



**UNFORGETTABLE**  
French pastries

## Community of support for parents



RIE stresses freedom of movement along with freedom of emotion for children. (Photo submitted)

## FORM: THERE TO HOLD YOUR HAND

By JAN WILLMS

Infants and toddlers come to this world as whole beings, and they should be afforded the same respect and consideration that another person would have.

That is the basis of respectful parenting, according to Kelly Scott, an associate for Resources for Infant Educators (RIE).

"We don't mean deference, that the child is in charge," she explained. "By respect, we meant that children have a point of view, that they can be active participants in their care."

"What they need for the first three years of their life is for a social and emotional foundation to be built," she continued. Scott, the parent of a young girl, is formerly from California and now spends her time between Chicago and Minneapolis. She joined Carolyn Paetzel recently to talk about their experiences with the RIE form of parenting.

Paetzel, a licensed educator, parent and RIE associate, is the founder of Friends of RIE Minnesota (FORM), which she started in 2014. "We started with a group of four, and now people in 23 different countries follow us online."

The group meets monthly for discussion, drawing parents, educators, school administrators and counselors to St. Paul. The group meets at different loca-

FORM >> 7



SPPL Librarian Maica Lelis places items on an outside table for contactless pickup. All items for pickup are packed by a gloved staff person, placed in a plastic bag, and delivered from a safe distance. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

## Libraries using contactless pickup, offering books and more online

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

When the Saint Paul Public Libraries (SPPL) closed their doors on March 16, they knew they had to quickly figure out how to best serve the needs of the community, while maintaining the health and safety of their staff and patrons.

By April 12, they had begun offering contactless pick-up for physical materials at five library locations. Since the first stay-at-home order went into effect, their selection of online resources has continued to grow.

At present, SPPL patrons are able to request materials for contactless pickup at these locations: George Latimer Central, Highland Park, Merriam Park, Rondo, and Sun Ray. These libraries have staff available Monday-Friday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. They can be reached by phone to answer questions and place holds, or patrons can request items online and pick them up at one of the five open branches. Patrons can also call 651-266-

*"While our physical locations are closed, we have found new and different ways to connect with our community. We have pivoted to make our library system work in a totally new environment." ~ Tracy Baumann*

7000 (the George Latimer Central Library has extended phone hours) from 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

To place a hold online, visit [www.sppl.org/staying-in](http://www.sppl.org/staying-in), click on "catalog" and follow the prompts. A current Saint Paul Public Library card is needed with known user name and password.

Note that held items are not ready to be picked up until library staff contact you by phone or email. Items may show up as "ready for pick-up" on your library account, but you must wait to be contacted by a staff person. They are not yet able to send automated notices when materials are ready.

Contactless pick-up at the library looks like any other type

of curbside pick-up. Patrons are asked to call when they arrive at the library, and then step a minimum of six feet away from the door. A gloved staff person will place items, wrapped in a plastic bag, on an outside table.

SPPL Public Services Manager Tracy Baumann said, "We aren't taking any library returns at this time. We've extended all due dates until July 1. As usual, there are no fines and it doesn't seem like we're at risk for running out of library materials. SPPL will communicate guidance for safely returning library materials once that information becomes known."

LIBRARIES >> 2

## Rethinking business

Chamber members share how they're doing during pandemic

By TESHAM. CHRISTENSEN

How are local businesses working through the COVID-19 pandemic?

The Midway Chamber of Commerce, together with Finance and Commerce, organized a panel of business owners to answer that question during a virtual meet-up on Wednesday, May 6, 2020. It is the first of several being organized to help businesses navigate through the coronavirus situation.

**Rapp: Working remotely**

Rapp Strategies (333 S. 7th St., Minneapolis) offers strategic communications and works primarily with hospitals, nursing homes, school districts and electrical industries. Nearly all of their clients have stayed with the company. Their work for projects out six weeks to two months has disappeared, but other work is sustaining them, according to Todd Rapp, who moderated the Zoom panel.

Their staff started working from home in shifts prior to the official Stay At Home order to work out any issues, and has been totally remote since the order. One staff member was let go, a position the company had considered eliminating prior to the pandemic.

**Elsa's: contactless delivery**

Elsa's House of Sleep (1441 University Ave. W.) is a second generation, family-owned furniture store. Tetra Constantino's mother, Elsa, started the company in 1997 to make sure families could afford nice items for their homes, and that's still the driving force of the company, observed Constantino.

As the African American community has been especially hard-hit by the coronavirus, Elsa's took steps before the shutdown to limit contact to keep both

RETHINKING BUSINESS >> 12



Tetra Constantino



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PAGE 3



HOME & GARDEN: Edible gardening in small or no spaces

PAGE 7



Graduation goes virtual, Monitor newspaper adds 2020 GRAD webpage

PAGE 8

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# Libraries

>> from 1

## Movies, music lessons, audio books, and more online

In addition to their physical collection of books, magazine, DVDs and CDs, the library has a wealth of digital resources for patrons to enjoy.

To access these, patrons can use their already activated SPPL card, or they can sign up online for an ecard. Only Saint Paul residents can apply for an ecard. Call any of the open branches for help getting started, if needed. Ecards can only be used for electronic resources. They cannot be used to place holds or check out physical items. Ecards are ready for use one to two business days after application has been completed, and residency information verified.

There is something for everyone in the online offerings, from

entertainment to education and homework help. SPPL also helps patrons connect to many of the new internet offerings that have appeared during the pandemic. Listen to broadcasts from the Metropolitan Opera or the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Stream one of 200 movies for free, with a periodically updated selection curated by SPPL staff. Visit RB Digital to access popular audio books and magazines with an ecard: <https://stpaulmn.rbdigital.com/>. Audio books and ebooks are also available through Cloud Library.

Baumann explained, "Many of the online resources have been around for a while, but people are taking advantage of them in much larger numbers. There's a gift in that; patrons are discovering things they didn't know we had before, like 'Transparent Language Online'. There are more than 90 languages you can study through this program, including English. The 'Ancestry Learning Library' is a program we've had as a library-based subscription for years, but the company has made

it available for home use during this difficult time."

Through [www.sppl.org/staying-in](http://www.sppl.org/staying-in), the library has linked to opportunities for free music lessons on a variety of instruments, to view award-winning Omni Films from the Science Museum of Minnesota, or to watch live cam broadcasts from the Monterey Bay Aquarium. It's a rare day that can't be brightened, at least a little, by seeing sea otters tumbling and jelly fish swimming.

According to Baumann, "The library's transition has been both hard and easy. We're doing the same things we've always done, but we've had to learn to do them differently - and very quickly. It's hard for librarians not to see 'their people.' Library systems everywhere are responding as well as they can."

Check [www.sppl.org/staying-in](http://www.sppl.org/staying-in) frequently for new offerings and to connect with the Saint Paul Public Library on Facebook and Twitter for information on upcoming events.

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# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## Shoppers use phone, pick-up and online options; students take classes remotely

By TESSA M. CHRISTENSEN

Mosaic on a Stick, an artist-owned mosaic supply shop, community classroom and studio, has been closed since mid-March. "Everything is temporarily paused," observed owner Lori Greene who opened the shop 15 years ago at 1564 Lafond Ave.

She is concerned about how to keep operating as she doesn't have an online store. Regular customers have been calling her for pick-ups.

### 'Shop small for real'

Another small business, Lula Vintage (1587 Selby Ave.), has been shut down since the Stay at Home order, losing the majority of its income. Owner Hayley Bush, who operates the shop by herself, is selling items online, through an Etsy shop called LULAVINTAGEMN, and off an Instagram account. She is planning to reopen the shop as soon as the governor gives his stamp of approval.

### How do you see this affecting your industry as a whole and what concerns you?

I am concerned that I have lost my spring business which is my best two months of the year and will not be able to financially rebound. I am concerned that people will no longer have the financial stability to spend money at small businesses. I am concerned that people will not want to brick-and-mortar shop as they now have become accustomed to online shopping.

### How can the community support you?

People have bought gift

cards as well as made special orders. People have gone and shopped at my Etsy shop as well as just visited it - which moves it up in the search rankings. Also, I have had cards and gifts sent from sweet, wonderful customers. People have donated clothing as they are cleaning out and just want the items to go to a good home.

I have had people send pictures of lounging at home in items from my shop. It has all given me great comfort.

I really encourage people to shop small for real. Not just talk about it and pretend to do it but actually do it. If they don't - only big companies will eventually be available to them who will then be able to charge whatever they'd like.

I read a study where one very small town, in one year, pumped over \$300,000 into their own economy by agreeing to support their own businesses. St Paul is a big city - imagine what we could do if we all went to our own grocers and co-ops, shopped our own stores, ate at our own restaurants and hired our own local companies for the work we needed. Not only would our economy flourish but we could really be a great example for other cities.

Thank you for a platform to talk about this situation. This is why local papers are important as they give voice to local issues.

### Online fitness classes

Defining You Pilates and Fitness (550 Vandalia St.) quickly transitioned to a virtual studio format in March, pointed out



Defining You Pilates and Fitness owner Suzy Levi teaches a class via Zoom. (Photo submitted)

owner Suzy Levi. The studio is offering 3-4 live group classes daily (mat pilates, yoga, barre, strength and HIIT formats), and has a Zoom library for members. Memberships and class sampler packs are available at several different rates starting at \$19.99. There are also free weekly workouts on the studio's YouTube channel.

Defining You is collaborating with an innovative fitness collective effort locally called Sweat Minnesota. This grassroots partnership of Twin Cities fitness pros and studios hosts a free lineup of all types of classes every other Saturday, and Defining You has hosted three classes on Facebook Live.

### How has COVID-19 affected your businesses?

We're grateful to so many of our loyal clients for sticking with us through this tough patch, enabling us to serve people through

fitness and ultimately working to support the greater community's physical health and emotional well-being. This pandemic brings to the forefront how important maintaining your health is, as a defense against the virus. Exercise and movement is essential to our well-being, and we are thrilled we can provide this to our clients and our greater community.

We have a plan in place to reopen as soon as Governor Walz gives us the green light and we're working behind the scenes to make sure the studio space is ready and that our team is well prepared. Once the restrictions are lifted, our strategy is to reopen Defining You in stages; we will take it slow and be cautious being mindful and following the COVID-19 guidelines established by the Department of Health and the CDC.

### Resiliency at St. Paul College

All courses at Saint Paul College (235 Marshall Ave.) moved to remote delivery approaches in response to the COVID-19 situation. Some of the technical, service and health sciences programs require face-to-face instruction, which may resume later this summer, according to St. Paul College Interim President Deidra Peaslee. Almost all of the students returned to class April 6 after the extended spring break.

### How are educators managing things?

Our faculty and staff have quite simply been extraordinary. Saint Paul College's faculty and staff have long been known and admired for their dedication to supporting students and helping them be successful. That's never shown itself more than over the past number of weeks.

I couldn't be more pleased or proud of how the Saint Paul

College faculty and staff have pulled together to keep our instruction and support for students moving forward with quality and integrity despite all the challenges in moving rapidly to new teaching and service delivery approaches.

### How are students?

Our students have been amazingly resilient, not just in finishing their courses, but handling the many other challenges the coronavirus and Stay at Home order have imposed on them and, in many cases, their children and extended family as well. Many of them have lost their employment in addition to having new responsibilities for supporting their children in K-12 schools learning remotely. Some of them also have faced health challenges either their own or within their extended families.

Whenever Saint Paul College has learned of a student, faculty or staff member contracting the coronavirus, we have reached out to express our concern for them and to provide them information to a wide range of resources that can help them during their recovery.

### How will this affect things long-term?

I think that, over the long term, all of us in higher education will take away many lessons from this experience including how we can serve students with alternative approaches to our traditional face-to-face delivery, maintain flexibility and agility in responding to crises and find new ways to work together successfully even though we can't do so on campus right now.

Read the full interviews online at [MonitorSaintPaul.com](http://MonitorSaintPaul.com)



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### Especially in these critical times, newspapers have your back.

COVID-19 is a national story that is impacting you at home and at work. Your local newspaper is keeping you informed with current events in your neighborhood and is bringing communities together in these challenging times. From the actions your local government is taking, to lists of local stores that are delivering and tips on what do to when you're at home, your local newspaper is committed to bringing you the news you need, when you need it.



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# The Motley Conversation

**Monitor**

Join the conversation, and let us know your diverse and varied thoughts on the issues that affect your neighborhood. Send letters and guest commentaries to [news@MonitorSaintPaul.com](mailto:news@MonitorSaintPaul.com) or call 612-345-9998.

I've seen the world of marketing dramatically change during my years with the *Monitor* working to help businesses develop the most effective marketing plan. My clients today have many more options to get their messaging about products and services to their client base than they did 20 years ago. Many of our print advertisers also use Facebook and other social media corridors to reach their target audience. Some also have fairly elaborate websites which provide valuable information about their business operation and its mission.

Is Facebook a business owner's best friend? Yes, Facebook can be a great tool for a business owner but sometimes businesses may not be aware of the obstacles that exist to really reach your target audience. For one, if you are familiar with the Facebook algorithm, you know that Facebook has its platform set up such that for most users the posts they see are most likely those of their family and friends. For a business promoting their products on Facebook, they should realize that only 5 to 10% of their followers will see their post through organic reach. That's when a business that has, say, 1200 followers might reach only 60 to 120 of those followers with any individual post.

As the user of your Facebook



## Stop the presses!

By DENIS WOULFE, [Denis@MonitorSaintPaul.com](mailto:Denis@MonitorSaintPaul.com), 651-917-4183

### Is Facebook your best friend?

account, you can check your reach by looking at any individual post and comparing your followers with your "reach." If you think that your post is going out to everyone who likes your business, I'm sorry to report that just isn't happening.

The other reality is that as a business owner, your goal is to bring in new business. Facebook and other social media can be a great tool for reaching your existing fan base, but ultimately you are trying to reach new customers who have never heard of your business. That's not going to happen if your posts on Facebook about Half Price Burger Night are most likely seen and "liked" by your Mom, your neighbor, and your cousin who lives in Chicago. Just because you reach someone or have a follower does not mean that the follower is someone local or someone who can buy your product.

Then there is the notion that Facebook is free. Let's face it: if you have to hire someone to manage your social media ac-

counts and put up content, that's not free. Worse – if you are the owner and spend your days and nights curating your social media accounts, that's not good either. We all learned the concept of Opportunity Cost in Economics 101, and if you are spending a lot of your time as a business owner on social media, then many other aspects of your business operation are being ignored. Time is money, after all!

Social media, for that matter, can be a mixed blessing as having a Facebook page means that others can post on your site if they have had a bad meal, a bad roofing job, or something else. Once you commit to having that social media presence, you have to be vigilant about monitoring the site and responding to feedback from other posters. Knowing how social media can embolden folks to say things online that they would never say to someone face to face, dealing with the repercussions of negative publicity can be challenging, to say the least.

I might also add there that not every business lends itself to social media. If you have a restaurant or brewery, you likely have a following who watch for deals online, but if you're a contractor, or nonprofit, or someone from another industry, your social media site may not be the first place that people look.

Likewise, I also know of some businesses that spend thousands of dollars setting up their websites. Some businesses have updated their websites many times over the years but still don't have visitors to the site. Again, just because you build it does not mean that people will see it. You need something to draw people to your website and not every business has it.

As I often tell my advertisers, promotion is about getting in front of prospective clients on a regular basis. It's true that there are often better approaches in advertising – using colorful photos and graphics, having people in your advertising, using

quotes, and using approaches that appeal to people's sense of humor, their compassion, and their humanity. But much of my advertisers' messaging focuses on encouraging folks to Buy Local and reminding readers that as business owners, they have a stake in Midway, Como and Frogtown neighborhoods just like residents do. And my advertisers have also heard me advise this over the years: Repetition, repetition, repetition. Studies suggest that consumers need to see an ad message seven, eight or more times before they actually pull the trigger and make a purchase.

It is, after all, a symbiotic relationship – businesses need residents as patrons and residents need businesses to stabilize their community, contribute to the local tax base, and make their neighborhood have the kind of Walkability Index that is the envy of every other neighborhood. Wouldn't everyone want to have their coffee shop, their dentist, and their mechanic within walking distance of their home? True, you certainly can "like" your second cousin's coffee shop in Seattle on Facebook, but you LOVE the coffee shop that's only five minutes from your front door. That's the beauty of Buying Local!

Every employer and employee feels the historic impact of COVID-19. Those of us in the network of state and local chambers would like to thank employers and employees throughout Minnesota for navigating this crisis to mitigate the health impacts and keep our state moving forward. And if you are a business that is currently struggling or confused about the resources available to you, reach out to us. We can help – whether you are a chamber member or not.

### Businesses are innovating and leveraging available resource

Minnesota is blessed with a landscape of innovative companies and skilled workers. Employers and employees are continuing to find ways to work safely, keep essential operations open, meet customer demands and protect critical supply chains. Most impressive, companies are showing their ingenuity to transform operations almost overnight to supply products and services critical to bringing this



## Building a Stronger Midway

By CHAD KULAS, Midway Chamber of Commerce & DOUG LOON, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

### WORKING TOGETHER IN MINNESOTA



pandemic under control.

Chambers of commerce share the goal of ensuring a healthy business community and economy. The stakes are higher today, and our efforts are escalated as we fight this pandemic. We are working tirelessly for our members – and everyone in the business community – listening to their needs and responding in their best interest.

### Chambers are bringing businesses together

Your local and state chambers work with businesses of every type, size and industry, and in every corner of the state. By listening to the needs of businesses, we are able to make con-

nections between challenges and solutions – during this crisis and long afterward.

### Chambers are advocating for employers and employees

Minnesotans' health and safety are paramount concerns for all of us. We share the goal of our elected officials to reduce the spread of the virus and simultaneously protect the long-term strength of the private-sector economy. It's a delicate balance, and we have worked with legislators and Governor Walz and his administration to make decisions with this balance in mind.

### Chambers are speeding resources and assistance to

### keep communities thriving

Every company is impacted by the state and federal directives related to COVID-19. Those deemed essential are doing what they can to keep shelves stocked and meet customer demands. If they were required to close their physical doors, many are continuing remotely or pivoting their operations. This was not their choice, but they are reviewing every funding option available to continue to make payroll, or act in good faith on behalf of their employees to keep their businesses open while mitigating health impacts.

The twists and turns of the pandemic are changing daily. Your chambers of commerce

provide timely and trusted information to navigate this crisis. We know businesses are looking for funding and resources to mitigate this crisis. Your state and local chambers are here to help you navigate the various options and maximize the benefit for your business and employees – whether you are a chamber member or not. Our offices may be closed due to the "stay at home" order, but we are only a phone call or email away.

Businesses contribute to our shared quality of life in Minnesota. Generations-owned family companies and new entrepreneurial start-ups are equally important parts of our state's story. The remarkable response of employers and employees everywhere is evidence that Minnesotans are well-prepared to weather this pandemic storm. Working together, we will position Minnesota to return to full productivity and full employment as soon as possible.

For more information, contact your local chamber at [www.midwaychamber.com](http://www.midwaychamber.com).

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News for you!

The *Midway Como Monitor* is a monthly community publication in the Midway, Como, Hamline and Frogtown neighborhoods of St. Paul, owned and operated by TMC Publications, CO. Visit our website for our calendar and publication dates.

### Story ideas always welcome.

Keep in touch with the *Monitor*. Letters to the editor under 200 words and news releases for publication can be sent via e-mail to [news@monitorsaintpaul.com](mailto:news@monitorsaintpaul.com). Unsigned letters will not run.

### Owner & Editor:

Tesha M. Christensen, 612-345-9998  
[Tesha@MonitorSaintPaul.com](mailto:Tesha@MonitorSaintPaul.com)

### Advertising & Marketing:

Denis Woulfe, 651-917-4183  
[Denis@MonitorSaintPaul.com](mailto:Denis@MonitorSaintPaul.com)

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is both black and white, both/and. As a media company, we work to highlight issues, solve real, meaningful problems, and repair existing social systems. We are working with our readers and advertisers to create a more just and responsible society that hears, helps and heals the customers and communities we serve.

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# Wondering why virtual socializing is so tiring?

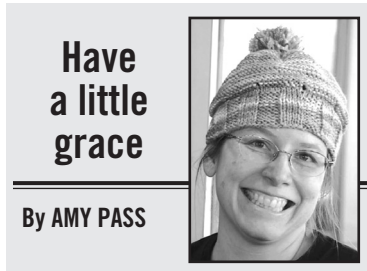
Sometime last month I started feeling disenchanted with video chat. At first I thought video chat was amazing. It was heartening to see the faces of my friends and family in the midst of so much upheaval. With the steady stream of news and the constant background of grief over things that had been canceled or postponed, I felt energized knowing we still had a way to connect with familiar faces.

But then, after just a few more weeks, something shifted. I was tired after virtual meet-ups, and my friends started saying the same. Virtual meet-ups were exhausting. I started reading widely on the subject and found a number of possible explanations.

First, when we see ourselves on the screen all the time, our attention is divided between our own video and that of others. It isn't normal to spend conversations in front of a mirror, seeing our own facial expressions, hair, lighting, clothes, etc. This divided attention keeps our brains a whole lot busier.

Next, a study of virtual meetings in 2014 demonstrated that delays of just 1.2 seconds in virtual calls make people feel that others are less friendly and attentive (International Journal of Human-Computer Studies). Our brains are wired for in-person conversations and we are designed to notice slight delays, shifts in speech patterns, focus, and non-verbal cues. We struggle to understand each other when the technology is not instantaneous.

We also don't have access to the full range of non-verbal cues in a virtual chat. While it is true that the vast majority of how we communicate is in facial expres-



By AMY PASS

sion and tone of voice, we also learn a lot from body posture. Virtual calls wear us out because we are trying to catch non-verbal information while seeing so little of someone.

In addition, while on virtual calls, we almost always have more distractions in the background - kids, spouses, pets, deliveries, even other phone calls and texts. Essentially, we're multitasking a whole lot more. And remember that our brains are already multitasking managing our image on the screen while paying careful attention to the limited and delayed non-verbal communication we're receiving from others.

As if that isn't enough, it seems likely that some of the exhaustion is related to the restlessness and frustration of being homebound. While virtual chats alleviate some of the loneliness, they also serve as a constant reminder that we aren't seeing our friends in person. The tired feelings may have less to do with the chat itself and more to do with video chat as a constant reminder of the current situation.

So, what can we do? That study about virtual delays suggests that when a conversation is slower-paced, delays have less negative impact on perceptions. So, maybe take it slow. Pause more often. And if you are experiencing poor quality audio/video it may be best

to postpone the chat to another time.

If the virtual chat allows for it, turn off the video feed of yourself or switch to a mode where the majority of your screen is allotted to the current speaker. Perhaps, back up from your screen and ask your friends to do the same so that you can see more than just faces. If you're able, set your screen up somewhere where you can keep doing the things you would normally do while visiting and still be seen. This gives your brain a rest from watching yourself, allows your friends to see your body language, and helps the conversation feel more natural. Sitting carefully in one place to keep your face on the screen is uncomfortable and unnatural.

Virtual socializing is not the same. And it's ok to find it disappointing. We are designed for in-person interactions that involve all of our senses. We don't need to pretend that online birthday parties, open houses, or baby showers are the same. Acknowledging that this is different and tiring might alleviate the stress of trying to make it work. And, as with in-person socializing, it's ok to say no sometimes...or to opt for a smaller group of people...or to be honest when you start a conversation that this is hard and exhausting but you want to see people anyway. Chances are good that your friends feel the same. Then turn from the screen and pretend they're sitting next to you.

*Amy Pass earned her master's degree in marriage and family therapy from Bethel Theological Seminary. But perhaps her greatest lessons have come from raising two children and maintaining a 21-year marriage.*

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## Letters to the Editor

### Teen supports Tobacco 21

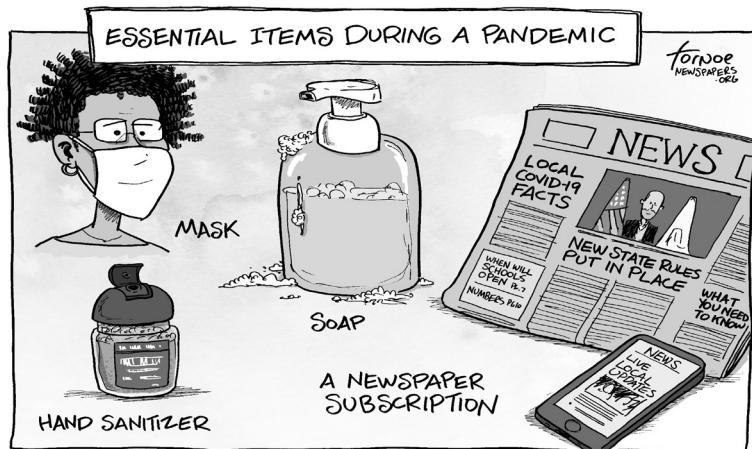
Dear Editor:

The COVID-19 pandemic is alarming for all of us, including young people. I'm worried about my health, as well as my parents, grandparents and neighbors. I'm glad to see Minnesota leaders stepping up to address the pandemic.

We can't forget other important ways to keep my generation healthy. There is still a huge problem of youth e-cigarette use, commonly known as vaping. Far too many teens are vaping, and the numbers keep rising. In just three years, the eighth-grade vaping rate doubled, and more than one in four 11th-graders vapes. As a high school senior, I've seen these statistics firsthand. My peers have been lured into tobacco use with cool looking products, fun flavors and targeted ads. Many of them were easily hooked by the big nicotine hit once they tried vaping. Some desperately want to quit but can't stop.

COVID-19 shows we must do more to keep us all healthy, especially when it comes to our lungs. If we can reach kids before they ever start using tobacco products, we won't see the devastating health consequences later.

I testified at the Tobacco 21 hearing in the city of St. Paul last fall to share my observations and fears about teen vaping. Our local lawmakers listened to the community's concerns and raised the tobacco sales age to 21, as have local lawmakers in more than 70 other Minnesota cities. But all Minnesota youth should be protected from these dangerous products, and I'm calling on our



state lawmakers to pass Tobacco 21 and protect the health of all Minnesota kids.

**Brianna Vang**  
Saint Paul

### Together against intolerances

Dear Editor:

As spring appears in St. Paul, we struggle with dual impulses of going outside, yet exercising physical distance.

There is another dual impulse we need to address: the inclinations to demonstrate kindness or hatred. While we check in with relatives and friends to make sure they are doing well or wave to neighbors, verbal and physical threats are aimed at people of Asian descent. We speak from experience. Minnesota China Friendship Garden Society volunteers have been targets of hateful insults blaming China and Asians for the pandemic.

Speaking for our organization and for everyone I've known in the Twin Cities - this is not who we are.

The Twin Cities is a beacon of tolerance, a community blending good, old-fashioned midwestern kindness with an appreciation for

diversity.

My hope is that a misguided and vengeful few - hiding behind the anonymity of message boards and online comments - will not have their voices elevated over the majority who understand this crisis. No country nor particular group are to blame for a pandemic. We are all in this together.

Our volunteers are proud that the Garden of Whispering Willows and Flowing Waters offers a place to enjoy the splendor of the outdoors in a safe and beautiful place where social distance exists in harmony with transcendent nature. You can sit in the Xiang Jiang Pavilion and relax and contemplate the sights, sounds, and smells of nature.

None of us know when this crisis will end and what "the new normal" will be. But I would bet my last dollar that in the future, the good people of the Twin Cities will gather within our institutions and public spaces to celebrate the diversity and spirit which makes this community a wonderful place to live and work.

**William Zajicek**  
President of the Minnesota China Friendship Garden Society

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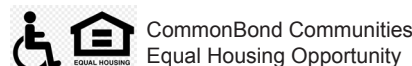
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# Home & Garden

## EDIBLE GARDENING IN SMALL (OR NO) SPACES

By JENNIFER PORWIT, MASTER GARDENER

Many of us live where our yards are small or we don't even have a yard of our own at all. How can we grow our own food under those conditions? That situation requires thinking out of the box (or the garden). There are many tactics that can be used.

### Scenario #1: All outside space is taken up by flowers or concrete.

Solution – Sneak edibles in amongst the strictly ornamental plants. In the background a shorter vining type of winter squash such as "Ponca" can be tied up onto a sturdy tripod. The diminutive 'Bush Baby' and 'Raven' zucchini varieties can be grown in the ground or in a large container. All of the squashes have large decorative leaves. Speaking of decoration, four-foot-tall 'Red Burgundy' okra has striking burgundy colored fruits and stems, as well as deep red flowers that look like small hibiscus blooms. A smaller red okra is 'Little Lucy'.

Groups, rather than rows, of 'Rainbow' swiss chard can be tucked in here and there for glimpses of red, yellow and orange stems. As the plants grow the outer stems and leaves can be harvested on an on-going basis. Beets, the cousins of swiss chard, have dark green ruffled leaves with burgundy or yellowish stems, as well as the enlarged root. These are best placed where other plants will fill in when the beets are harvested. 'Golden' and 'Detroit Dark Red' are both varieties where the entire plant is edible. 'Golden' has the advantage of not having juice that stains.

Most of the tall varieties of tomatoes are best hidden at the back of a decorative garden and supported by sturdy stakes or enclosed in a large wire cylinder. However, the newer varieties of dwarf indeterminate tomatoes can be placed more centrally. These varieties range in height from 2 feet to 4 feet, and the fruit come in all colors. Some support is best. Varieties sold locally include 'Rosella Purple,' 'Golden Gypsy,'

and 'Heartland.' Very short varieties like 'Tiny Tim' (cherry) and 'New Big Dwarf' (slicer) and can be placed front and center.

Carrots have fine feathery foliage which is ideal as a front edging for a bed. It has the advantage of looking good until late in the season. Individual plants can be harvested on an ongoing basis while maintaining the overall look. Another edging choice is lettuce, which comes in many colors and textures and can be harvested a few leaves at a time from many plants or whole plants can be removed where there is a crowd. In a couple days the remaining plants grow and the harvested one isn't even missed. When lettuce goes to seed it can be easily pulled as part of regular maintenance.

Herbs such as dill, basil, rosemary, and chives all are small plants that can be tucked in here and there in a decorative garden very easily. Dill and chives are annual plants that need to be replanted each year. Rosemary is a perennial that is not winter-hardy here, but can be potted up



Grow and assemble your own edible salad. (Photo by Jennifer Porwit)

and used as a houseplant in the winter. Chives are perennials that slowly multiply in place and can be harvested for many years.

Many flowers are edible and add color to a salad or stir fry. Included are nasturtiums, violets, basil, chamomile, pansy, rose, marigold, and daylily. Remember, do not eat any plant parts that have been sprayed with insecticide.

Unused edges or corners of patios, sidewalks and driveways are good places for large pots. Most all medium and small-sized

edible plants can grow in pots as long as they do not have really large root systems.

### Scenario #2: Very little of the yard has sun all of the time.

Solutions – Plant edibles that don't require full sun, but tolerate partial sun (four to eight hours of direct sun per day), such as: arugula, asparagus, beets, bok choy, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, Chinese cabbage, garlic, horseradish, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, mustard greens, parsnip, potatoes, radish, rhubarb, rutabaga, scallions, spinach, tatsoi, and turnip. Note that these all are leafy or root crops, not fruits.

Chase the sun – a dwarf variety of tomato plant in a large pot can be moved around the yard by means of a small wagon or wheelbarrow.

### Scenario #3: There is no ground to plant in where one lives.

Solutions – Rent a plot in a community garden. Help a friend or an elderly person with his/her garden and share the produce. Where potted plants are allowed

EDIBLE GARDENS >> 7



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Russ Henry, Owner and Soil Specialist

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### Here are 3 tips for growing healthy soil:

1) Keep the ground covered: Bare ground encourages weeds and damages soil. Use mulch, leaves, or ground covers, like creeping thyme, throughout the landscape.

2) Plant native perennials, trees, and shrubs: Native plants offer more nutrition for pollinators. Choose plants that bloom at different times so bees can find food in your garden every day of the growing season.

3) Transform your lawn: The best lawn is a garden. Eliminate mowing, fertilizers, and pesticides by transforming your lawn into garden space. Native landscapes are much easier to maintain than lawns!

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# FORM: THERE TO HOLD YOUR HAND

>> from 1

tions, such as homes or libraries, in St. Paul. There are play groups for children monthly. People also participate on Instagram.

Paetzel explained that RIE focuses on children from infancy to two years old, but said the respectful parenting program can go all the way on the continuum to cover adults and relationships in general. There is usually a presenter at the monthly FORM discussion group. For example, recently a Hamline University developmental psychologist talked about raising boys in today's society. "We had a full house," Paetzel said.

## Spotlight method

She stated the mission of FORM: "We are an open forum for collaborative inquiry, dialogue and advocacy influenced by Magda Gerber's 'Educaring Approach' in Minnesota."

Gerber taught respectful parenting in the terms of a stoplight. As described in a recollection of Gerber's work, "When a child can handle the situation, the light is green and the adult does not need to intervene. If the child's behavior will put themselves or another person in danger, or is socially inappropriate, (a red light situation) then the adult will intervene to prevent anyone from getting hurt or to explain why something is not okay. This is done in a calm, non-judgmental way. It might also include physically blocking the child from causing harm.

"When there is a situation where the child may not be able to manage on their own, the adult can respond to this as an amber light situation. The adult would come close to observe the situation, and be ready to act."

## Trust without intervention

Scott said a hallmark of the RIE approach is to trust an infant and toddler to know how much to eat and how much to sleep. "They know how much to eat, and then they stop. They know when they are tired," she said.



Parents gather at a FORM meeting pre-corona virus. Currently communication is online. (Photo submitted)

"They don't need as much intervention as we sometimes believe. Our job is to observe closely when they are trying to send us a message."

She said parents can see what young children can do for themselves, and not anticipate their needs before they have a chance to tell what they are.

"Sometimes RIE families can look different from a conventional family. There is a lot of emphasis for children to develop gross motor skills on their own without intervention, so there is not as much modifying what they are doing. They are given a space they can freely explore, where a grownup is very comfortable with the environment and does not really intervene," noted Scott. "We will let them dress themselves sooner or make choices sooner than in a conventional way."

## 'You fell down'

Paetzel added that along with freedom of movement, there is freedom of emotion. "So we wouldn't stop a child from crying, but acknowledge their crying and support them," she said. "You fell down. Acknowledge what happened. That is sometimes all that is needed."

Scott discussed the number and types of toys that children may need. "If children have a lot of toys that are single-use, such as pressing a button and the toy does one thing, children do not

stay in interaction with those toys very long," Scott said. "And they don't treat those toys as gently."

She said if you think of a child on a hike, that child may find a stick and find 15 things to do with it as the walk continues.

## Talk to your very young child

The RIE approach also puts an emphasis on conversing with a child, even at a very young age. "A six-week-old won't understand what you're saying, but will understand your intent," Scott explained. "The infant will understand what you feel." She said that when parents talk to their baby, they are slowing themselves down, reminiscent of the way Fred Rogers addressed children.

"The child can participate with what's happening," she said. "When we speed up, the child can't come along. Respectful care is considering children in the choices we are making, considering them in what we are doing to them, telling them what we are going to be doing so they can participate." Scott noted that a small infant can move its legs up to get a diaper off, for example. "We will talk with them, there is nothing to rush through; we are looking at bonding and attachment that warm, responsive care brings."

Paetzel said Gerber had described the relationship between the child and his or her caregiver as two teenagers doing an awkward dance. Eventually the

## Reflections from parents and educators

Annie Pezalla is a parent of twin six-year-old boys, Jackson and Owen. "I have been greatly helped in my parenting through FORM. I have been plugged in to this organization almost since the boys' first birthday. Jackson and Owen were born here in Minnesota, but when they were just a few months old, we moved to Seattle for my husband's job. We were completely uprooted, and I felt lonely and overwhelmed with the challenge of parenting twin babies without the support network I had back in Minnesota."

Pezalla started to read newsletters from FORM forwarded to her by her older sister and quickly became a member in her own right, reading anything she could get her hands on. "FORM has helped me to be a better parent. It combines evidence-based practice on early childhood development with a down-to-earth, compassionate, curious, playful approach to learning about kids."

"In the midst of some really challenging parenting moments for me - one of my boys had a 'biting phase' which was pretty alarming; another one of my boys had some digestive issues which had me completely perplexed - FORM has been a savior. I've learned great lessons about how to care for my kids and myself through FORM."

Pezalla is also a professor of human development and family studies who earned her doctorate at Penn State. "I am so grateful for my education there, which has given me a strong foundation upon which to understand development. Yet FORM has brought about a new layer of color and light to my education. It's given me a more humanistic understanding of the wonders of child development."

Pezalla has presented twice at FORM, once on the importance of nature-based free play in early childhood, and another time on healthy emotional expressions in young boys. "Both sessions were a joy for me."

Nicollette DeVall is a long-time member of FORM and early childhood and family education instructor.

"I absolutely love FORM. It has meant so much to me to be a part of such an amazing group of people who are dedicated to providing the best care for infants and toddlers. FORM has changed a lot since I first started attending, and it has been great to see so many people take an interest in the group over the last few years."

"I first heard about FORM in the fall of 2015 soon after I received my B.S. in early childhood education. Although I can't always attend the monthly meetings, I always look forward to reading the FORM newsletter and connecting with my friends."

"FORM has introduced me to many like-minded people, as well as RIE resources that have been of great value to me personally and professionally. I am so grateful to have this group as a support to me in my work with children and families. Being a part of FORM offers many opportunities for sharing ideas and resources and for making new friends."

caregiver and child, like the teenagers, learn to be in rhythm together.

Scott added that speaking to the child in proper cadence and tone and full sentences helps him or her with language development and becoming highly verbal.

## Parents who understand

"We are all looking for community," Scott said. "Everyone wants to do their best and be around people who are championing them and making them feel secure in their choices. FORM is a great place to come and find empathetic parents who understand what you're going

through. Everyone is trying to find this more peaceful way of being with each other. There is a lot of wonderful information online, but there is still something wonderful about being together, and that is what FORM provides."

Paetzel added, "So often friendships form that remain until the kids go away to college. Someone is there to hold your hand when you need one."

"FORM is not a group that is exclusive," she continued. "One of our mottos is 'Come as you are whenever you can.' We never charge for anything so it's open and accessible for everyone. Everybody's welcome."

## EDIBLE >> from 6

at multifamily units fill the pots with edibles instead of strictly decorative plants.

When growing vegetables in pot it is advisable to fill the pot with well-draining potting soil that drains well, not soil from a garden that tends to compact and get hard. Growing plants in pots requires regular fertilization. It is important to read the label on the fertilizer packaging and follow the advice given regarding how much fertilizer to use and how often it should be applied. Too much fertilizer is as bad as too little.

Grow sprouts of various kinds in your kitchen. Common seeds to sprout are alfalfa seeds, broccoli seeds, red clover seeds, lentils, mung beans, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, and chia seeds. The only equipment needed is a glass jar with a sprouting screen lid. Besides being nutritious, sprouts can be grown year around. Bean sprouts are an essential ingredient in many Asian dishes.

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# Como Hamline Midway

## Absentee voting may happen

The Como Community Council board will vote May 19 on whether to allow absentee voting for 2020 board elections. An advisory committee is recommending a two-week window in June during which community members could vote by mail or by using an online ballot.

Under the district council's bylaws, elections were supposed to take place April 21 at the District 10 annual meeting. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the board postponed the in-person meeting and elections that go with it, in order to comply with Minnesota's ban on public gatherings. Changing voting procedures requires changing the district council's bylaws, which the board expects to do this month.

Under a draft proposal, eligible community members in District 10 would request a ballot, then return it before June 16. The ability to vote absentee will allow community members to participate more on their timeline, rather than requiring them to show up in person at a particular time in a particular place one night a year.

Details on how to request a ballot will be posted on the district council's website after May 19: [www.district10comopark.org](http://www.district10comopark.org).

Still time to run: The website will also have details on candidates. Nine seats are up for election this year. In most of the positions, no incumbent is running. The deadline for candidates to file is Tuesday, May 19.

### Zoo will keep parking free

After months of study, Como Park Zoo and Conservatory says it will not implement paid parking this year, in 2021, or likely anytime soon. Research suggests that, if Saint Paul charged for parking, frequent visitors would visit less often and spend less when they do visit.

Charging even \$1 an hour for parking would drive down attendance by more than 20 percent during the summer, according to projections by Zoo Advisors, an outside consultant hired by the city. Although parking itself would turn a profit, the revenue gain would not offset the revenue lost from sources such as voluntary admission donations, food and souvenir purchases, tickets to Como Town amusement rides, and fundraising, projections show.

"Some version of paid parking has been a topic in Como Park for many years," says Michelle Furrer, director of the Zoo and Conservatory. "It was our in-

### District 10 Como Community Council

By MICHAEL KUCHTA, Executive Director  
[district10@district10comopark.org](mailto:district10@district10comopark.org)



tent to gather accurate data to inform decisions. The feasibility of this as a revenue source shows it would not be a long-term benefit to the city."

Opponents said charging for parking would compromise the Zoo and Conservatory's long legacy of free access, in which visitors are admitted regardless of their ability to pay.

### Neighborhood construction

- The Board of Zoning Appeals holds a public hearing Monday, May 18 at 3 p.m. on outside sign variances being sought by Como Park Senior High School.

- Saint Paul now says Como Ave. will not be rebuilt between Hamline and Snelling this year. The city and Ramsey County still intend to rebuild Como between Snelling and the Raymond/Cleveland intersection in fall 2020 (presumably after the State Fair). That work includes the off-street

Como Ave. Trail that goes with it. But the stretch east of Snelling is put off until 2021, unless something dramatic changes.

- The city's Planning Commission on May 1 approved rezoning 1015 Bandana Blvd. from B3 commercial to T3 traditional to allow construction of a 152-unit apartment building atop the existing parking ramp. The commission also approved a setback variance. Both votes were 12-0.

### Fresh path builds on local ideas

A newly rebuilt bicycle and pedestrian path in Como Regional Park begins implementing recommendations from the Como Community Council's Pathways Project. The path stretches roughly two-thirds of a mile from Schiffman Fountain, across Lexington, then along the golf course and up the hill toward Montana.

The portion west of Lexington was dug up and repaved. The portion east of Lexington was widened to 12 feet; it now officially allows two-way bicycle traffic through a stretch of the park that badly needs it.

Those improvements are among recommendations from the Pathways Project. The project's final report gives Parks and Recreation specific suggestions to improve the condition and function of pedestrian and bicycle paths in the regional park;

to upgrade signs; to create maps, kiosks, and other "wayfinding" tools; and to upgrade amenities along paths. The recommendations were the result of more than a year of study, including ideas from more than 300 park users.

The community council now is talking with Parks staff on how to incorporate more recommendations when the department rebuilds the parking lots outside the Lakeside Pavilion and the golf course. That construction is penciled in for fall 2020 or early 2021.

### Call or video into D10 Meetings

District 10 board and committee meetings are continuing but, for the time being, they take place using technology rather than face to face. Renters, homeowners, and other community members are always welcome to participate, through either video conference or by phone.

To obtain links, phone numbers, or other information to join a meeting remotely, send a request by email to [district10@district10comopark.org](mailto:district10@district10comopark.org). Or, call in your request to 651-644-3889. Whenever possible, agendas are posted in advance in the "Board News" section of District 10's website: [www.district10comopark.org](http://www.district10comopark.org)

## Graduation goes virtual, celebrate with lawn signs

With schools closed through the remainder of the school year, spring of 2020 will certainly be unforgettable. The harsh loss of shared celebrations for graduating seniors will guarantee that.

Rites of passage including final concerts, awards ceremonies, prom, graduation, the all-night senior party, and even the entire spring sports season have been cancelled due to the coronavirus.

Distance learning is keeping academic growth possible, but predictably, the personal relationships that students and staff enjoy are sorely missed.

Hundreds of Como students will conclude their college-level course studies with **Advanced Placement Exams** between May 11-May 22.

AP Exams are traditionally taken on site at schools across the nation during the first two weeks of May. This year because of COVID-19, the College Board will be administering online exams for students to take at home during specified times in each subject area.

The rollout of a plan to make testing accessible yet safe is appreciated by students and teachers, but also comes with uncertainty and stress. Anticipating there may be technology glitches, the College Board has reserved the first week of June for make-up exams in case of uploading errors or issues.

Testing formats will be altered with only essays in a shortened timeframe instead of a combined three-hour exam in-

cluding multiple choice and extended writing. In all, 294 Como students will be taking a collective 529 AP Exams across 20 different subjects.

### Shar Too earns Athena Award

The cancelled spring sports season has left hundreds of Como student athletes without the opportunity to pursue their passions and make memories with teammates. Traditional end-of-year banquets and ceremonies have also been scratched from the usual schedule, although honors have still been awarded.

Como senior Shar Too earned two special distinctions for her achievements. A four-time all-state soccer player for the Cougars who became the St. Paul City Conference's career scoring leader, Shar Too was selected as Como's Athena Award winner.

Shar Too was also a stellar badminton player for the Cougars, helping the squad to third-

### Como Park Senior High School



By ERIC ERICKSON  
Social studies teacher

place state finishes in 2017 and 2018. In the classroom, she achieved a 3.59 grade point average (4.12 weighted) and earned several academic honors during her four years including a State History Day qualification.

Shar Too was also chosen as one of just six finalists for the St. Paul Downtown Lions Club Athlete of the Year. The club selects its honorees from all the high schools in Ramsey, Washington and Dakota counties. The elite recognition has been humbly downplayed by Shar Too. She will be a first-generation college student next fall at Bethel University.



Yard signs to honor Como's Class of 2020 will soon appear in the neighborhood.

Como's graduation ceremony will still be held at its originally scheduled time of 5:30 p.m. on Monday, June 1, but it will be "virtual." A plan is being constructed in accordance with St. Paul Public School directives.

While there is no way to replicate what students and families always anticipated, one small gesture to try and celebrate this special senior class prior to their commencement includes yard signs for each graduate.

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# { Development Roundup }

By JANE McCLURE

## University and Fairview plan

Plans for a 146-apartment, five-story mixed-use building near University and Fairview avenues met resistance from the Union Park District Council (UPDC) land use committee. On split votes in March, the committee recommended denial of developer LIG Investments' requests for a conditional use permit and density variance for the project at 1790-1800 University Ave. the request goes to the full district council for action in the future.

Hamline Midway Coalition has also reviewed the request but took no action.

The project would eventually go to the St. Paul Planning Commission for final approval, regardless of whether or not it has district council support. The site is zoned traditional neighborhoods 3, so no zoning change would be needed.

Developer Alex Gese of LIG Investments is working with Joshua Jansen from Collage Architects on project plans.

Some land use committee members said they couldn't support the project because of its lack of affordable housing. Others said they needed more time to discuss

the plans, but the online meeting was drawing to a close. Supporters said the project is a way to redevelop a site with two older buildings for a higher and better use.

The demand for more affordable housing is also a topic the Planning Commission is studying. St. Paul currently has no inclusionary zoning ordinances that tie zoning approvals to provision of affordable housing units. These ordinance can be used to require that a given share of a new building be affordable to low to moderate-income residents.

St. Paul can only require affordable housing be built if a project developer seeks a city, state or federal funding source.

The project would have a mix of one, two and three-bedroom apartments, with 10 units apiece of the two and three bedroom units. Rents would start at \$1,700 for one bedroom and go up to \$2,400 for the larger three-bedroom units.

The development site is occupied by two longtime University Avenue businesses, Hafner Furniture at 1800 University Ave. and Bonded Auto Repair at 1790 University Ave. The buildings are at the southwest corner of University and Beacon Street. Gese said the



John O'Brien, who manages the commercial Wright Building west of the site, appeared at the Zoning Committee public hearing to speak in opposition. The Wright Building has off-street parking it already must police to keep non-tenant vehicles out. He believes that such a large parking variance next door will mean more vehicles illegally parked in the lot.

site has its challenges including the need for environmental cleanup.

Eason said the project would help meet market demand for apartments.

The first-floor commercial space could open with a coffee kiosk, which could be developed into a full bar/restaurant in the future. The wide front sidewalk would be an amenity for a first-floor occupant, said Jansen.

Because the site is zoned for TN3 and is along the Green Line

light rail transit corridor, it isn't required to have any off-street parking. Seventy-six enclosed parking spaces and bike parking are planned.

## University/Hampden development moves ahead

A proposed five-story building with 147 apartments and 1,400 square feet of commercial space won approval from the St. Paul Planning Commission Friday April 3. Paster Development and Yellow Tree Management are seeking a conditional use permit and variances for 2225 University Ave. The developers would tear down a one-story office building and cinderblock garage that are currently on the ell-shaped property.

The Planning Commission Zoning Committee voted March 12 to support the conditional use permit and variances, despite staunch neighborhood opposition to a parking variance. The project drew letters in opposition from almost 100 neighbors opposed to the project's parking variance, citing high demand for parking in the area already created by other apartment buildings in the area. The variance is for 57 spaces. The project has 80 underground, with the rest in a parking lot along Charles Ave. The project requires 147 spaces.

Mike Sturdivant of Paster De-

velopment said they don't anticipate that every building resident will own a motor vehicle, given its location along light rail and local bus routes. The development team also said they would provide ample bike parking for residents.

The site's location along Green Line light rail and bus routes justify the parking variance. The property was rezoned for traditional neighborhoods use in 2011, as part of a sweeping University Ave. rezoning process. Had the site been rezoned for TN use, it would not be required to provide any off-street parking.

"The zoning to industrial-transitional came at a time when there was concern about the loss of industrial zoning," said Senior City Planner Anton Jerve.

St. Anthony Park Community Council and three other property owners and residents also sent letters of approval.

The project requires Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) approval, as it is in the Historic Raymond Village Heritage Preservation District.

The site is long and narrow, with 103 feet of frontage along University Ave. Its north end abuts Charles Ave., extending all the way to Pillsbury Ave. Its site is sloping, and the grade at Charles is eight feet higher than the grade at University.

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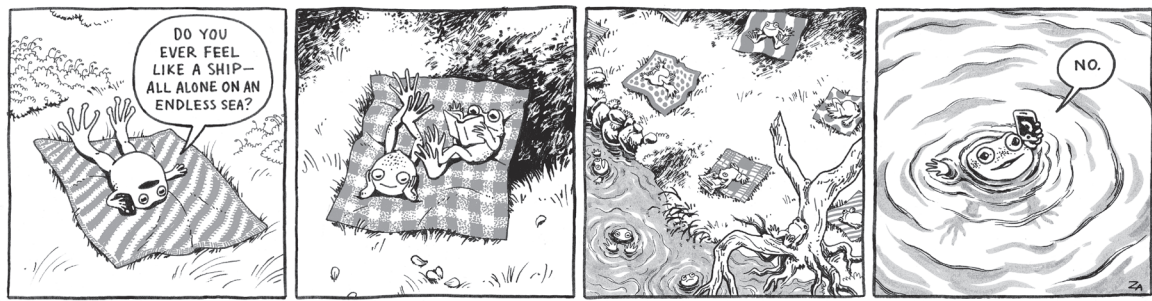
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## Frog Food by Z Akhmetova



## Food program reopens

Feeding Frogtown reopens Friday, May 15 at St. Paul City School after shutting down in March. It will no longer offer walk-up distribution. Folks must drive up or call 612-440-8570 for delivery in Frogtown, Rondo or the North End. Beginning Friday, May 22, two satellite sites will open: at Frogtown Farm (bottom of the hill

along Minnehaha) and Como Place Apartments.

The Frogtown Farm board has announced it will scale back this year to smaller areas that can be maintained by a reduced farm crew and hold monthly pop-up produce distributions. A cover crop will be planted on the larger fields to enrich the soil for the 2021 season.

# PATISSERIE PARIS MAKES UNFORGETTABLE FRENCH PASTRIES

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Last August, Chef Marc Heu began selling made-from-scratch, mouthwatering French pastries and desserts in his newly opened Frogtown pastry shop. Customers were delighted by the passion fruit-raspberry and lime yuzu tarts, the creamy flan, and the buttery croissants. Business was brisk from the start, with customer response approaching the ecstatic.

From one, "The Opera Crepe Cake is so good, I cried." And from another, "These pastries are...unforgettable."

At the time of this printing, the brick and mortar Patisserie Paris is temporarily closed in accordance with Governor Walz's Stay-at-Home order. While Heu made the decision to close the retail space with "a heavy heart," the online pastry shop remains open. His baking team is taking and filling orders online; they are measuring, rolling, and proofing dough well into the night – just like before.

The 30-year-old Heu has been baking pastries since he was a little boy growing up in French Guiana, a French territory in South America, and he's not about to stop now.

Born in France, Heu moved to French Guiana with his parents and five older siblings when he was three. He said, "We actually arrived on my third birthday. My parents had gone to France from a refugee camp in Laos in 1982, but they never really settled there. They were farmers from Southeast Asia, who found themselves living in a busy French city for 10 years."

He added, "They learned of a good-sized community of Hmong refugees farming in French Guiana, and decided to relocate. It was a lifestyle similar to what they had known in Laos, with a warm, humid jungle climate. One of my earliest mem-

ories is of my mom cleaning out cow stalls in the abandoned cow barn where we were assigned to live. She spread blankets on the ground for us to sleep on, and this became our home."

Heu's life would soon take on a push-pull of contradictions and coincidences. Or were they?

His older sisters had learned to bake exquisite pastries during their years in France, and they gave their little brother a job to do. Standing on a stool, in a cow barn in French Guiana, he learned to beat egg whites to perfection. Heu said, "We were poor by anyone's standards, but we had eggs, flour, butter, and sugar. My sisters didn't know how to make a proper dinner, but they could bake."

When he turned 13, Heu proudly announced that he was going to become a pastry chef. He remembered, "My parents responded with a single word, 'NO.' As refugees, they wanted their children to follow a certain path to a better life. In their minds, the work of a pastry chef was no better than manual labor. I didn't want to disappoint them, so I tried my best to become a doctor."

Heu was sent back to France for high school, and applied himself to the study of science. He eventually entered medical school and completed one year, intent on fulfilling his parent's dream for him. But when it was time to return for the second year, he couldn't make himself do it.

With the support of his wife, a St. Paul resident he had met while visiting extended family here in 2012, Heu enrolled in a prestigious French baking school instead. He studied under the world's top chefs in the fields of chocolate, ice cream, confectionary, and cakes. In June 2018, he graduated (second in his class) with a Grand Bachelor's Degree



Patisserie Paris (383 University Ave.) owner Mark Heu said, "We hope each delicious bite of our pastries will be a magical experience – and will transport our customers, at least for a few moments, to Paris." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

of pastry. He was going to follow his own dream.

Heu said, "We worked very hard in school, but because I had such passion for it – everything felt easy. Baking pastry involves a lot of scientific reasoning, so the time I had spent studying science proved useful. For the first time in my life, I felt free."

After graduation, Heu was offered a pastry chef position at Stohrer, the oldest patisserie in Paris, which was founded in 1730 by King Louis XV's pastry chef. As wonderful as the experi-

ence was, he and his wife longed to return to St. Paul.

Heu looked at a lot of different locations before choosing the store front at 383 University Ave. W. He said, "It's about the same size as Stohrer's, the 300-year-old pastry shop in Paris, and we have the same unwavering commitment to using the finest ingredients. I hope that my business will last a long time, too!"

There is a perception that French pastries are reserved for the rich. Heu said, "I come from a poor family, and I am trying to

*"In baking, the simplest things are the hardest to achieve. Croissants are made with the most basic ingredients: flour, milk, yeast, honey, sugar, salt. It takes 48 hours to make croissants from start to finish. The dough needs time to rest. You can't be in a hurry. If you don't have patience, your croissants won't be tasty. Every day I am learning how to make croissants better."*

~ Marc Heu

make this food available to everybody. I want to share what I love. Our pastries are priced as affordably as I can make them, and still run a profitable business."

Future plans include building out an area for seating in the bakery, and adding coffees and savory baked goods to the menu. For the foreseeable future, go to [www.marcheuparis.com](http://www.marcheuparis.com) and follow the prompts to place an order online. Pick-ups are scheduled by appointment Tuesday to Sunday. Patisserie Paris also offers free delivery for \$50+ orders within a 15-mile radius of the shop. All orders must be placed 48 hours in advance.

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Heu and his staff are taking their days as they come, one at a time. He said, "We've gotten tremendous support from the community, both before and since the pandemic hit. I'm sending out a huge thank to everybody for supporting our pastry shop, and for making this adventure continue."

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...encourage (left to right) Camphor United Methodist Church pastor Rob Bell, Bethel University Assistant Director of Service-Learning and Community Engagement Tanden Brekke, Melvin Giles and United Family Medicine resident Jenny Zheng. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

# School spreads message of joy during distance learning

St. Paul City School District has a message for its 540 students: "We miss you and we are here for you!"

St. Paul City School staff is putting some heart into their distance learning plans by visiting individual students at home to post a message of joy and support in front lawns. "We want our families to know they are being supported from afar even in these uncertain times," said District Executive Director Dr. Meg Cavalier. "This closure has been difficult for all of us, but our community has risen to the challenge by continuing to celebrate and care for our students above all."

St. Paul City School (SPCS) is a public charter school district whose three school sites serve preschool through 12th grade students. Like all schools across the state, St. Paul City School temporarily closed all buildings and moved to distance learning for the remainder of the school year.

After the technical pieces were set in motion, such as getting classrooms online and deliv-

ering books and other materials to students' homes, SPCS knew they needed to go one step further to bring joy to the community. "We want to help students and families find a smile in the midst of this really scary time," explained Primary and Middle School Principal Justin Tiarks. That's when SPCS staff began printing signs with the message "We miss you! We are here for you" in English, Spanish, and Hmong and planting them in the front yards of each of their students. Some staff were even lucky enough to get to wave to their students from afar.

Distance learning is a practice that all Minnesota schools are in the process of getting used to. There are plenty of challenges; "I don't get to see my friends and help people or do group projects," says Lyna N., a fifth grader at St. Paul City Primary School.

Some families struggle to access technology, meals, mental health supports, and other resources typically provided by schools.

But there are also highlights

to note. "I have really enjoyed working so closely with students and their families each day. It is nice to have time to connect with families and get to know them better," said second grade teacher Brittany Burrows.

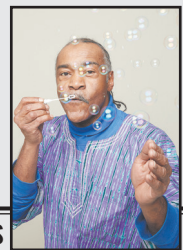
St. Paul City School admin/family support staff member Esteban Rodriguez-Hefty visits with a student while leaving messages at student homes with Ava Buchanan (not pictured). (Photo submitted)



## '6 Ft. Apart' song lyrics

OOO we need each other,  
Yes, we know it's true!  
This coronavirus won't make us feel blue  
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Phone me! Zoom me!  
And show your love by stay-in' 6 feet apart!  
We can love each other and be really smart  
Do your part by lovin' us from 6 feet apart  
Phone me! Zoom me!  
Phone me! Zoom me!  
And show your love by stay-in' 6 feet apart!  
6 feet apart. You're showing all your love!  
6 feet apart, is all we need to show we care!  
OOO we need each other,  
Yes we know it's true!  
This coronavirus won't make us feel blue  
Phone me! Zoom me!  
Phone me! Zoom me!  
And show your love by stay-in' 6 feet apart!  
6 feet apart. You're showing all your love!  
6 feet apart, is all we need to show we care!  
Let's love everybody,

## Peace bubbles



By MELVIN GILES  
peacebubbles@q.com

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6 feet apart

>> See related photo on page 10.

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# Rethinking business

>> from 1

their staff and customers safe, according to Constantino. Elsa's began selling items on its online store and via telephone orders, and are still working to organize 6,000 items in their online shop. The store does Zoom consultations and offers free contactless deliveries. Staff use masks and gloves. "We make sure safety is our number one priority," said Constantino. They still believe their customer service sets them apart from large online stores, and sales keep money within the community.

They initially furloughed employees, but have been able to bring nearly all of them back as there is work cleaning the warehouse and reorganizing the showroom. They're working to set up business for a new normal, said Constantino.

They've partnered with a local musician, Jamilah Pettiford, on a song that will be released on local radio stations.

## Urban Growler: lean is the new normal

Urban Growler Brewing Co.

celebrated its fifth year last July, and is trying to figure out how to still offer a fun experience with food and beer while maintaining social distancing. Pavlak pointed out more training is needed on social distancing so their customers practice it.

"Summer is when we make hay and we survive winter," observed co-owner Jill Pavlak. They were just starting to pick up and had added several new staff positions when they had to shut down their tap room and laid off 37 servers, bartenders and kitchen staff. They were left with nine managers. Since getting a Payroll Protection Program loan, they've added back some kitchen staff. "We're still a very lean team and we believe that will be our new normal for awhile," said Pavlak.

They didn't miss a beat, but started offering takeout immediately as there was no other option for them, said Pavlak. "We had to stay open or we would not survive."

Pavlak admitted it is hard to wrap one's brain around this situation, and there is a lot of grief and loss. Overall, their staff is a tight group, and are sharing tips with those who aren't working, letting them know they're missed.

"Love can keep us afloat," said Pavlak. "We will survive because we've received a lot of love from our team and customers."

## Mendoza: diverse base

Tony Mendoza operates a small law firm in the heart of the Midway. His primary clients are from the telcom and technology industries, entertainment and the non-profit sector. He's grateful for their diverse make-up, which means he has continued to work through the pandemic. He let one staff member go in a position he had considered eliminating previously, but hired a paralegal for a different type of work.

His two staff members work remotely, and he works out of his office as his house is busy with students engaged in distant learning.

## PPP loans and staying engaged

Given his small size, Mendoza didn't seek a PPP loan.

Rapp staff continue connecting through weekly staff meetings. They received a PPP loan, and are focused on getting the money in the hands of staff. They're not entirely sure if it all needs to be paid out by June 12, or not.

At Elsa's, they have worked to stay engaged with each other through conference calls. "I've had to rely on our team to be creative," remarked Constantino. "It's a challenge to completely shift your business model. We are here to meet the needs of our clients on a budget who want a great living situation. They can have a shutdown, but not be

shut-in."

It doesn't make sense for Urban Growler to bring back a bunch of staff, said co-owner Deb Loch, so they know they'll end up paying back some of the PPP loan they received. "We're maximizing what we can for the forgivable piece but a lot will be unforgivable. For us, that loan didn't help as much as it could," she said.

## Managing anxiety

"Anxiety is at a high level for everybody," observed Mendoza. "I deal with it by trying to stay informed." He is helped by the shared sense that "we are all in this together."

He's working to maintain his routines as much as possible. His gym is shut down, but every morning he's running, biking, and using resistance bands.

Pavlak and Loch take a daily walk. They also insist their staff take off two days in a row, and have opted to be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. It helps to know "this isn't just happening to Urban Growler. This is happening everywhere," said Pavlak.

Instead of dumping beer they couldn't sell, Urban Growler partnered with two distilleries to make hand sanitizer that they donated to a hospice center here in their Midway neighborhood. "It helped us feel a little bit better about beer we can't sell," said Pavlak.

## Next, from the chamber:

• **Thursday, May 21, 8 a.m.**  
Five-part economic series through June 18 will discuss people, careers, community, environment and commerce. Ling Becker, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, will kick off the event.

• **May 27, noon to 1 p.m.**  
Social Media: From Burden to Business Tool presented by Danielle Dullinger, Minnesota State Fair Marketing & Social Media Supervisor.

"Anxiety is high in the black community," stated Constantino. He deals with it by educating himself and staying informed. "The more you know, you have a plan and that relieves anxiousness," he said.

Rapp only listens to jazz music until 11 a.m. each day and stays away from the news until then. He makes sure he gets 10,000 steps a day. He and his wife have reinvented "date night" on Saturdays. He cooks and his wife picks an Academy-Award-winning movie to watch.

Mendoza pointed out that he is wondering what businesses will drive the recovery. He observed, "We will need to rethink how we do business as a society."



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