, food, prizes and more are on the agenda. Parents and community members are invited to help before, during or after the party and donations are welcome at any time. Use the VolunteerSpot link to help! <http://signup.com/go.KY29UN>.

News from Hamline Midway Library

By CARRIE POMEROY

Spring heralds array of opportunities at the library!

all movement is done while seated or standing using the chair for balance. This class is co-sponsored by the Hamline Midway Elders. More yoga classes are offered at the same time on May 25 and June 1 and 8.

Sat., May 20 from 11:30am-5pm, the library will be celebrating Hamline Midway Library becoming a Nature Smart Library. Enjoy fun nature-oriented activities for the whole family all day long and learn more about what it means to be a Nature Smart Library!

The Show and Tell Book Club meets on Sat., May 20, 1:30-

2:15pm. Join librarian Shelly to share books, do fun activities, and eat snacks. Best for first, second, and third graders.

Jody's Documentary Series presents documentaries from PBS's POV series with lively discussion afterward. On Wed., May 31, 1-3pm, Jody will be showing "Tough Love" by filmmaker Stephanie Wang-Breal. The film tells the stories of two parents, a father in Seattle and a pregnant mom in New York, both trying to get their children back after being accused of child neglect. Where this

film goes just may surprise you! Co-sponsored by the Hamline Midway Elders and POV.

The Saints and Sinners Mystery Book Club meets Sat., June 3, 1-2pm to discuss good mysteries. This month's book is "The Ice Princess" by Camilla Lackberg. Please contact volunteer G. Balter for book list or more information at geribalter@gmail.com or 651-224-5570.

The Teen Book Club meets on Sat., June 10, 3-4pm, to discuss teen books, including graphic novels, Battle of the Books,

Read Brave, and more. For grades 9 and up.

On Thur., June 15, 6-7pm, the nationally recognized puppet company Open Eye Figure Theater will present Molly and the Magic Boot. A city girl named Molly is stuck on Grandma's farm all summer with no TV, no cell phone, and no video games! But with the help of some fantastical footwear, her fabulous farm friends, and a little imagination, Molly discovers how fun the outdoors can be!

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Central plans 150th Birthday Party Picnic

The entire community is invited to join the Central High community on May 18 from 5-6:30pm for a special 150th Birthday Party Picnic on the new plaza.

Current students as well as alumni musicians Martin Devaney and Lucy Michelle will perform outside near the outdoor classroom. Stroll around the newly remodeled campus and enjoy the outdoor photography exhibit. Photos from Central's past will be mounted on the building alongside current photos by photographer Chris Faust.

Leprechaun's Dreamcycle and other food trucks will be on-site if you wish to purchase food. There will be games and art projects for all ages.

You are invited to stay for the Central jazz band concert at 7pm in the auditorium.

YMCA Garage Sale scheduled May 18

More than 250 families will contribute to a huge sale at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds Merchandise Mart on Thur., May 18, 9am-7:30pm. Proceeds fund the Camper Scholarship Endowment for YMCA Camps Widjiwagan and duNord. (Donations accepted May 14-16, 9am to 7:30pm.)

St. Anthony Arts Festival set June 3

Fabulous original art in the fine setting at the steps of the St. Anthony Park Branch Library marks the St. Anthony Park Arts Festival on June 3, 10am-5pm. Always the first Saturday in June, this year they will celebrate the 48th year of the arts festival with 79 juried artists, music, food and activities. Attractions include a used books sale in the library community room and a plant sale at the Lutheran Church.

Need MN soldiers names, addresses

A small group of seniors sends boxes every month to soldiers serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. They report that they have lots of goodies and need additional names and PO addresses of Minnesota soldiers to send their packages to. Please send information to Sue Stark at princess-jjstark@gmail.com.

News from Hamline Midway Elders

New Walking Club—Gather at 11am on Wednesdays in the parking lot of Hamline Church

How does your garden grow?



Students from Ms. Crowley's and Mr. Chase's Murray Middle School Magnet (2200 Buford Ave.) science classes visited with Dr. Jeannine Cavender-Bares and her team of graduate students to tour the greenhouses at the St. Paul Campus of the University of Minnesota earlier in April. Students rotated between different stations including a tour of the greenhouses to see the unique ways some plants get their nutrients. The students examined stomata cells in leaves under the microscopes and observed the dendritic patterns of veins in oak leaves. Cavender-Bares also had students measure the chemical output of photosynthesis with some amazing technology used in her lab. Using a vacuum chamber, students were also able to observe how the xylem and phloem cells move water and nutrients about the plant.

United Methodist (1514 Englewood Ave.) for a casual stroll in the neighborhood—fresh air, exercise, and conversation.

Chair Yoga—Nancy Giguere returns to lead another series of Chair Yoga at Hamline Midway Library. Free classes will be held on four consecutive Thursday mornings from 10:30 to 11:30 beginning May 18. Chair Yoga focuses on a range of movement, alignment, stretching, strengthening, awareness, breathing, and relaxation. All movement is done while seated or standing using a chair for balance.

Community Dinner with "Laughter is the Best Medicine"—The whole community is invited to join in on Thur., May 18 at Hamline Church United Methodist (1514 Englewood Ave.) beginning at 6pm. Chef Erik Hendrickson will prepare a wonderful meal that will be followed by a fun-filled presentation of characters concocted by neighborhood artist and comedian Leslye Orr. Reservations are strongly encouraged (to help us know how many meals to prepare), and we request free-will donations (suggested \$10 for adults and \$5 for seniors and children) along with donations for a local food shelf.

Jody's Documentary Film Series—On Wed., May 31 at 1pm the film "Tough Love" by filmmaker Stephanie Wang-Beal will be shown at Hamline Midway Library. This documentary explores the topic of child neglect. No registration is necessary, just enjoy the documentary, some snacks, and a lively discussion led by Jody Huber after the film.

Ice Cream Social—Mark your calendar for Tuesday night, June 27 for our annual Ice Cream Social—details in next month's Monitor.

For more information on any of the above items please con-

tact Tom Fitzpatrick at Hamline Midway Elders at 651-209-6542 or tom@hmelders.org.

Drum Center plans annual benefit

The annual Women's Drum Center (2242 University Ave. W.) Benefit Concert will be held on Sat., May 21, 7pm at Sateren Auditorium, Augsburg College, 2211 Riverside Ave., Minneapolis. Tickets are \$15 and are available at www.brownpapertickets.com, or \$20 at the door. A silent auction begins at 6pm. Women's Drum Center is a nonprofit organization providing opportunities for women and girls to learn, teach, and play percussion together and to energize the community at large through performing.

Backyard celebration scheduled June 3

The sun is out, and it's time for Frogtown's Backyard Celebration. Come on over to Frogtown Park and Farm (946 Minnehaha Ave. W.) on Sat., June 3, 11am-2pm, for free food, gardening activities, and games for kids—there is so much to do!

- Bring a sample of your yard's soil for free screening for contaminants and quality (see how to take your sample at www.frogtownfarm.org/soil-sample).
- Free plants, learn how to build a raised bed, and other gardening tips.
- Visit the interactive Hmong village, check out cooking demonstrations, and explore neighborhood resources.
- Explore the Park's new nature-based play area located on Victoria Ave. and see what is in store for the season.

- Stop by the plaza area to participate in Frogtown Neighborhood Association's elections for their Board of Directors. Polls are open from 10am-1:50pm. Results will be announced at 2pm.

The Frogtown Backyard Celebration event is free and open to all. The park is accessible by foot, bike, bus, and the Greenline. On-street parking is very limited. Disability parking is available onsite via the Milton Ave. entrance.

Frogtown Backyard Celebration is presented by Frogtown Neighborhood Association, Frogtown Farm and Trust for Public Land with support from Public Allies Twin Cities and Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

Native Plant Expo scheduled June 3

Learn about native plants and their many benefits from local conservation organizations at the Landscape Revival Native Plant Expo & Market, June 3, 9am-3pm. You will be able to purchase plants native to Minnesota and accessories from a variety of local growers (cash/check only). No cultivars, no systematic insecticides. The Expo will be held at the Cub Foods Community Pavilion, 1201 Larpenteur Ave. W.

Many of us don't think about choosing plants that are native to Minnesota when we plan our yards and gardens. Instead, we pick plants for their color, their hardiness or how quickly they grow. But by choosing Minnesota native plants—plant species that have grown in this area for hundreds of years and are thus well adapted to our conditions—we can create spectacular gardens that are a haven for wildlife and protect our lakes and the Mississippi River.

In Minnesota, there are trends that threaten wildlife and environmental quality. Bees, butterflies, birds and other animals are quickly losing their habitat as our growing population creates the need for more land development. These developments also change how water moves over the landscape and create more runoff where water would naturally soak into the soil. Additionally, the spread of invasive plants is degrading and fragmenting the habitat that remains. You can help by growing native plant species that sustain wildlife in ways that introduced plants do not.

Begin creating your wildlife oasis by talking to professionals at the Landscape Revival. You can start small. The beauty and rewards you discover will make you want to do more!

Landscape Revival is organized by a dedicated group of volunteers, and sponsored by St. Paul Audubon Society, Blue Thumb, Wild Ones, and Neighborhood Greening. Native growers participating in the sale do not use sys-

temic pesticides.

Rep. Alice Hausman receives award

Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul) has received the Saint Paul College 2017 Community Partner of the Year award. The award honors individuals and organizations for outstanding service and dedication to Saint Paul College.

According to the college, Hausman received the award because she "is a tireless advocate of higher education and Saint Paul College. As a retired educator, her support of education initiatives and her advocacy for the well-being of her constituents, so many of whom are Saint Paul College students, has contributed greatly to the success of the College and our students. Representative Hausman is a genuine leader who truly cares about all Minnesotans."

Saint Paul College President Rassoul Dastmozd also announced that an endowed scholarship of \$500 per school year will be awarded to a student in the Trades programs in honor of Hausman.

Salvage Saturdays planned in May

Tech Dump Saint Paul, 698 Prior Ave. N., is planning Salvage Saturdays on May 13 and 27, 9am-1pm. Get rid of that pile of denial and turn your old electronics into jobs at Tech Dump, the nonprofit social enterprise e-waste recycler and retailer. Cables, cords, computers, cell phones and working flat screen TVs are free. Otherwise, fees may apply.

For more info and to see where fees do apply, go to the website at www.techdump.org/recycling-events.

Como Shuttle launches new season

'Get Closer' to Como Park Zoo & Conservatory's plants, animals, and the front door with the Como Shuttle. The shuttle is a quick, convenient and free bus service to the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory.

Weekend shuttle service is now operational, while daily service will begin May 27 and run through Aug. 6. Weekend-only shuttle service resumes Aug. 12 through Oct. 1. There will be no shuttle service on June 23 and during the State Fair (Aug. 24-Sept. 8).

The shuttle bus allows passengers to board at the staffed off-site parking lot at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds, located on the south side of Como Ave. across from the State Fair's Warner Coliseum and

Continued on page 10

In Our Community

Continued from page 9

within minutes of the front doors of the Visitor Center.

The shuttle runs continuously 9:30am-6:15pm. The buses are wheelchair and stroller accessible.

The City of Saint Paul is implementing residential permit parking restrictions effective May 1 on streets west of Como Park. Taking the shuttle will be the most convenient and best alternative to finding parking at Como Park Zoo & Conservatory, with nearly 2 million annual visitors.

Artists' Market planned May 19-21

Artists' Market (formerly Art on a Line) is scheduled for May 19 and 20, 10am-6pm, and May 21, 11am-4pm at the State Fairgrounds Fine Arts Building. All original watercolor and acrylic paintings are for sale at this NorthStar Watermedia Society event. Ongoing art demonstrations by award-winning Twin Cities artists and a scavenger hunt for the kids is also planned. Register to win a free original painting—there will be free drawings held each day for audiences that are present. For more info go to www.northstarwatermedia.com.

Gibbs Farm opens their 2017 season

Gibbs Farm: Pathways to Dakota & Pioneer Life will offer new programs as well as returning favorites for the 2017 Season. The farm allows a glimpse into the lives and cultures of the native people of this land, the Dakota, as well as a look at the craft and kitchen heritage of the pioneers who settled, farmed and raised families in 19th century Minnesota. The new Gibbs Farm Fridays series will focus on the day-to-day lives and activities that have become a heritage that continues to thrive today. There will be an exciting new topic each week!

Returning favorites include Ice Cream Sundays every other week, and the ever-popular Gibbs Halloween (Oct. 28), with costumes and trick-or-treating, crafts, fun, and food in the historic buildings of Gibbs Farm; the Apple Festival on Sept. 30, that explores the heritage of apple growing in Minnesota with presentations and tours with master gardeners, along with apple crafts, fun and food; and Dakota Day on June 24, celebrating the rich contributions of the Dakota, Minnesota's First People, to our state with language presentations, crafts, food and more.

Please see the website at www.rchs.com for other events, parade participation and more.

Gibbs Farm 2017 Season runs from Memorial Day weekend through Halloween weekend. They are open weekends, Saturdays

and Sundays, 10am-4pm. They are also open on selected Fridays, June through August, for Farm Fridays, 10am-4pm.

Garden Club Plant Sale slated June 3

Don't miss the annual St Anthony Park Garden Club's Plant Sale at the Arts Festival, June 3, 9am-2pm, at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Ave. Proceeds fund a UMN Horticulture scholarship & the SAP Library plantings.

Will the stumps be gone from Como?

Saint Paul Mayor Christopher Coleman expects stumps left from ash trees will be cleared from Dist. 10 boulevards by the end of summer, and replacement trees planted within the next year. Coleman and parks director Mike Hamm gave the new details Apr. 26 after meeting with residents and viewing some of the blocks in Como most heavily affected by the city's ash removal program. Their new plan, however, depends on reallocating about \$600,000 to do the work.

If pieces fall into place, District 10 will see replacement trees planted this fall and next spring. The replacement trees are likely to be a mix of oak, honey locust, hackberry, and Kentucky coffee tree. At this point, the city plans to plant 2-inch saplings.

But, the city is working on an option for individual residents to pay extra to plant a more-mature replacement tree.

The city is also hoping to revamp its permit process for residents who want to plant their own tree in the city boulevard without waiting that long. Read more details on city plans on the District 10's website.

St. Thomas More gets new principal

St. Thomas More Catholic School, has named Pat Lofton incoming principal, beginning in June 2017. Lofton previously served as principal for the Jesuit pre-K through 8th-grade school from 2006 to 2011 before being recruited to positions in regional and national Catholic education.

"I've enjoyed a wonderful professional journey over the past six years, but I have truly missed being in the Twin Cities school community and particularly being at St. Thomas More," said Lofton. "Returning to St. Thomas More is like returning to family."

Lofton will return to find notable curriculum advancements including the SuperKids reading program and Singapore math. Lofton said he looks forward to growing St. Thomas More as a destination school in the Twin Cities and showing prospective families the difference a Jesuit education can have in their child's life.

"We are thrilled to have Pat return to our school," said Father Warren Szama, SJ, Pastor of St. Thomas More Catholic Community, which includes both the parish school and church. "He is not only a highly engaged and forward thinking leader, but universally well-liked and respected by students, parents, and faculty."

Northstar Council honors volunteers

Congratulations to the volunteers, honored in April, at the Northern Star Council, Boy Scouts of America, North Star District Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner. 2017 District Awards Recipients from the Monitor area included:

- Ralph Davis Award: Matt Connolly, Troop 218, Holy Childhood Catholic Church and Anthony Kieser, Troop 1, Church of Saint Mark.
- Henri A. Eisenhower Award: Al Madison, Pack 70 & Troop 13, Church of Saint Columba
- Gordon F. Meeker, Webelos Leader Award: Juli Pelletier & Tim Hagedorn, Pack 90, Parent Advisory Board Expo School.
- Assistance Scoutmaster of the Year: Bob Hartshorn, Troop 1, Church of Saint Mark
- Scoutmaster of the Year Award: Dean Schafer, Troop 17, Saint Anthony Park United Church of Christ.

The North Star District of the Northern Star Council, Boy Scouts of America serves the youth of Saint Paul.

Classifieds

Monitor

Want ads must be received by the Monitor by May 26 for the June 8 issue. Call 651-645-7045 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

Monitor Want Ads are \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, 125 1st Ave. NW, PO Box 168, Minneapolis, MN 55369. Want ads must be mailed to the Monitor by May 26 for the June 8 issue. Ad copy can be e-mailed to denis@deruyternelson.com. Call 651-645-7045 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

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EMPLOYMENT

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LANDSCAPING

Monitor In A Minute

By JANE MCCLURE

Griggs St. park is focus

Apr. 28 saw a flurry of activity on proposed park land on Griggs St. south of University Ave. Minnesota Environmental Fund led an effort to bring together Gordon Parks High School students, senior citizens, HealthPartners staff, Skyline residents and Community Action Partnership-Ramsey Washington staff, in addition to other nonprofit employees. This action complements the City's and the Trust for Public Land's efforts to engage the community in planning the future park at that location. The group picked up litter, toured the area and discussed park ideas.

"Students and nearby residents came to us for help creating a park, and now they are sharing their dreams about this future park," said Jenna Fletcher, program director at the Trust for Public Land. "We are grateful that Minnesota Environmental Fund is both bringing us together for this event and supporting our work creating parks for people. Getting to know each other through community events like this builds a caring community for years to come."

Students at nearby Gordon Parks School identified the need for a park on Griggs, and are actively shaping its future. Students are excited about the park and have worked for years to make it a reality.

Paul Creager, Parks High Curriculum and Media Arts Coordinator, said, "Over the years promoting the park concept, Gordon Parks High School students have worked with Skyline Towers, the Lex-Ham community and other neighbors on cleanup efforts near the future park space. However, this event will be the biggest cleanup ever and a great way to meet more neighbors around the vibrant energy of the future park space."

Park improvements

Two area parks are going to see changes this construction season.

May Park's play area improvements are finally moving ahead. A design process has resulted in bids being let and a contractor chosen. Construction gets underway this spring and will end in late July. Playground improvements and seating with artistic elements are in the plans.

May Park is bounded by

Clayland Place, Clayland St., Tatum Place, and W. Chelton Ave. It was funded by the city's Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget Committee in the last funding cycle, after having previous funding reallocated. The park is less than one acre in size.

Long-awaited work on Dickerman Park (see more detailed article on page 2 in this issue) could start this summer, bringing another park space along the Green Line. The park is on the north side of University Ave., between Fairview Ave. and Aldine St. Bids for the park will be sought this month, to continue park development. Park plans were developed a few years ago by a community task force.

Sustainable St. Paul awards

Several area residents and business were honored at the 2017 Sustainable St. Paul Awards Apr. 19. The City Council and Mayor presented the awards just before Earth Day.

The Transforming Central Committee, which has spearheaded efforts to improve the Central High School grounds, was given the Water Quality and Conservation Institution Award. This was for work done to build rain gardens and handle water runoff outside of the school at Marshall Ave. and Lexington Pkwy.

Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood Ave., won the Local Food Production-Community Award for its Hamline SPROUT Garden. The garden produces food for the Hamline Midway Elders and the Keystone Mobile Food Shelf. Children, parents, and Hamline University interns volunteer to tend the garden.

The St. Paul Port Authority was honored for Green Building Design-New Construction for the Saints Business Center, built on the former Midway Stadium site, 1771 Energy Park Dr. The building, which is being leased to commercial tenants, won a LEED Silver designation for energy conservation.

Tech Dump, 698 Prior Ave. N., was honored with the Waste Reduction and Recycling Award, for the nonprofit's work to reduce electronic waste.

Bang Brewing, 2320 Capp Rd., was given the Water Quality and Conservation-Business Award.

Trash talks are underway

St. Paul's move toward an organized residential trash collection system is rolling ahead but on two different tracks. The St. Paul City Council voted 6-0 in April to pursue a dual track process in the move to organized trash collection. Talks will also con-

tinue with the city's 15 licensed residential trash haulers, as they have since August 2016. City staff indicated they would like to see a fourth proposal.

But the council also appointed an organized collection options committee that can pursue requests for proposals for trash hauling in the city's residential neighborhoods. The committee will consist of Council President Russ Stark, Ward Six Council Member Dan Bostrom, Deputy Mayor Kristin Beckman and Department of Public Works Director Kathy Lantry.

Under the current timeline, it's hoped that some sort of proposal can be brought forward this summer. Organized collection would most likely start in 2018.

St. Paul currently has open collection, in which property owners hire their own trash haulers. That has drawn complaints about multiple haulers traveling on a single street or alley, and complaints about people who don't hire haulers and illegally dump their trash. Organized collection would mean assigning a hauler or haulers to one area. But that idea has also met resistance from garbage haulers and from homeowners wanting the ability to choose who picks up their trash.

Local street/road construction has just begun!

By JANE MCCLURE

The cones and detour signs have already gone up in area neighborhoods. A mild winter meant an early start to some work. One of the area's first projects, work on Snelling Ave., between Midway Pkwy. and Larpen-teur Ave., is already well underway and expected to wrap up this month.

St. Paul, Ramsey County and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) have announced 2017 area projects. While area travelers won't be dealing with work on the scale of recent A Line/Snelling Ave.

construction, the major Como-Chatsworth residential street reconstruction project or even bridge work over Interstate 94, work will go on and everyone should be ready to drive, walk or bike along detours.

Other spring projects include Wheelock Pkwy. reconstruction between Victoria and Dale streets, Raymond Ave. reconstruction between Energy Park Dr. and Como Ave., and Como Ave. reconstruction between Raymond and Commonwealth avenues. The Raymond project, which is in its third phase, should be done in June.

This month Ramsey County

is set to replace the at-grade railroad crossing on Energy Park Dr. between Raymond and Snelling avenues.

Ramsey County also plans mill and overlay work on Pierce Butler Rte. between Minnehaha and Snelling avenues, on Como Ave. between Dale and Marion streets, and Lexington Pkwy. up to University Ave. from Lincoln Ave. These projects are typically done in late summer or fall and involve removing the old street surface and placing a new surface on top. Typically, parts of a street stay open, but everyone should be mindful that a short-term detour could be needed. The work on Pierce Butler will also bring bike lanes to the road shoulders.

The county also plans to rebuild traffic signals at Dale St. and Wheelock Pkwy.

St. Paul is planning improvements for bike facilities on Pelham Blvd.

The county, city, and state do post project maps and construction updates, as well as information about future years' anticipated work. Keep in mind that available funding always affects future construction schedules, and that can be open to change.

Ramsey County's 2017 projects are at www.ramseycounty.us/residents/roads-transit/2017-construction-maintenance.

For St. Paul projects, and to subscribe to updates for street closures, go to www.stpaul.gov/departments/public-works/road-construction.

For state highway and bridge work, visit the MnDOT website. That site is searchable by region, for anyone traveling around the state. Go to www.dot.state.mn.us/roadwork/current.html.



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GIA Kitchen incubates new businesses in South Como

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

GIA Kitchen is the brainchild of Sarah and David Couenhoven, who bought an office building at 955 Mackubin St. in 2011. David had just retired from his life-long work as a contractor, which came in handy as the two overhauled the building into a commercial kitchen for 30 tenants.

Their tenants rent space with access to four extra-large stockpot stoves for salsas, sauces, and ghees; 20, 40 and 60 quart industrial mixers; two double-rack convection ovens that can bake up to 30 sheet pans at a time; a walk-in refrigerator and freezer; 3,200 square feet of commercial cooking and baking space; and 1,600 square feet of warehouse space for storage and transfer of product.

What the Couenhovens have created is called an incubator kitchen, where entrepreneurs can launch a food line without the worry of high overhead and equipment costs.

"All of this started because of our own health issues," Sarah said. "About ten years ago, David and I needed to shift to a gluten-free diet avoiding refined flour and sugar. We created a sourdough bread recipe that uses gluten free, whole grains that are highly digestible—and we liked it so much that we started selling it. We come into GIA every Tuesday morning to bake our one pound "Thuro-Bread" loaves: to fill our kitchen at home and our commercial orders."

One small kitchen space at

GIA allows gluten, but the majority of the square footage is gluten and peanut free.

Jennifer Helm is an entrepreneur who launched St. Pops, a healthy popsicle business, out of GIA Kitchen four years ago. "I had a life change in 2013," Helm said, "when I was laid off after 20 years in a successful advertising career. I'd always wanted to run my own business, so I took the summer to develop recipes, research different incubator kitchen spaces, and create my business plan with the help of a class at Women Venture. One of the smartest things I did was to take my time, and to really think it all through."

Helm continued, "One of the best things about being in an incubator kitchen is that we were able to launch a viable business with a very small investment. We put about \$7,000 into St. Pops that first year, and we easily made it back."

Helm has scaled back her flavor selection this year in an attempt to maximize efficiency. The flavors that will be available include chocolate, coffee, strawberry, lemonade, hibiscus, pear, elderberry, and rhubarb. She said quietly, "I swear that my rhubarb pops have a cult following."

St. Pops are available at Tin Fish on Lake Calhoun, the City of St. Paul pools at Highland and Como Parks, the Thomas More Church Farmer's Market (Summit and Lexington avenues), the Fulton Farmer's Market (50th St. and France Ave.), and on the TUK TUK and 9 Yum

Yum food trucks.

The cost for a St. Pops is \$3, or \$20 for a box of eight. Helm is available for catering weddings, grad parties, and corporate events. She has traveling coolers and a cart from which to sell her vegan confections on location.

Often asked why she doesn't make tropical flavors like pineapple and mango, Helm explained, "We use local products whenever possible: fresh, seasonal fruit from the farmer's markets, and coffee from the Dunn Brothers on Grand Ave."

"Another benefit to being at GIA," Helm said, "is the amount of contact I have with other cooks and makers." There are many different foods being made there including gluten free pizza crusts, injera, raw coconut macaroons, specialty chocolates, and fresh pasta.

GIA Kitchen has an online space reservation system that saves small start-ups money and time. With no up-front capital investments, entrepreneurs can launch their product without the financial risk of renting a storefront and buying their own equipment.

Sarah concluded, "We're always looking for new entrepreneurs to lease to at GIA: food start-ups or established business owners who would like to work in an environment that's very clean, and where people are supportive of each other."

For more information, contact Sarah at giakitchen@gmail.com.



Midway resident Jennifer Helm makes 528 popsicles in a typical production day. The flavor pictured here is hibiscus, which Helm makes by brewing hibiscus leaves into tea. The end-result is gluten free, sugar-free and delicious. Helm calls this pop her favorite guilt-free, go-to choice. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



St. Pops uses only biodegradable packaging, like these glassine paper bags. Helm is proud to run a zero waste business. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

Upcoming spring events at HAMLINE UNIVERSITY



Hamline Commencement Weekend 2017 Saturday, May 20

Baccalaureate Multi-faith Service, 9 a.m. in Hamline Church

Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony, 11 a.m. at Old Main Mall

Graduate Commencement Ceremony, 3 p.m. at Old Main Mall

We are excited to celebrate Hamline's Class of 2017!

We ask for your patience as we welcome friends and families of our graduates to the neighborhood to celebrate their hard work and extraordinary achievements. hamline.edu/commencement

University Chorale Spring Concert, Friday, May 12

Join the University Chorale for its spring concert from 7–8:30 p.m. in Sundin Music Hall.

Jazz Ensemble Spring Concert, Sunday, May 14

Join the Hamline Jazz Ensemble for its spring concert at 4 p.m. in the Drew Fine Arts Center's Anne Simley Theatre.

Hamline Dance Ensemble Spring Performance, May 11–13

Hamline Dance Ensemble's spring performance is from 7:30–9 p.m. in Anne Simley Theater. Tickets are \$2–\$8.

Call or email the Hamline University Theatre Box Office at 651-523-2905 or tickets@hamline.edu.

hamline.edu/events

