By Kathy Henderson

If you wonder if there will be a Chroma Zone Mural & Art Festival this year, mark your calendar: It’s coming Sept. 14 to 16.

Planning meetings are underway for this year’s festival, said Creative Enterprise Zone Executive Director Angela Casselton, who expects the 2023 festival schedule will include the always popular artist talks, music and mural bus tours. New this year will be bike tours.

If you want a sneak peek, CEZ mural bus tours will be leaving on the hour during the St. Anthony Park Art Festival June 3.

Initially, there was some question of the CEZ could stage another mural festival because funding was lagging.

But festival sponsors more recently have been diligent in contributing funds, Casselton reported. She noted that in early March funding had reached 70% of the anticipated money needed.

Casselton said the challenge this year was that the financing for the 2023 festival no longer included grant support from the Knight Foundation.

It is with tremendous gratitude, she emphasized, that the foundation’s three-year grant helped jumpstart the festival in 2019.

The foundation extended the grant one additional year since the 2019 festival was cancelled due to Covid 19.

If you wonder who the mural artists will be in 2023 — ah, well, Covid 19. The 2020 festival was cancelled due to grant one additional year since the 2019 festival was cancelled due to Covid 19.

If you are wondering how we can help support the festival, donations to the Creative Enterprise Zone nonprofit (a 501c3 organization) can be mailed to Creative Enterprise Zone, P.O. Box 14252, St. Paul, MN 55141 or made online via a donation link at creativeenterprisezone.org/support.

If you are wondering how CEZ is doing its new location — 2171 University Ave. W., a former Sun Rise Banks branch building — Casselton reported the St. Anthony Park Council recently opened an office there, adding to suites occupied by CEZ. Habitat for Humanity of Minnesota and Northcountry Cooperative Foundation.

Thanks to donations that enabled the purchase, the building not only makes CEZ more visible, but it also supports the role of CEZ’s Real Estate program and its plans to create a Real Estate Investment Cooperative.

And, finally, if you are wondering about CEZ’s 100 Trees Initiative, Casselton said the commitment — from Bailey Nurseries tree donations to volunteer recruitment for the Watering Wednesdays (mobile tree watering project) — remains strong.

By Anne Holzman

This park building was closed before the pandemic due to damaged pavement, lack of accessibility and other structural problems.

The land purchase will allow the city to make a substantial investment in upgrading the park without fear of needing to vacate it when a lease might expire.

In an interview, city Parks commission member Mike Bradbury said the commission’s tour of Roseville facilities several years ago gave his group a good start setting goals for the park renovation. He mentioned padded flooring to protect skate blades in a warming house area, for example, and the need for rental space.

He said most groups are now catering rather than cooking, so they’d be able to accommodate more meeting rooms in place of a full kitchen.

In addition, Bradbury said, “We’d like as green a building as possible.”

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Anne Holzman is a Twin Cities freelance writer who covers Falcon Heights government news for the Bugle.
District 12 Community Council

Kasota Ponds cleanup April 29

The District 12 Environment Committee has scheduled the annual Kasota Ponds Cleanup for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 29. In the event of rain, the cleanup will be held the next day at the same times. Neighbors of all ages are invited to participate in the annual cleanup. Help remove trash from around the three ponds that provide critical habitat for waterfowl, turtles, fish and insects. Each year this one-day event removes one to two tons of debris from these impaired wetlands. Volunteers can come and go at any time during the event.

Check in at the Napa Auto Parts sign at 2530 Kasota Ave., where you can pick up trash bags, gloves, safety vests and snacks and learn more about the ponds’ aquatic life from local entomologist Margot Munson. Find out more and RSVP at sapcc.kasotacleanup.com.

This event re-started last year after being canceled due to Covid 19 the two years before. In 2022, more than 60 volunteers collected over 100 bags or 2,200 pounds of trash and recycling during the four-hour event.

District gains grant for tenants

District 12 Community Council said it has received a Tenant Organizing VISTA grant through HOMEline.

The VISTA program is scheduled to start in August 2023 and will partner with the Equity Committee and the Hamline Midway Coalition to work on tenants rights, advocacy and community events. HOMEline has hosted the Tenant Organizing VISTA program for the past few years to help groups advocate and organize around renters rights.

To help fund training, communication and events surrounding SAPCC’s Tenant Organizing work, the Equity Committee applied for and received a Neighborhood Partnership Initiative grant through the University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. If you would like to get involved in tenant advocacy in St. Anthony Park, please contact Jessica@sapcc.org or join the next District 12 Equity Committee meeting on the last Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.

District 12 upcoming meetings

St. Anthony Park Community Council committees discuss a variety of issues at their monthly meetings. Visit the council’s website at sapcc.org to learn more. All meetings are hosted via Zoom. Meeting times are subject to change. If you want to attend a meeting or have questions about joining a committee, please email Kathryn at kathryn@sapcc.org.

For ongoing updates and meeting changes, follow along on Facebook @St.AnthonyParkCommunityCouncil.

• Land Use Committee: 7 p.m., Thursday, April 6, and 7 p.m., Thursday, May 4
• District 12 Board: 7 p.m., Thursday, April 13
• Environment Committee: 7 p.m., Wednesday, April 26
• Equity Committee: 7 p.m., Thursday, April 27
• Transportation Committee: 7 p.m., Tuesday, April 27

Submitted by Jessica Willman, District 12 community organizer.

District 10 Community Council

2022 Como Park honor roll recipients named

After receiving residents’ nominations, the District 10 Como Community Council Board at its February meeting named the following people to its 2022 Como Neighborhood Honor Roll.

Carol and Jim Kmiecik
Molly O’Rourke and Judy Johnson of the Midway Parkway Garden Club and Reene Jacobsen and Sandy Simpson, garden stewards of the Midway/Agora garden.

The honor roll annually recognizes everyday residents and organizations who make a sustained and lasting impact in their neighborhood. While the city of St. Paul has discontinued its official support of the honor roll program, District 10 continues to celebrate outstanding community members, whose names will be added to the permanent plaque in the District 10 office.

For more information about the 2022 honorees as well as a record of past honorees visit District10ComoPark.org/HonorRoll.

Volunteers sought for May 13 Pick Up & Party event

District 10 is planning a spring Pick Up & Party event on May 13 at the Orchard Recreation Center, 875 W. Orchard Ave. District 10 is also planning its annual ice cream social at the Como Streetcar Station in July and a Harvest Festival in the Tilden Park area in October. Get involved in planning one of these events in your sub-district, or any of the sub-districts, at District 10 Neighborhood Relations Committee meetings.

For further details about these and all District 10 community events go to District10ComoPark.org/Events.

District 10 Como Community Council elections

Residents of District 10 who are at least 16 years old, representatives from businesses, non-profits or other organizations with a physical presence in District 10 are eligible to vote in its April elections.

Online ballots must be requested by 8 a.m. Monday, April 17.
• District 10 will send out ballots beginning Monday, April 10.
• We must receive your completed ballot at the District 10 office no later than 5 p.m., Monday, April 17.

The in person election is April 19. Find out more information here: District10ComoPark.org/Elections. That’s where you can also learn more about the roles and opportunities of board members.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about being a board member, you can reach out to district10@district10como.org.

District 10 meetings schedule

All D10 board and committee meetings are open to the public.

• Environment Committee: 6 p.m., Wednesday, April 5
• Neighborhood Relations Committee: 7:15 p.m., Wednesday, April 5
• Land Use Committee: 6 p.m., Thursday, April 6
• D10 Board Council: 7:15 p.m., Thursday, April 13

For further details, go to District10ComoPark.org.

Submitted by Shevek McKee, District 10 Como Community Council executive director.
Purrniture owner eyes expansion

By Janet Wight

Purrniture, a local maker and retailer of durable cat furniture near south St. Anthony Park, is eying expanding its production and showroom by later this year.

Owner Darryl Michaelson said he plans to enlarge his current manufacturing operations by either leasing an additional 2,000 square feet of space in his existing building at 2242 University Ave. or by finding that extra space in a nearby facility. The additional production space would allow him to produce an expanded line of cat furniture products, he said.

Also, Michaelson said he may partner with a regional furniture store to offer Purrniture cat furniture alongside consumer furniture.

Michaelson's plans reflect the solid health of Purrniture, whose well-stocked showroom is filled with a variety of furniture and accessories along with a selection of catnip and toys. Currently, Purrniture offers 22 designs of sturdy cat furniture, all handcrafted by Michaelson and his seven part-time employees. These products may be purchased at the showroom or by placing an order on the Purrniture website.

Michaelson also offers his furniture at the Saintly City Cat Show held in conjunction with the St. Paul Winter Carnival each January. Michaelson began making cat furniture from repurposed wood in June 1990. He figured everyone needed a hobby and he enjoyed being creative.

At that time, Michaelson was a full-time manager for Domino's Pizza, but he realized that his unique cat products might be marketable. He made a flyer advertising his custom-made cat furniture and posted it in local veterinary clinics.

In June 1991, after devoting a full year to his new hobby, Michaelson succeeded in gaining space at the then-new Pet Center exhibit at the Minnesota State Fair to sell his cat furniture products. There has been a Purrniture booth at every State Fair ever since.

So, what is special about Michaelson's cat furniture? Purrniture's environmentally friendly furniture is made from scrounged and repurposed materials whenever possible. Initially, wood spools from electrical companies, tubes from paper companies and salvaged wood were available to meet all of Michaelson's needs, he said.

Recycled wood spools are still readily available. But Michaelson now has to supplement the quantity of scrounged tubes and 4x4s with new materials since he can no longer find enough of these items to keep up with full production needs. Carpet is sourced from remnants that are obtained from a company in Golden Valley.

"Because we use plywood, ours is stronger and heavier. It is the jungle gym that cats are looking for," Michaelson added.

Today, Purrniture sells about 2,000 pieces of cat furniture annually with prices ranging from $30 to $600 per item sold. Michaelson relies primarily on sales sparked by Google advertising, which garners thousands of views each month, yet Google advertising, which garners thousands of views each month, also saw a slight bump in sales during the pandemic, but that also could have been spurred by a newly completed website and recently placed Google advertising, he explained.

Meanwhile, Purrniture's recent business challenges include securing readily available lumber and dealing with price increases, some which came in September. In previous years, Michaelson said he could place an order for lumber and pick it up the next day. Now, he may have to wait up to three months.

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Delivery of the cat furniture in the Twin Cities metro is available for $50.

During the holiday season, tax time and the Minnesota State Fair, Michaelson said the company also saw a slight bump in sales during the pandemic, but that also could have been spurred by a newly completed website and recently placed Google advertising, he explained.

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By Scott Carlson

Thank you for your financial support as the Bugle strives to produce great journalism that informs readers and engages our communities of St. Anthony Park, Como Park, Falcon Heights and Lauderdale. The Bugle has received $47,350 as of March 8.

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From the Desk of the Editor

By Scott Carlson

Poetry in motion

For the 13th consecutive year, the Bugle has held its annual poetry contest in conjunction with National Poetry Month, which happens every April. We had entries from about a dozen readers this year and once again received really interesting and thoughtful poems from all of our contestants.

Our mystery poetry judge was Ann Reed, Minneapolis songwriter, singer and poet. She is well known in St. Anthony Park for leading a monthly community singalong that was held, before the pandemic, from Luther Seminary. Now, Ann virtually leads the singalong on YouTube with Dan Chouinard.

I was very impressed with this year’s poetry entries and so was Ann.

“It left me feeling a little uneasy, judging something as personal as a poem, knowing the work that goes into writing,” Ann said. “These poets were asked to write about change and transformation, and it was an honor and a pleasure to see their work.”

Ann added, “I want to encourage all of the writers who entered the contest — and those poets who did not — to keep working at your craft. Every person is full of stories and if you don’t tell your story, who will?”

You will find our winning poems on p.60 with a sign-off to sign a contract. We plan to post all poems online.

Our poetry contest is one way for us to engage the community in our newspaper. In the months ahead, we will be looking for other ways to invite you to participate in the Bugle, whether it is in our paper, on our website or through social media.

Thank you Betsy!

I send this column on a personal note. My wife Betsy, who has been our trusty Bugle copy editor, for the past three years, is going to be retiring from her post effective after our May issue.

Betsy has been a journalist for decades, proverbially born with “ink in her blood” from the time she was a girl in Le Mars, Iowa. She worked for, among others, the St. Paul Dispatch when years ago I worked with her in the old suburban neighborhoods section.

Yes, you can call Betsy a “green eye shade,” bred in an era when newspaper copy editors wore green-shade visors and sat around a horseshoe-shaped table known as “the rim,” marking up news stories with grease pencils.

Betsy’s gift has been her attention to details, from waging war on two spaces between sentences in copy (there should be just one space) to deleting Oxford commas, (they are verboten in Associated Press newspaper style.) Through the months, Betsy has gone the extra mile to doublecheck facts in scores of stories.

Betsy intends to enjoy retirement and has plenty of interests to keep her fulfilled.

Her departure means that I am now looking for a replacement. I will consider candidates who live in our Bugle community and have a love for journalism and a copy editor’s attention to detail and the AP stylebook.

The copy editor works about 10 to 15 hours a month with the heaviest workload occurring in the second week of the month. Salary is about $200 a month, a token appreciation for the job that is required.

Interested in applying? Send me an email with a description of yourself and why you would like to be the next Bugle copy editor. Send it to editor@parkbugle.org.

Letter to the Editor

Going solar

If you have a south facing roof (or even east or west) that gets a decent amount of sun, but haven’t known whether solar panels are viable on your property — or whether solar is affordable for your budget — Solar United Neighbors’ Twin Cities Solar Area Co-op, or S.U.N., is a smart place to start.

At no charge, the solar co-op’s vetted vendor (SolarInc. for 2022 and also 2023) provides an updated assessment of your property’s solar viability. Solarin then provides a user friendly customized report that details both your property’s solar capacity and total cost of installing panels, from start to finish. Current cost savings, such as federal tax incentives (up to 30% off the full cost of the system in 2023) and Xcel Energy’s incentive programs, are factored into their report. It’s free to join the Twin Cities Solar Area Co-op and there is no obligation to sign a contract. S.U.N. is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 and is able to keep costs down by a bulk discount approach.

We can’t speak highly enough of our 2022 experience with both S.U.N. and Solarin. Doing our due diligence, we did seek a second bid from another solar installer. This installer informed us that they could not beat Solarin’s pricing and gave us positive feedback about the manufacturing quality of Solarin’s proposed panels. Every member of Solarin’s team was friendly and informative — it was clear that solar energy is a passion for each one of them.

There was transparency every step of the way, and great patience with our many questions. The panels were installed over the course of two days, and it was wonderful to share in the excitement of “going live” in September 2022 with our new friends at Solarin.

To learn more, visit solarunitedneighbors.org/twincities, email mtmeate@solarunitedneighbors.org or call 651-293-7267.

S.U.N. can also connect you with a former co-op member to talk about their experience with the co-op. The co-op closes to new members on April 30, 2023.

Debbie Smith
St. Anthony Park

Bugs: A Word

It’s that time of year again, and we are looking for articles for the Bugle’s annual Bug competition, which has been running for decades. To enter, you must write a bug-themed story, poem, or essay. The winning entry will be published in the Bugle in June.

Bugle deadlines

Here are our Bugle deadlines for the next three issues. As always, we appreciate when writers and readers submit their articles early.

Please note our publication dates represent when the newspapers go out for delivery. Mail distribution of the paper may take up to several business days.

Meanwhile, bulk drop-offs of the paper around town are usually completed two to three days after publication.

May:
• Home & Garden Guide
  Copy/ad deadline: April 12
  Publication: April 25
• SAP Arts Festival Guide
  Copy/ad deadline: May 10
  Publication: May 23
June:
• July Graduation recognition
  Copy/ad deadline: June 14
  Publication: June 27

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BOOK REVIEW:
Let’s discuss the atomic bomb

By John Horchner

Emily Strasser brought along a photograph of her grandfather, George Strasser, who rose to assistant plant manager at Oak Ridge, to the 70th anniversary commemoration of its bombing. The photo was a stand-in for the photo she alludes to throughout the book. That photo shows Mr. Strasser standing in front of a mushroom cloud during a test of a nuclear explosion.

Strasser’s book is billed as history and memoir by Amazon, but it reads like a novel to me. It reads like a novel because it has characters like her grandfather who acted, at least at first, without awareness of all the ways he was hurting himself or others.

The book reads like a novel because it follows twists and turns and eventually uncovers the messy side of Oak Ridge where, she writes, there was “...a whole tangled mess left behind by half a century of a rushed and secretive arms race with little regard to the long-term consequences on human health and the environment.”

It reads like a novel because it does not shy away from confronting big ideas: “…we might question whether we can evolve as a species to reach a higher level of consciousness that we need to survive. This may require admitting that Native American culture is firmly based on stolen land, genocide and slavery, a history of denying the humanity of others.”

Those who can’t wait until summer to see Christopher Nolan’s movie “Oppenheimer” with Cillian Murphy as J. Robert Oppenheimer along with a star-studded cast, might do well to consider a new book by Emily Strasser, “Half-Life of a Secret: Reckoning with a Hidden History,” due out in April.

Strasser writes how in her 10th grade history class in Atlanta, she learned about the Manhattan project. She also had an epiphany during class: “George, my grandfather, helped build an atomic bomb.”

She writes how she always knew he worked in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. She knew her father grew up there.

But she just thought of Oak Ridge as a place to buy pizza when visiting her grandmother’s lake house 20 miles to the east. She didn’t realize it was one of three secret cities created by the government to develop the atomic bomb.

However, Strasser’s interest in what her grandfather had done grew with each passing year. In July 2015, while still a student pursuing a degree at the University of Minnesota, she learned about the Manhattan Project and continued to the current day. Both past and current activities involve hazardous chemicals and radioactive materials.

Soon after WWII ended, several groups of scientists fought to share nuclear knowledge worldwide, she writes in her book, and “…advocate for international governance of nuclear knowledge and facilities.”

However, Strasser writes that this idea soon was stymied by military and civil authorities, and scientists, including her grandfather, were told to keep everything secret and were subject to routine lie detector tests to prove that they were keeping their knowledge within the plant.

I paused, looked off to the side and stared across the library floor. I recall how Strasser’s book mentions that Native American activists around Oak Ridge have reported seeing many relatives die of cancers.

I was jolted suddenly by the sound of an alarm. It was the librarian announcing that the doors would be closing in 15 minutes.

I couldn’t help but remember that Native American culture is firmly based on stolen land, genocide and slavery, a history of denying the humanity of others. It was Native American nations that were kept from making a living as they were keeping their knowledge within the plant.

As I left the library, I ran a search for Oak Ridge at the card catalog. I found many government reports. One report titled “Oak Ridge Reservation Annual Site Environmental Report (ASER)” stated: “The U.S. Department of Energy operates three sites on the reservation: the East Tennessee Technology Park (formerly the K-25 Site)...”

I stopped reading. That’s where Strasser’s grandfather worked.

The report continues: “Government-sponsored activities on the reservation date back to the Manhattan Project and continue to the current day. Both past and current activities involve hazardous chemicals and radioactive materials.”

“…we might question whether we can evolve as species to reach a higher level of consciousness that we need to survive. This may require admitting that Native American culture is firmly based on stolen land, genocide and slavery, a history of denying the humanity of others.”

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School news around town

Compiled by Sarah CR Clark

Twin Cities German Immersion School

Used book fair April 19-20
The Twin Cities German Immersion School’s library will hold a two-day used book fair from 3 to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 19, and Thursday, April 20. The event is open to the public and will take place in the school atrium. Expect to find German books of all levels — from board books and first readers to novels and “vintage” books. There will be books in the English language, as well. All items are sold on a donation basis, and a credit card or cash is accepted. Funds raised benefit the school’s library.

Hosts needed for young educators
The TCGIS is seeking hosts for its young educators’ internship program. Interns are native German-speaking young adults training to become teachers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The interns are integrated into all grades at TCGIS and provide more than 6,000 additional hours of classroom support for the students each semester. The interns live with volunteer host families, giving them an opportunity to get immersed in daily U.S. life. Interns come during two phases: late-August through late January, and February through mid-June. To learn more about hosting an intern, visit tcgis.org/host-an-intern.

Murray Middle School
Black History Month Celebration
In February, nine Murray students traveled to Georgia and Alabama on a civil rights trip. Murray Principal Jamin McKenzie, said the trip “could be a life changing event.”

The trip was sponsored, in part, by Ujamaa Place, a nonprofit organization serving primarily African American men that seeks to provide holistic transformation for men experiencing racial and poverty inequity (injustice). Roosevelt Mannfield, youth services coordinator at Ujamaa Place, has partnered with Murray Middle School before and accompanied Murray’s students on their journey. According to McKenzie, “While in Atlanta, the students were able to visit and participate in enriching experiences that taught about and celebrated Black History.”

Students visited, among other places, the MLK Jr. National Historical Park (Atlanta), The National Center for Civil and Human Rights (Atlanta), The Civil Rights Memorial Center (Montgomery), and The National Memorial for Peace and Justice (Montgomery).

Murray’s National Junior Honor Society students made blankets and toys for animals at the Humane Society. Photo courtesy of Stefanie Folkema.

SAP Elementary School
Spring carnival
SAP Elementary School’s spring carnival will be held on May 12 and is open to the public. The carnival will feature games, raffles, obstacle courses, a silent auction and food. For more information, visit sapssmn.org.

The spring carnival is a long-standing tradition at SAP Elementary and is an important fundraiser for the St. Anthony Park School Association. It provides money for the school’s students and programs, such as artist-in-residence experience, field trips and classroom supplies.

Nature-based, pre-K program coming to SAP Elementary
St. Paul Public Schools has announced that SAP Elementary will be home to a new, nature-based pre-kindergarten program next fall. SAP Elementary School Principal Karen Duke said the Nature Discovery Pre-Kindergarten will charge a fee, with funds available to support families that qualify for assistance. The students will spend most of their time outdoors.

SPPS’s after school childcare, Discovery Club, is available for half the day; to create a full-day pre-K option. For more information, visit spps.org/domain/19812.

Plant sale
The St. Anthony Park School Association will host its annual plant sale featuring a wide variety of vegetables, herbs, annuals, perennials, pre-planted baskets and seeds. Sales from all plants and seeds will benefit SAP students and programs at SAP Elementary.

The plant sale will be May 17 and 18 at Langford Park rain or shine. (Look for the tents!) The popular pre-sale will open for online orders (sapssmn.org) on Saturday, March 18, and will remain open until Friday, March 31. Online orders will be available for pickup at Langford Park on Tuesday, May 16.

Sarah CR Clark is a regular contributor to the Bugle.
AP Government students visit Washington D.C.

By Eric Erickson, News commentary

Seniors now studying AP Government and AP Economics at Como Park Senior High School recently spent a week in Washington, D.C., as part of the national Close Up program.

After a couple years of missing the program due to Covid restrictions, 15 students now have had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the civic culture of the nation’s capital.

Como student highlights included study visits to national monuments and memorials including Jefferson, FDR, Martin Luther King Jr., Lincoln, World War II, Vietnam and Korea. There were also study visits at museums of the Smithsonian, the Holocaust Museum, Black Lives Matter Plaza, the White House, Arlington National Cemetery and unique Washington neighborhoods with citizen action sites.

On March 1, Como students visited Capitol Hill where the first of many security checkpoints gave access to a House of Representatives Committee Meeting. Students observed an Energy and Commerce sub-committee hearing on data privacy and social media.

Students then sat down for a policy meeting with U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minnesota, in her office. The hour-long discussion had a powerful impact on the students who answered their representative’s questions about education, public safety and the environment while also listening to McCollum describe the work of Congress and its current climate.

After a tour of the U.S. Capitol building, students had meetings with aides of Minnesota’s U.S. Sens. Tina Smith and Amy Klobuchar.

Capitol Hill Day also included visits to the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress and sitting in the House of Representatives chamber where votes occur and State of the Union addresses are given.

Throughout the week, Como students participated in policy discussions with peers from across the nation and beyond in workshop groups. Altogether, 90 students represented the states of California, New York, Rhode Island, Ohio, Michigan, as well as Puerto Rico and France.

I’m proud of Como students who advocated for themselves, worked to reach a goal, entered a new environment with an open mind, consistently used critical thinking and represented their school with a positive attitude and gratitude.

This week of experiential learning helps create informed and engaged citizens, equipped with skills to make a difference in their community and our world.

Eric Erickson has taught AP Government at Como Park Senior High School for the past 23 years and has guided 16 groups on the Washington, D.C., Close Up program.
Bugle announces poetry winners for 2023

By Scott Carlson

In the 13th year of our annual poetry contest during National Poetry month, the Bugle received entries from about a dozen literary-minded readers. This year, contestants were asked to write poems that drew inspiration from the words “transformation, change, transitions, metamorphosis and/or remodeling.” First place winner and recipient of $50 is Marilynne Thomas Walton. Second place and winner of $30 is Paige Riehl. Third place and recipient of $20 is Susan Everson. Minneapolis songwriter/singer/poet Ann Reed served as Bugle poetry judge. See details on page 9.

First place – Marilynne Thomas Walton
“Packinghouse Animal”

Sometimes it hits me with the force of a blow. A packing house animal, the mallet of your death makes me stumble and fall.

Years ago the surgeon told you after the Whipple surgery “You’ll feel like a truck hit you.” Now I get that. You are the part of me that was hacked away.

The truck ran off. I see it in the blue distance just over the hill. My tears run like blood of a doe. My animal-thin knee bones give way.

I reach for saving scraps of memory, for prayer grasped like a wooden cane, for the certainty of the velvet curtain of time, blessedly lowered, over and over, and the people, all the people still to love.

Second place – Paige Riehl
“The Girl’s Mother and Father Disagree At Breakfast”

about whether the girl should walk alone to the school bus. Mother worries about icy morning roads and distracted teen drivers, white vans and hands with candy, frigid winters even freeze rabbits — so many ways a girl can die. Father’s frustrated: younger kids go alone, shout and hit sticks like swords at the stop, a battalion of little generals. Gunshots only come at night anyway, and dogs are fenced on this street.

Mother gets quiet, stares at Father, both unmoving, steaming cups in still hands. Middle school looms, but they both know the girl’s distractible — a plastic bag in the wind. An ant, a pretty leaf, a smooth rock, so much to examine in one block.

The girl’s eyes dart between frowning faces, silently hoping both will win.

Third place – Susan Everson
“Christmas Eve At the Beach”

A fleet of pelicans cruise low over the ocean barely clear the surface feathered planes in V formation.

Long beaks stretch out parallel one bends down to grab a fish doesn’t miss a beat.

I want to join them, feel my wings surf on air currents, try to synchronize their beats, catch the upwash from the tips feel the lift of streaming air from the bird ahead.

What perfect harmony as if one body, a ballet troupe that never collides, only glides and feels the flow.

Ann Reed’s Comments: The feeling of being altered by loss is palpable. There is one line that took my breath away: “for prayer grasped like a wooden cane.” Beautiful.

Ann Reed’s Comments: It is challenging for a writer to take the enormity of something like gun violence or not feeling safe and make it personal. The unease of everyone is in the last four lines.

Ann Reed’s Comments: I admit it. I am a sucker for a good bird poem. This poem has the feeling of transformation. Favorite line: “a ballet troupe that never collides / only glides / and feels the flow.”
Luminary Festival is a magical event

By Bryn Manion

News commentary

The St. Anthony Park Elementary School community had an unforgettable Luminary Festival at Langford Park at the end of February.

From beginning to end, the school and broader SAP community displayed generosity, creativity and teamwork to pull our winter oasis together.

Volunteers descended on SAP Elementary's playground and Langford Park on Friday, Feb. 24, a day before the festival began, to stomp down the 16 inches of fresh fallen snow that week. SAP parent Ryan Courtney spent hours snow blowing the trail and performance circle.

Anna Gasetiwe, founder of The Makery, started working early on Saturday morning, Feb. 25, hanging hundreds of glass jars in the school forest and assembling an eight-foot tall plywood light pillar. Meanwhile teams of parents and children filled over 800 bags with sand and candles and lined the pathway with the luminaries. Other families brought over a few hundred ice lanterns and placed them at the bases of trees!

Then we all waited! When the sun set and darkness settled into the park, the full impact of our cooperative teamwork was apparent: The lights were magical, filling us with a sense of wonder! They set the stage for a mesmerizing fire dancing performance on Saturday night and enchanting “crankie” storytelling sessions presented by SAP librarian, Alisa Mee, on Sunday.

More than 450 people attended ed this year’s festival on Saturday alone. (Attendance was not tracked on Sunday.) This festival was funded, in part, by a generous grant from the SAP Foundation, as well as cash and goods donations from individuals. If you enjoyed the festival and feel moved to donate, please visit: givenmn.org/event/sapluminary.

We are already looking forward to next year and hope to see you all there.

Bryn Manion is a parent volunteer with the St. Anthony Park School Association.

About poetry judge Ann Reed

Ann Reed, a Minneapolis songwriter/musician and poet with ties to St. Anthony Park, served as our anonymous judge this year.

Ann said: “I was surprised when asked to be the mystery judge for this year’s poetry contest. I’m a songwriter who starts each day writing a short-form poem. My career as a songwriter has gone on for well over 45 years. Lyrics to a song quite often can be taken out and read as a poem. On occasion, doing this gives the listener a deeper connection to the song once the singer is out of the way. In songwriting as in writing poetry, inspiration comes from being alive and paying attention. But it takes dedication and persistence to sit in front of a computer, or in front of a blank sheet of paper with pen in hand.

“It left me feeling a little uneasy, and if you don’t tell your story, who will?”

Ann Reed is a singer, songwriter and author. She lives in Minneapolis with her wife and their cat, Momo. For more on Ann and her work, please visit annreed.com.

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Photo by Lou Michaels.
SAP Area Seniors tailored exercise programs

By Dave Healy

Exercise

We know that it’s good for us, know that we rarely get enough by going about our daily activities, know that exercising our bodies means exercising our wills by finding the time and mustering the motivation to do it regularly. Physical well-being is tied to mental health. When our bodies feel good, when they do what we want them to do, we feel better emotionally, more alert and confident.

Physical exercise is important at any age, especially as we age and often tend to become, increasingly, sedentary. Muscles atrophy. Posture worsens. Some older people, while still ambulatory, feel less confident moving about because their balance isn’t what it used to be.

St. Anthony Park Area Seniors provides three activities specifically geared for seniors.

Chair Yoga

The oldest of these is chair yoga, which was started in 2015. It’s always been led by Niza Hanany; first as a volunteer and now as SAPAS’s service coordinator. She has yoga instructor certification from the Wingate Institute for Excellence in Sports, in Israel.

For four years, twice-monthly chair yoga sessions were held at the St. Anthony Park Branch Library. Since the onset of COVID-19 restrictions, one-hour sessions have been conducted weekly via Zoom. Currently, virtual chair yoga has 28 participants.

Chair yoga, like any form of yoga, can improve flexibility and strength. But rather than being practiced on a mat or the floor, it’s done while seated or using a chair for balance.

Falcon Heights resident Lillian Noble says the chair yoga class “has transformed my Mondays. I feel alert and ready to tackle the world.”

Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance

In 2020, SAPAS began offering Zoom sessions of Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance. Developed by Dr. Fubong Li, TJQMBB is an evidenced-based program shown to improve balance, lower-extremity strength and gait in older adults.

For three years, TJQMBB was conducted through Juniper, a nonprofit that offers health and wellness activities. Now SAPAS has its own TJQMBB license and conducts sessions independently.

The class is led by SAPAS volunteers—coordinator Ahla Jesse. She completed a two-day training session through Juniper and has taken three refresher classes. The current class has 12 members.

Shirley Soderstrom, of Lauderdale, learned that “movement does not have to be fast to be helpful in gaining strength and coordination.” She added, “I’m more likely to do these exercises since I have a class at a specific time to attend.”

Walk With Ease

The newest exercise activity offered by SAPAS is Walk With Ease, which was developed by the Arthritis Foundation, in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sessions took place at Como Lake in the summer of 2021 and 2022. Another is planned for 2023. They’re led by Hanany, who was certified through Juniper.

Participants learn how to walk safely, comfortably and at their own pace and how to improve balance and strength. They meet at the Como Lakeside Pavilion and engage in a brief warm-up activity. Then they walk around the lake at their own pace, and as far as they feel comfortable going.

Part of the philosophy of Walk With Ease, and indeed all SAPAS exercise activities, is that engaging in physical exercise is easier, more enjoyable and often more effective if it’s scheduled and done with other people.

Falcon Heights resident Shirley Reider says that Walk With Ease has motivated her to continue walking.

Reider, who participates in all three exercise activities, says that all of them “deal with different aspects of balance and strength. Experiencing all of these has really made a difference in my physical well-being.”

All SAPAS exercise activities are free and open to all ages. First priority is given to seniors ages 60 and older living in the SAPAS service area. St. Anthony Park, Lauderdale and Falcon Heights west of Cleveland Avenue. For more information, contact SAPAS: office@sapaseniors.org, 651-642-9052.

Dave Healy lives in St. Anthony Park and is a former editor of the Park Bugle.
Horton Park is focal point for community

By Tracy Kugler

As I drove up Hamline Avenue in 2013 to check the area around our new home, I noticed a sign at the corner with Minnehaha Avenue: "Horton Park — Mini Arboretum." I thought, "Nice perk!" Now I know it's much more than that.

The arboretum reflects partnerships among the city of St. Paul, community groups and private companies that have responded to the changing needs of our urban ecosystem to maintain this educational and inspirational space. We need more partnerships like these to adapt to our own changing times.

Established in 1907, Horton Park occupies an oversized city block near an assisted living facility, the Friends School of Minnesota and Hamline University.

Evolution of tree life in the mini-arboretum

In 1978, St. Paul had lost many of its street trees to Dutch Elm disease. The St. Paul Companies (now Travelers Insurance) decided to honor its 125th anniversary by working with the city Parks Department to create a mini-arboretum to educate residents about the various trees that would replace the elms. Horton Park's walkability and proximity to concentrations of students and seniors made it an attractive site for the arboretum.

The city's landscape architect, Bill Pesek, selected 33 tree species, drawing on the city's Tree Master Plans. He worked with the St. Paul Companies and Jostens (of high school ring fame) to create brass plaques to identify individual trees and a map to stand at the center of the park.

Made of living trees, the arboretum is dynamic. Of the 174 trees planted, only 58 remain today. Some plaques still accurately identify trees; others stand alone or next to different trees.

Many of the older trees in the park, which is in St. Paul's Hamline-Midway district, were ashes and most of them were marked for removal in 2012 due to the threat of the emerald ash borer. Urban forester Karl Mueller remembers: "Students at the Friends School were upset when they saw the red paint ringing tree trunks and reached out to the Parks Department. So, we organized an Arbor Day planting with the school."

Together they planted 60 new trees of 24 varieties, many native to Minnesota, and have added more at annual Arbor Day events.

Ecological education and community connections

Disease and pests are not the only challenges to Horton Park. The low concrete wall around the central plaza had long been a target for tagging, to the dismay of Friends School teachers.

In 2014, visiting scholar David Sobel suggested that a mural on the wall could help. Teacher Melissa Andersen and local muralist Gustavo Lira helped students design and paint a colorful mural. No more graffiti!

The Friends School also worked with the Parks Department and the University of Minnesota to refresh the tree identification signs. Walkers learn the trees not only in the park but throughout the city. When people ask Mueller what kind of trees would suit their yards, he frequently refers them to Horton. Learning about the trees from these signs helped inspire my own writing project that gradually taught me the stories of the park.

Horton Park educates about more than trees. In 1999, a group of volunteers partnered with several community organizations to install an oak savanna wildflower garden anchored by the oak trees at the northeast corner. Later, the group created a native wildflower shade garden in the center of the park and added informational signs.

Hannah Texler said, "My vision is that the primary plantings in the neighborhood will shift from turf lawns to native wildflowers as people learn of their beauty, ecological benefits and ease of maintenance."

Look around! Her vision is becoming reality. Why not go for a stroll once a week? See what has changed and learn about a new tree or two on each visit. Who knows where it will take you?

Tracy Kugler is a resident of Hamline-Midway and loves trees, birds, words and maps. She works as a research scientist at the IPUMS Data Center at the University of Minnesota.

Resources

Want to know more about Horton Park’s trees or Tracy Kugler’s writing project? Visit momentsinhepark.com

Learn more about Horton Park at hamlinemidway.org/horton-park

Interested in planting native wildflowers in your yard? Check out the Lawns to Legumes program at bwst.state.mn.us/12

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State Farm
The Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. W., is offering hand drum basics every Monday from 5 to 6 p.m.

On Nov. 12, the French-based Modigliani Quartet will return to the series for a second time, followed by The Heath Quartet, renowned worldwide for their fiery, dynam-ic performing, along with pianist Oxion Weiss.

Concerts on Sunday afternoons at Saint Anthony Park United Church of Christ. For ticket information, visit schubart.drumcenter.org.

Hand drum basics

The nonprofit Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. W., is offering hand drum basics every Monday from 5 to 6 p.m.

Besides covering different musical styles and genres each week, this class offers the chance to learn free-style drumming on djembes (West African hand drums) and other percussion instruments in a low-pressure setting. All levels are welcome and drums are provided. Register at womensdrumcenter.org.

**Literary Bridges Reading series**

The Literary Bridges Reading series continues at 2 p.m. April 2, at Next Chapter Bookshops, 35 S. Snelling Ave. This session, during National Poetry Month, will feature a mix of poets.

The roster includes: Diane Jarvenpa, Draldandra Larkins, Lora Robinson and John Medeiros and Michael Moos.

**Tuesday Scholars series looks at Black artistry**

Ramsay County Library's free Tuesday with a Scholar series continues with a series of April on Black artistry and its impact on American history. Historian and Macalester College emeritus professor James Stewart and four African American artists plan to interpret American history through images of the Black experience.

The sessions are:

- April 4: Painter and collage artist Beverly Tipton Hammond talks about “Black Women and the Legacies of Africa.”
- April 18: A. Drew Hammond, a self-trained artist, discusses “Four Centuries of Racism, Rage and Resistance.” His talk will examine images that connect the 16th-century origins of American white supremacy with African Americans’ four-century history of struggle to resist and overcome it.
- April 25: Kennedy Simpson, a St. Paul graphic designer, will talk about “White Racism and Personal Identity.”
- May 2: Donald Walker, the first African American artist to work at the Minneapolis Star Tribune, will talk about “Law and Racial Justice: Allies and Antagonists.”

All sessions start at 12:30 p.m. in the community room of the Roseville Library, 2280 N. Hamline Ave. Registration is requested. Register on the library website or by calling it at 651-742-6400.

**St. Anthony Park Library**

The St. Anthony Park Library, 2245 Como Ave., will host a variety of activities in April. Usually, no registration is required. Programs this month include:

- **Clowning with Caboot!:** Theatre, Thursday, April 6, 1 to 3 p.m. Learn the comedic techniques of clowns at this workshop designed for kids aged 7-11. Participants will delve into the absurd and hilarious mind of the clown and develop their own clown characters.
- **Family-oriented movement and storytime:** Wednesday, April 19, 2 to 3 p.m. Join the St. Anthony Park Branch Library Association, staff from Carpe Diem Yoga Studio will guide families through breath-based movements they can do together to reduce stress and develop family bonds. Wear comfortable clothes and be prepared to move and breathe! For more information, email the St. Anthony Park Branch Library Association at info@sapbla.org.

**Family-oriented movement and storytime:** Wednesday, April 26, 6:30-7:30 p.m. In this program, sponsored by the St. Anthony Park Branch Library Association, staff from Carpe Diem Yoga Studio will guide families through breath-based movements they can do together to reduce stress and develop family bonds. Wear comfortable clothes and be prepared to move and breathe! For more information, email the St. Anthony Park Branch Library Association at info@sapbla.org.

**Saturday Family storytime: Welcoming spring!** April 29, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Join the St. Anthony Park Library on the last Saturday of each month for songs, stories, crafts/activities and social time with other families in the library’s audiotorium. Saturday family storytime is best for toddlers and preschoolers, caregivers and siblings.

Paw Pal: Read with Enzo or Sadie: Saturday, April 8, 10:15-12:30 p.m. Read to Sadie or Enzo, two friendly dogs who love to sit and listen to stories! In order to allow as many children to participate as possible, a single reading session will be no longer than 15 minutes. Paw Pal is geared to youth ages 3 to 12.

Parents with mental health in mind:

- **Tuesday, April 18, 7 p.m.:** Centennial United Methodist Church, 2220 Hildebrand Ave.
  - In this presentation sponsored by the St. Anthony Park Branch Library Association, Erin Walch, co-founder of Spark & Stitch Institute, will help parents and caregivers better distinguish between typical signs of stress in kids and signs that they need additional mental health support.
  - This session will be live-streamed. Call the library at 651-642-0411 for more information.
- **Adult Book Club:** Monday, April 24, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Join library staff and fellow book lovers for lively conversation, coffee and cookies. Stop in or call the library at 651-642-0411 for more information or to pick up a copy of the book.
- **Family-oriented movement and storytime:** Tuesday, April 25, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Hang out and make cool stuff! Featuring crafts, science experiments, engineering projects, video games and more. A Madlib program in the library audiotorium is designed for ages 7 to 11.

**English Conversation Circle for adults**

Join the University of Minnesota Retirees Volunteer Center and the Partners in English program for free English practice at the library.

- **Shake your sillies out! Playtime:** Fridays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Come to the library’s audiotorium for a story, stretching, movement and lots of fun! Playtime is appropriate for children ages 2 to 5. Adults must remain with their children for the duration of playtime.

**Seniors activities**

The St. Anthony Park Area Seniors will hold a mix of in-person and virtual activities in April.

In person activities include:

- **A blood pressure clinic from 3 to 4:30 p.m., April 16, at Seal Hi-Rise, 825 Seal St.**
- **Grief and loss study group, 1 to 2:30 p.m., April 12 and 26 at 2200 Hillside Ave.**
- **Caregiver community gathering,** 11 a.m. to noon, April 24 at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Ave.

SAPAS virtual activities include:

- **Lunch bunch sessions from noon to 1 p.m., April 12 and 26**
- **Caregiver Support Group, from noon to 1 p.m., April 6**
- **Chai yoga (call to see if space is available) from 10 to 11 a.m. on April 3, 10 and 17**

Call the seniors office at 651-642-9052 for connection instructions on these and other virtual activities Compiled by Bugle managing editor Scott Carlson.
New leaders taking helm at SAP Arts Festival

By Sarah CR Clark

This summer the St. Anthony Park Arts Festival will mark its 54th year, with three new co-chairs leading the event. Neighbors and friends Anna Gaseitsiwe, Ericha Gudmastad (marketing strategist) and Natalie Georgiiff (structural engineer) are sharing the work of directing the festival. Asked why she decided to take on leadership of the SAP Arts Festival, Gaseitsiwe said, “It felt like an exciting opportunity and a way to engage with my own neighboring in a way that felt real to me.”

The all-day 2023 SAP Arts Festival will happen on Saturday, June 3, along Como and Carter Avenues. “This year’s event will again feature 70-plus juried artists, a plant sale, “one of the best used book sales in the metro area,” art activities for families, good food and great music. This year’s festival will also feature some new activities as well as expanded activities for children like a bouncy house, face painting and an arts and crafts tent. Gudmastad said she is particularly looking forward to this expanded area of new activities. “The festival has always been a family friendly festival, but I think this will really drive that home,” she said. Georgiiff said she is particularly excited about the festival’s music lineup, with two covered, electrified stages (one by the library and one on the Luther Seminary lawn). “In the coming weeks I’ll be working closely with SAP Arts Festival Committee members to round out our lineup and coordinate final details for our stage setups. We’ll be announcing our final lineup on our website in May, so stay tuned!” Also new this year: The Creative Enterprise Zone will partner with the SAP Arts Festival by sponsoring the graffiti wall and by coordinating Chroma Zone mural tours by bus from the festival.

Co-chairs of recent Arts Festivals, Deanna Seppanen and Tanya Anderson (2019, virtual festival in 2020 and 2021) offered best wishes to this year’s new co-chairs. “Have fun together – that was the best part for me,” Anderson encouraged. Seppanen agreed, saying, “I want to thank the new leadership team for the countless hours of planning and wish them the best as they add new ideas to the mix!” Leading up to June 3, neighbors will have choices to begin building excitement and support for the SAP Arts Festival at a series of events in May, such as Yoga in the Park and a Movie on the Lawn. Sarah CR Clark lives in St. Anthony Park and is a regular contributor to the Bugle.

Hanafin Berg to present at April SAP History Series

By Mary Mergenthal

The free, monthly St. Anthony Park history series resumes at 7 p.m., Tuesday, April 11, at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church with Erin Hanafin Berg discussing the policies, procedures and possibilities of historic designation and preservation. Berg is deputy director at RE-THOS, a nonprofit based in the Landmark Center, working nationally for the use of old buildings and sites. Currently, she oversees legislative initiatives and works to provide information and resources to local and state elected officials, staff and community members about effective policies pertaining to building reuse, affordable housing, job creation, sustainability and economic revitalization.

Born in St. Paul, Hanafin Berg lives near Como Park; her father, grandparents and great-grandparents were longtime residents of St. Anthony Park and she is a member of SAP Lutheran Church. She earned a master’s degree in historic preservation from the University of Oregon and has more than two decades of professional experience in all aspects of preservation practice. St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2242 Como Ave., is sponsoring the monthly history series. After the lecture and questions, treats will be served in the church’s narthex.

Kristin Anderson, the founder and usual presenter at the history series, will lead walking tours of St. Anthony Park this summer at times and dates to be determined. If you wish to be informed of details closer to summer, please send your email address to mary.mergenthal@gmail.com, if you have not already signed up. Those unable to attend in person, can get the live Zoom link taped on YouTube.

Mary Mergenthal is a longtime resident of St. Anthony Park and the former editor of the Park Bugle.

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Andrew Christiansen
Andrew Scott Christiansen, 57, of Crystal, died Feb. 3, 2023. Drew was born Aug. 6, 1965, in Johnson City, New York, and grew up in Lauderdale. After graduating from Roseville High School, he completed a degree in business administration at the University of Minnesota.

Drew was an avid fisherman and birder. He loved visiting zoos and taking pictures of his family’s adventures. He was predeceased by his mother, Jean Christensen, and father-in-law, Thomas Gallagher. He is survived by his wife, Kathy, and daughter, Emily.

Memorials to: cistofriends.org/support/donate.

Ron Dufault
Ronald (Ron) James Dufault, 80, died unexpectedly Feb. 3, 2023, at Ronald Dufault in northwestern Minnesota.

Ron was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his three children and spouses, Dan (Michelle), Mary (Nicholas) and Sarah (Daniel), as well as three grandchildren.

Memorials to St. Anthony Park Area Seniors or the St. Anthony Park branch library.

John Nelson
JoAnn Marie Nelson, 89, of Lauder-
dale, died Feb. 9, 2023. She was born Oct. 1, 1933, in St. Paul to Har-
ry and Esther (Bourke) Tangen. She was married to Walter Nelson for 65 years.

Dayle Nolan
Dayle Nolan, 76, died Feb. 4, 2023. She lived in St. Anthony Park for some time.

As an attorney for more than 40 years, most of which were spent at Larkin Hoffman law firm in Bloomington, Dayle made employ-ment law history, shattered glass ceilings, mentored many, cham-pioned equity and inclusion, and earned the trust, respect and ad-miration of peers, adversaries, colleages and clients alike.

She was married to her sister and best friend, Deb Carrigan, her moth-er, Casey (Andrew) and Mike (Carol); and five grandchildren. A celebration of Dayle’s life will be held in June.

Clarence Peterson
Clarence Peterson, 94, died Feb. 9, 2023. She grew up in Como Park and attended Murray High School. She graduated from the U of M, where she was a member of Chi Omega. Most of her working years were as a social worker in nursing homes.

Clarence was an avid bridge player, never missed a chance to go swimming and loved to travel. She cherished time with her fam-ily and friends. Clarence saw the good and wonder in everyone and everything.

She was predeceased by her par-ents Sidney and Clara Perkins; her brothers Sidney, Jr. and Roger; her parents, Andrew Christiansen and Eugene Christiansen; her seven siblings; and nine nieces and nephews.

She is survived by her nieces and nephews, including eight grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Memorials to the Minnesota Historic Preservation Society.

PARK BUGLE • APRIL 2023
L I V E S L I V E D

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Lives Lived from p. 14

that he would receive a battlefield commission and was awarded the Navy Cross, one month shy of his 21st birthday. With the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in early August 1945, Bob’s 4th Marines were part of the first American combat troops to arrive in Japan. There, they dismantled artillery on Futtsu Cape, liberated allied troops from prison camps and witnessed the Japanese surrender on Tokyo Bay. His experiences are chronicled at the WWII Museum in New Orleans, the Marine Raider Museum in Quantico, Virginia, and in Patrick O’Donnell's book, “Into the Rising Sun.”

After WWII, Bob enrolled at the College of St. Thomas, living in the barracks with other returnees, the site of today’s St. Thomas Seminary. While at St. Thomas, Bob was a member of the track team and Tiger Club, graduating in 1949 with a degree in political science and economics.

Soon thereafter, with tensions escalating in Korea, he was recalled to active duty and accepted a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant/rifle platoon commander, 7th Marines. His Platoon was part of the Inchon Landing and the Chosin Reservoir. It was here that Bob was awarded his third Purple Heart.

Back stateside, Bob married Zandra and soon would welcome Tom, Pam, Norah and Wil. They lived in the Como Park area and in 1967 purchased a 90-acre hobby farm in Hugo, where they lived until 2004.

Bob enjoyed a 39-year career with St. Paul Companies, in addition to completing his law degree at William Mitchell Law School in 1959. Bob was active on the board of the YMCA, where he was a member for 65 years, and participated in the loaned executive program for the United Way of St. Paul.

Throughout the years, Bob and Zandra remained active in local and national horse shows both as judges and stewards. Bob was granted his judge’s card in 1963 and stewards card in 1967, officiating at over 150 horse shows throughout the U.S. and Canada for the next 40 years. Bob was a founding member of the Minnesota Hunter and Jump Association and the Tri-State Horsemen’s Association.

Upon retirement at 70, he returned to his alma mater and received his MBA in 1998. Retirement also gave him and Zandra time to pursue their love of cycling, swimming and running and they soon became fixtures on the local and national triathlon circuits. He competed in 226 triathlons over the years. His last competition was at the age of 91, having amassed five national championships for his age group and entry to the world finals.

Bob passed away peacefully. He was preceded in death by his parents, wife Zandra and brothers Thomas and James.

He is survived by his children: Tom (Diane), of Hugo; Pam Kess- ler of Plymouth; Norah Gondeck (Chris) of Wayzata; and William (Bogey) Donon, California; as well as eight grandchildren; one great-grandson; and his brother Daniel (Toni). Memorials to St. Mary of the Lake Catholic Church, White Bear Lake.

Sherley Unger

Sherley Glasscock Unger, 99, died March 1, 2023. While she lived at the 1666 Coffman building in Falcon Heights for 35 years, she considered St. Anthony Park her neighborhood. She loved the library, Mim’s Cafe and Speedy Market, as well as all of the beautiful yards and trees in SAP. She would have been 100 in August.

Along with Norma Olson and Maris Thomas, Sherley helped form the original Triangle Committee in Prospect Park. Sherley attended Peconic High School where she graduated at 16 and was the homecoming queen. She went on to become homecoming queen at Texas Christian University. Twenty-five years later she was invited to join the TCU Horsemen’s Association.

After college, Sherley was a stewardess for American Airlines—flying NYC, Dallas and Mexico City.

Sherley married Leonard Ung- er just after WW2 and they made their way to the U of M after a year at Bard College. Sherley was a member of the Women’s Interna- tional League for Peace and Freedom, the DFL, and various groups in Prospect Park along with being a volunteer at a Minneapolis hospital.

She wrote poetry and short sto- ries, was a great cook and was the Pearl Mesta of hostesses. She loved art and spent a lot of time at the Minneapolis Institute of Art and the Landscape Arboretum. In 1958 she lived in Rome for a year while Leonard was on a combined Ful- bright/Oughtonheim sabbatical. In 1963, the year she was elected to TCU, there were 150 students.

A celebration of life gathering will be held in May. Please email umber.my@gmail.com for details.
Como Park Cougars winter sports wrap up with swimming meet

By Eric Erickson, Sports analysis

Como’s winter athletic season concluded in early March at the Minnesota State Swimming Meet. It was the third consecutive season in which Como swimmers qualified for the state meet, and their performance in the premier event reached a new level of success.

Also qualifying for a state meet this winter was freshman Nordic skier Henry Simmons. The Como girls’ basketball team secured another conference crown, while boys basketball players and wrestlers worked hard and made their own unique memories as well.

Boys swimming: The Cougars entered the Section 4AAA Meet on Feb. 24 with high expectations. Como’s upperclassmen had state qualification on their minds, but they also had goals of setting personal, and potentially, school records. Committed to a group of swimmers that had goals of dedication, a new era was born.

Senior captain Kyle Kosiak and Kyle Kosiak set a new school record in the 200-yard freestyle relay. Charlie Power-Theisen and Oskar Helgen combined with Napierala and Sackreiter to break the school record in the 200-yard medley relay. And Napierala added a new all-time Como record for the 100-yard breaststroke.

There were three relays in high school swimming and Como advanced to state in all three, thanks to the 400 freestyle relay race by Isaacson, Power-Theisen, Helgen and Kosiak. Additional individual qualifications in their specialty events were achieved by these same swimmers, which gave Como a great opportunity to produce points toward a high team score at the state meet on March 3 and 4 at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center.

Como swimmers were thrilled to see Como swimming and Como advance out of the preliminary events on Friday and into Saturday’s finals. The overall team score resulted in a 10th place state finish — a phenomenal achievement for a group of swimmers that has kept improving through years of dedication.

At state, Isaacson was 11th in the 100 free style and 19th in the 100 breaststroke. Napierala was 12th in the 100 breaststroke and 15th in the 100 butterfly. Sackreiter was 16th in the 50-yard freestyle and 16th in the 100 freestyle.

The ultimate team success came in the 200-yard freestyle relay, when the school record holders of Napierala, Isaacson, Sackreiter and Kosiak earned a spot on the podium with a fourth-place finish. Celebrating with state medals around their necks was a special way to end a spectacular season.

And for seniors Isaacson, Napierala and Power-Theisen, it was a fitting end to their Como swimming careers.

Nordic Skiing: Freshman Henry Simmons burst onto the scene in the Twin Cities Nordic Conference by placing fifth overall and earning all-conference. Simmons then qualified for the state meet by placing in the top 10 at the Section 4 Meet.

Skiing in the state meet at Giants Ridge in Bwabik was a proud moment for Simmons and Como Nordic, with promise of more state meets to come.

Senior captain Liam Schwie finished his career as an all-conference honorable mention skier. Junior Sophie Warner and sophomore Margaret Spray were the top performers on the girls side.

Girls Basketball: The Cougars conference winning streak surpassed 80 games as the team rolled to its ninth straight city title. The streak set a record for the St. Paul City Conference.

In the Section 4AAA Tournament, Como earned the No. 3 seed and advanced to the semifinals before losing to Visitation.

This year’s squad was led by senior captain Shania Nichols-VanNett who reached the 1,000-point milestone for her career.

Senior Zhane Singer was the team’s leading rebounder and shot blocker. Senior captain Kayla James brought versatility to the Cougars offense and intensity to the defense.

Junior standouts Alice Wagner-Hemstad and Greta Spross were added skill, hustle and strong defending and are ready to lead next year’s team in pursuit of another conference championship.

Boys Basketball: Junior Mason Aarnesi was the leading scorer for the Cougars who finished the season with a 4-8 conference record (6-17 overall.) Sophomores Dejaun Jones and J/’Hari Hill both averaged over ten points a game and showed great potential in their first varsity season.

While most of the team will be back next season, the program will miss the senior leadership of Oliver Petch and Levi Nichols.

Wrestling: Cougars earning all-conference awards were seniors Ve Ah Ree Shar and Thay Lee Seh, and junior Luke Glad. Junior Will Stiles and sophomore Farhan Idries gained honorable mention.

Stiles and Ve Ah Ree Shar both finished in fourth place for their weight classes in the Section 4AA Tournament.

Eric Erickson is a social studies teacher at Como Park High School.