Changes afoot following George Floyd murder

By Maja Beckstrom

After George Floyd was killed, Samantha Huett-Shevtzoff watched protesters spill into the streets. She saw the pain and the passion and wanted to be a force for positive change.

"It all sparked this fire inside of me," Huett-Shevettof, a St. Anthony Park business owner, said. "It's a fire I didn't know I had honestly." Huett-Shevetzoff, who opened Healing Elements on Como Avenue in 2016, realized her yoga studio gave her a platform from which to speak about racial injustice.

"In Saint Anthony Park it seems we were in this safe little pocket, or nest," she said. "The majority of our clientele are white and seem to live for the most part with privilege and with access to resources. And now we've really had our eyes opened to the lack of access affecting so many of our neighbors. I was like—how can we reach out to the greater community?"

Huett-Shevetzoff started by organizing a food drive and raised $1,800 for organizations working in neighborhoods hit by army fires. Now she is considering next steps.

Saint Anthony Park and immediately adjacent neighborhoods in St. Paul weren't at the center of protests and didn't see businesses burn in late May. But residents, organizations and business owners have seen racial inequality in new ways and many have grappled with how to turn their disapproval into action.

Hampden Park Co-op has invited customers to "round up" their grocery bills in July and plans to give these donations to George Floyd's family. Urban Growler is brewing a "Black Is Beautiful" beer to raise funds for a local organization working for racial justice and equity, joining a national effort started by a black-owned brewery in Texas.

In response to the widespread rioting, looting and vandalism in the Twin Cities in late May, District 10 Community Council board and community members responded to sudden needs in various ways. Those actions included banding together to protect the home and safety of a District 10 family who received vulgar, violent, race-based threats and donated enough supplies for 150 activity kits for children in north Minneapolis.

The neighborhood discussion group — SAPark@groups.io — saw lively posts about whether Buford Avenue was named after a black man by a white police officer. Now she is considering next steps.

"I think as a community people are still in the reaction mode," said Kathryn Murray, District 12 executive director. "There is education that needs to happen and healing that needs to take place. I don't know what that means yet for St. Anthony Park."

Immediately after Floyd's death, some neighborhood residents joined the protests against yet another killing of an unarmed black man by a white police officer.

"What was impressive to me was going down to Midway that Friday morning and seeing hundreds of people cleaning up," said Steve Ray, who lives on University Avenue. Ray joined a crowd at Bethlehem Lutheran Church after the fiery night in St. Paul.

"There was this outpouring of community support," Huett-Shevetzoff also responded after seeing a plea for food donations on Facebook. Healing Elements gathered money and supplies from friends and clients and brought more than 90 bags to community organization Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha, a few doors down from Cup Foods in Minneapolis where Floyd was killed.

"It was people from all backgrounds coming together," said Huett-Shevetzoff. Meanwhile, local churches organized their own food drives and delivered pickup loads of supplies. Individuals like Walker Johnston, of south Saint Anthony Park, raised money and went grocery shopping.

Huett-Shevetzoff was named a 2020 Teacher of the Year by Maja Beckstrom.

By Michael Kuchta

The restaurant in Como Lakeside Pavilion opened June 5 with a new name—and at least one feature that doesn't exist elsewhere, hard to find beer.

Dock & Paddle debuted in a scaled-back version in order to meet the dining limits required under state pandemic restrictions. (The restaurant is under the same management as last year's version of Spring Café.)

The menu started with appetizers, grill fare such as sandwiches and burgers, a children's menu and locally sourced salads. Some favorites return from last year, including the BLAT (bacon, lettuce, avocado and tomato) and Cibiato. In keeping with the restaurant's new name and décor, its menu includes fish-and-chips and fish tacos, too.

However, Dock & Paddle's biggest coup is an exclusive arrangement with the Minnesota Craft Brewers Guild. The Guild will curate a rotating selection of beers from around the state. That means Dock & Paddle will serve beers on tap that are rare or difficult to find in the Twin Cities.

Dock & Paddle intends to open weekdays 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and weekends 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Kid's items are $8; most everything else is in the $10 to $14 range. Michael Kuchta is the executive director of the Como District 10 Community Council.
Commo and St. Anthony Park Community Council news

District 10
Community Council
Nine elected to District 10 Board

With record participation, Distri- ckt 10 residents elected five new members to the Como Community Council board and re-elected four members. All voting this year was absentee, either through mail ballots or online voting. Together, 275 community members voted, more than double the ballots cast in prior years when voting was restricted to in-person at the Council’s annual meeting. Elected to two-year terms:

• Vice-chair: Olivia Mora­wiecki (Olivia previously was an at-large board member)

• Treasurer: Mike Ireland (re-elected)

• At-Large: Melissa Brannon (newly elected) and Jill Hen­ricksen (re-elected)

• Sub-District 1: Rebecca Calvo (re-elected)

• Sub-District 2: Dan Edgerton (newly elected)

• Sub-District 3: Jenne Nelson (formerly elected)

• Sub-District 4: Rachel Bowers (newly elected)

Also, Bob Jacobson was newly elected to fill the remaining 10 months of a vacant seat in Sub-District 4.

Starting the conversation in Como

In the wake of Minneapolis po­lice officer’s killing of George Floyd, Como Community Council board members are asking Como residents to help revise our neighborhood’s role in ending systemic racism and dismantling inequities where we live. To begin the process, they are asking community members to share their experiences with racism, their ideas for pursuing racial justice and their willingness to act for permanent change. Join the con­versation at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/DIV1racism.

Como trail work scheduled

Cancellation of the State Fair has at least one benefit: It has paved the way for St. Paul to rebuild all of Como Avenue this summer between Hamline Avenue and the Raymond/ComoFest intersection. Originally, work was going to be split between 2020 and 2021. Now, construction is scheduled to begin in July and finish by the end of October, according to city proj­ect manager Don Pfau­man. Trees will be planted in spring 2021.

The reconstruction includes building the Como Avenue Trail along the entire 2.5-mile stretch on the north side of Como. The off-street trail for bicycles and pe­destrians is part of the Saint Paul Grand Round. Federal funds are paying for much of the work. Re­construction also includes sewer work and reconfiguring much of the road itself:

• Hamline to Snelling: On-street bike lanes will be eliminated and the road will be narrowed. Other­wise, things remain functionally as they are now: parking on both sides of the street and one vehicle lane in each direction.

• Snelling to the Transiway: The road will narrow and be re­configured to handle one vehicle lane in each direction, a center turn lane, and an on-street bike lane in each direction. During the two weeks of the State Fair, this section will be restricted to handle two vehicle lanes in each direc­tion, similar to what occurs now.

• Transiway to Raymond/ Cleveland: The street will remain pretty much as it is now: one lane of vehicle traffic in each direction, parking on each side of Como, and an on-street bike lane in each direction.

ComoFest is canceled
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual ComoFest will not take place in July. Events can­celed include the Como Com­munity Council’s Ice Cream Social and Como Connect, the Northwest Como Movie Night and Campout, the ComoFest Art Fair, North Dale Summerfest, TopLine Federal Credit Union’s community appreciation picnic, Gabe’s By The Park’s Mini-Mingle and Lymphombi­ent’s MidSummer Festival.

Como scavenger hunt

Staying “safe” during the pan­demic no longer means we have to stay home all the time. To help us get rid of the cobwebs, the Como Community Council has created a Como Scavenger Hunt. This family friendly activity helps you discover your neighborhood, past and present, get some fresh air, and exercise your body and mind along the way:

• There are two hunts: one east of Lexington, one west of Lex­ing­ton. Do them at your own pace up until July 31. We’ll enter all completed lists into a drawing for gift cards to District 10 restaur­ants. Download the lists at www distric­t10como.org.

District 10 meetings

District 10 board and committee meetings are continuing but, for the time being, they take place using technology rather than face to face.

• To obtain links, phone num­bers, or other information to join a meeting remotely, send a request by email to director@ distric­t10como.org. Or, call in your request to 651-644-3889.

Upcoming meetings:

• Neighborhood Relations: Tuesday, July 7

• Environment: Wednesday, July 8

• Board meeting: Tuesday, July 21

District 12
Community Council
Reaction to Floyd murder

The St. Anthony Park Commu­nity Council issued the following statement after the George Floyd murder. The Bugle has edited the statement due to limited space.

“The St. Anthony Park Community Council is deeply sadd­ened and outraged by the murder of George Floyd. And saddened by the loss of busi­nesses and organizations that provide crucial support and employment to lower income neighborhoods.

However, we are buoyed by the massive protests and vigils and by the groundswell of support across economic and political levels for systemic change that will lead to a more equitable, humane and sus­tainable society. SAPCC is dedi­cated to that vision.

As is evident in our new 10-year plan, SAPCC works to pro­mote equity in the community. And yet, as an organization with influence in the community, we recognize that we can and should be doing more to confront and dismantle white supremacy.

Change is necessary and long overdue. SAPCC believes that an answer to these systemic prob­lems lies in more funding for mental health professionals to de-escalate situations, communi­ty-first public safety methods and replacement of school resource officers with more mental health resources.

We will be discussing ways to involve and engage more people who identify as BIPOC (black, indigenous and people of color).”
Four years after Castile killed, what has Falcon Heights learned?

By Anne Holzman

Falcon Heights City Council member Melanie Leehy is a black woman who grew up a few blocks from where George Floyd was killed on May 25 in Minneapolis.

The Bugle recently asked Leehy to reflect on what lessons might have been learned after a black man, Philando Castile, was killed by a police officer in her city on July 6, 2016.

"Beauty is coming from ash-es," Leehy said of Floyd's death, "but there's still a life lost, and churches destroyed, and busi-nesses." She noted that in the case of Castile's death, some impor-tant changes ultimately emerged for Falcon Heights as the result of a special task force.

The day Castile was killed, Leehy said, she had been setting up a workshop on racial equality. She had been leading city commissions for a decade and at that time chaired Falcon Heights’ Community Engage-ment Committee.

"I know that the demographic (in Falcon Heights) was changing," she said. "I wanted my communi-ty to be prepared." So, in the af-ftermath of Castile's death, Leehy already had the contacts needed to help the city respond to the com-munity's pain and outrage and help facilitate a special task force.

In December 2016, the task force convened with 11 par-ticipants, who planned and conducted five “community conversations” and produced a report that the City Council approved in June 2017. More than 180 people participated in the conversations. The report, minutes of meetings and an evaluation of the process were all available on the city’s website.

Leehy asked Kathy Quick, an associate professor of public affairs at the University of Min-ne-sota, and Ken Morris, an aca-demic tutor at Mitchell Hamline School of Law, to help the task force design a process for the holding and reporting the community conversations.

"There was no template," Leehy said. "We were trying to put together a toolkit." She said it was important to have "facilita-tors from the outside" as well as a commitment from city coun-cil members for the process. She sought racial balance at every lev-el of participation.

Leehy said the first step was to "hear from people as to what they feel are the values of our city. You have to know your values, and see those values imbued in every-thing we do.”

The conversations weren’t easy. "Our residents were angry that Philando was killed and they spoke out," Leehy said. The process concluded with, among other things, a banquet for par-ticipants and commitments from city staff for ongoing meetings.

Leehy said the city policing contract was dropped by St. An-thony 11 months after Castile was killed, and when staff sought a re-placement, the only taker was the Ramsey County Sheriff. While the task force and commu-nity talked passionately about desired changes in police work, "our hands are tied" given that the county is in charge of it, Leehy said. She described communi-ty sessions in which police were invited from other jurisdictions as panelists. If other cities try a similar process, she said, “there has to be an opportunity for po-lice to speak and police to listen.”

The Falcon Heights contract with the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office expires in December 2021. Mayor Randy Gustafson said he expects the city to consider re-newing it, concurrently with six other cities operating under sim-iilar agreements. Gustafson works for the Sheriff’s Office as a crime program coordinator.

Leehy said the task force work has led to important changes, including a more accessible city website available in multiple lan-guages; ongoing work with city staff to make aspects of life in Fal-con Heights more inclusive; and an annual Restoration Day (July 6) and Unity Day (July 7), hosted by the Castle family, which she said will go on this year with appropri-ate social distancing in place.

Gustafson, who participated in the task force (at the time as a council member) said, “Our community response to the trag-edy of Philando Castile's death in 2016 was to seek healing and solutions to prevent tragedies in the future. Our community engaged process, clarified and defined our values as a city sur-rounded by policing and created opportunities to strengthen in-clusivity and recognize the im-portance of diversity.”

Meanwhile, Leehy had a cou-pel of general recommendations for communities facing the chal-lenge of racial reconciliation.

"Give each other permission to be offended,” she said, or the con-versation won’t get very far. And commit time and resources to the process, she said.

“You have to create that table for people to come to.”

Anne Holzman, a former St. An-thony Park resident, is a regular freelancer to the Bugle.


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From the Desk of the Editor

By Scott Carlson

When COVID-19 hits home

As of mid-June, nearly 120,000 Americans have died of the coronavirus. On May 18, my mother Joan became one of those COVID-19 statistics. It was a sad end for Mom, who turned 90 earlier this year and had dreamed of possibly reaching age 100. She had all the spirit, grit and mental clarity that made me think anything was possible. But already suffering from respiratory trouble prior to testing positive for COVID, Mom's longevity goal was far out of reach. After initially testing negative for the coronavirus in early May, a second test revealed she was infected. That news felt like a punch in the gut. A couple days later, Mom was taken from her nursing home to the hospital in St. Paul. For three or four days, she and her body fought valiantly to survive. But late afternoon on May 18 Mom passed away. I know no one lives forever. But Mom's end was cruel. No family or friends at her bedside. Only the blessing of virtual meeting allowed me to see her at the very end. Two compassionately caring nurses were at Mom's bedside when she took her last breath.

My Mother was a kind, gentle and compassionate woman, who loved life, enjoying some of the smallest pleasures in life. During her life Joan wore many hats: wife, mother, grandmother, honors college graduate, a Sunday school teacher, bird bander, nature guide, amateur poet and writer. I loved her deeply and you would have too.

In the wake of George Floyd

One week after my Mom died, George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer. His senseless death has shocked the nation and the world. In this issue we have stories that touch on the George Floyd incident and how it has and is affecting people in the St. Anthony Park area. Among the stories is a lengthy reaction piece from journalist/writer Maja Beckstrom.

Thank you to everyone who supported our students in the Pilot One-on-One Tutoring Program. This program has depended on donations over the last 13 years. The businesses and churches in the area, individuals (including many Murray Alumni) and local foundations all made it possible because of their generous contributions.

Our students experienced improvement in their grades and gained a deeper understanding that they can do well in school with confidence! With deep appreciation,

Cindy Vik Thoater Murray Middle School Pilot One-on-One Tutoring program coordinator

Tone it down!

On the morning of May 31, I had another unnecessary incident involving a misunderstanding with a bicyclist on my way home from my University Avenue business.

Crossing Marshall Avenue, driving south on Ons, there was a bike ahead of me moving around parked cars. At times, I slowed down and moved to my left. I passed him. That’s when I got an earful about my driving and not sharing the road with bicyclists. Had given him more than enough space for both of us to share the road.

I was not in the mood; I had spent the morning cleaning up after looters. I let him catch up and attempted to engage him in conversation, which turned into a shoving match. Totally unnecessary on both of our parts. I left it at that and continued on my way home feeling pretty miffed. When I arrived home, I walked to my front yard and waited for him to ride by. As he did, I asked, “Would you like to talk about this?” All I got was the finger! No interaction at all. I was even going to offer him water.

I have witnessed bad behavior from cars, motorcycles, bicyclists and even joggers. There is absolutely no excuse for this kind of behavior on anyone’s part. Share the road, what a joke! Most people do without incident. But for those individuals that believe they have a total right to own the road, well, who’s going to win an interaction with a car? I implore everyone involved to tone it down and get home safely. Is that asking too much?

Dana Roes
Highland Park

Thank you to tutors!

Thank you to all of the tutors who supported our students in the Pilot One-on-One Tutoring program at Murray Middle School during the academic year 2019-2020. Throughout the year, over 60 Murray students were tutored five days a week by 144 volunteers. This amounts to about 225 hours per week.

When the pandemic started in March our schedule changed to three hours per week. We continued to support all of our students by phone. The gift of time and patience was so appreciated! Residents and employees of the Bugle community, University of Minnesota and the University of St. Thomas college students were involved.

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There are also stories from free-lancers Anne Holmaz and Sara CR Clark and commentaries from Michael Kleiber-Diggs and Matthew Young. We look to continue these kinds of conversations in future issues of the Bugle.

Bugle fundraising update

The Bugle’s goal for 2019-20 is $52,000. As of June 19, we have received $50,191 in donations.

Thanks to all of you who have contributed as we close out our 2019-20 fiscal year. All of your donations, large and small, are very much appreciated and are helping to keep the Bugle strong and vibrant.

And now here is a list of our latest contributors: Haley Ander son, Mary Boyd-Brent, Bjorn and Gagnepinnes, Erik Haugoy, Rosemary Jennings, Ellen McEvoy, Annemarie Solon, Glennys Thordemsgaard, Jay Weiner and Anne Jaergens and Mary Zorn.

Upcoming Bugle deadlines

Here is a reminder on our Bugle deadlines for the next three issues. As always, we greatly appreciate when writers and readers submit their articles early. Aside from breaking news, most articles can be submitted ahead of the scheduled deadlines.

And again, our publication dates represent when the newspapers go out for delivery. Distribution of the paper should occur over the next two to six business days.

Meanwhile, bulk drop-offs of the paper around town could be slightly delayed because our distributor is taking steps to ensure their delivery people are safe during the coronavirus challenge.

LE TTER S

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Murray Middle School
Pilot One-on-One Tutoring program coordinator

The annual meeting of the members of Park Press Inc., publisher of the Park Bugle, will be held at 7 p.m., Thursday, July 23, via Zoom.

The agenda will include the election of directors, minor changes to bylaws, conversation about the future of the Bugle and other matters that may be raised by members.

Anticipated bylaw changes include establishing a slightly smaller board of directors and amending the group’s meeting schedule.

Please copy and paste this link to your browser:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84220941719

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All are welcome to attend. Park Press Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization guided by an elected volunteer board of directors. The Park Bugle has been publishing for nearly 46 years.

~Scott Carlson, managing editor
My friend Barb, our neighbor George

By Michael Kleber-Diggs

Before the pandemic, before I worked from home, I knew my neighbor, Barb, tended her lawn herself. She mowed her grass, pulled weeds by hand, applied fertilizer where it was needed and got down on her knees to dig up and reseed any rough patches. But before I saw her work all day, I didn’t know she did.

Barb is closer to 90 than 80. She is sprite-like and charming. We talk about the weather or trees or our dogs or her late husband, Bob. Or when we’re feeling carry, other neighbors—interest-gossip sometimes, never anything mean-spirited.

A few years ago, very early in the morning, a woman, a white woman, an intoxicated white woman stalked through my wife’s truck, stood at our front window with a heavy rock above her head ready to throw it through, rang our doorbell several times, shout-ed profanities at us and demand-ed to be let in.

We yelled at her to go. But I didn’t leave my house to con-front her until she left our front porch and walked toward Barb and Bob’s house. The early morn-ing visitor left Barb alone. She retreated down the alley and dis-appeared into the darkness.

Well, back to Barb’s lawn. Barb’s lawn is perfect. She mows twice a week. I know that now. She whacks tall grass around trees and streetlight posts. She trims the edges every time. When she isn’t mowing, she’s weeding. She works on her yard every day.

I don’t know why Barb’s lawn matters to her. I don’t know if she loves yard work or does it to hon-or Bob, for exercise or for some other reason. I know she isn’t motivated by what her neighbors think. Everyone around her does just enough yard work to avoid complaints. I only know her lawn is important to her.

Meanwhile, less than a month ago, George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis. If you don’t under-stand what it’s like to be black in America, if you don’t know how it feels for many blacks in the days and months after the police kill a black man or woman, I write to tell you the hard part has not started yet. For all who feel these killings personally, the hard part is just beginning.

George Floyd’s character will be called into question. His hu-manity will be called into ques-tion—quiet suggestions he deserved to be tortured to death. Those who can, will return to normal routines. Pro-police and anti-protestor messages will increase. People won’t make a sincere effort to engage with sug-gestions for reform.

If the name of the movement isn’t just right, many will opt out without checking it out. Any urgency the white community feels toward action, any efforts to look inward, to work for real change, any efforts now under-way may succumb to the status quo. Racism never left. It went dormant for a few days. It will crawl back into our city life like a weed.

I thought a long time about centering my column on my friend Barb instead of George Floyd. I thought about my au-dience. I wanted to share three ideas—one aspirational, one metaphorical and one spiritual—that are all intertwined.

First, people like the woman who visited us early in the morn-ing need help and grace, not bru-tality and violence.

Second, the work of building the world we claim to want—the work of ending racism—is daily work. Each of us has to value the work. Our inspiration should be internal, not external; it should come from within each of us.

My last idea is applied in the first idea and is expressed in the work of the second. My last idea is about George and Barb and unwanted early morning visitors and you and me and Minneapolis and St. Paul and America and so on. My last idea is this: We are meant to love our neighbors.

Michael Kleber-Diggs is a poet, essayist and literary critic. He lives in Como Park, by Bob and Barb’s house, with his wife Karen, their daughter, two cats and two dogs.
Bending the arc towards racial justice

By Matthew Young

As a resident of the ethnically-diverse Commonwealth Terrace Cooperative and as a chairman of the advocacy and equity committee of the Minnesota Association for Environmental Education (MAEE), I share my deep sorrow, but also deeper hope as we all live through the grievous, senseless death of Minneapolis resident George Floyd on May 25, 2020, killed by officers of the Minneapolis Police Department.

The loss of Floyd’s life, the resultant rioting and turmoil across Minneapolis and St. Paul during recent weeks speak of a deep illness in the life of the United States: the illness of racism and economic structures in the United States. The sooner that we can intentionally follow the arc of the moral universe and bend it towards racial justice, the sooner that we can truly honor the lives of George Floyd, Philando Castile, Jamar Clark and the other people of color in Minnesota and across the United States who were taken from why they were.

May we follow this arc and bend it towards racial justice every day in community.

Matthew Young is a resident Commonwealth Terrace Cooperative, home to a diverse Commonwealth (and 4-year-old son on Mead.

“Diverse Voices” debuts in the Bugle

By Sarah CR Clark

Editor’s note: The following conversation between Tanya Dragseth and Bugle freelance writer Sarah CR Clark is the first in an occasional series we are calling “Diverse Voices,” a feature that will highlight the thoughts and views of local people of color.

Q: Tanya, how do you racially identify?
A: I am African American.

Q: What sort of work do you do?
A: I am an application analyst in IT for M Health Fairview.

Q: What does your family/household look like?
A: We are a family of five (was six, but the oldest is out on his own). Caucasian husband and three adorable, biracial kids.

Q: Where did you grow up?
A: I grew up in St. Paul in a housing project right off of Wheelock, I attended Central for all of high school.

Q: Can you tell a story of a time when you experienced injustice or discomfort because of your skin color?
A: I have not personally experienced injustice, but my family has with the death of my nephew Philando Castile. That was very hard on my family and to this day justice has not been served.

I do remember a time when I felt discomfort.

Years ago, my family lived in California in a predominantly white area. I had registered my oldest son for junior high. I was very intentional since he was born, always making sure to mark that he was both white and black in any forms I ever had to fill out. When I turned in my paperwork at the school, the admin started inputting his information into the system and stated that she could only enter one option in the race/ethnicity field. White or black, not both. My son was present during this exchange. I was so embarrassed. For the first time in his life, I had to choose how he would be identified by people in my school. I picked if I picked white as his race, someone would assume that was a mistake and change it to black. So, I told her to type in black.

Q: Did your parents give you “The Talk” about what to do if you were ever confronted by police?
A: As my parents never gave me the talk. Police brutality was not a thing here in Minnesota when I was a kid. As a parent, I had to give my oldest son the talk when he was a high schooler at Como.

After Trayvon Martin’s death I had to explain to him not to run, stay where he was, if questioned, be polite and answer the questions and if things went sideways—call your parents ASAP. I had to tell him how to dress, how he could be perceived in public. It was heartbreaking because I felt like I was telling him not to be who he was in order to keep him safe.

Q: How is this current moment of social justice and protests feeling for you?
A: As I am conflicted, really. I am not an optimistic person by nature, so I don’t feel that any change will happen anytime soon. In my heart I hope it does.

Q: What are your hopes for your kids?
A: My hope is that the positive and widely shared demand for structural change continues. I hope that those changes or some of those changes will occur in their lifetime so that our country can move forward.

Q: What else might you like our neighbors to know about your experience as a person of color?
A: The sooner that we can own our grief caused. The sooner that we can stand shoulder to shoulder, white with people of color, the sooner that we can mobilize to demand city, county, state and federal policies that regard diversity, equity and inclusion, instead of perpetuating segregation, inequities and divisiveness.

The sooner we call for closing the opportunity gap in secondary education between white students and students of color here in Minnesota, the sooner that we can begin atonement for more than 400 years of support—

sionally selected test or any of 2020-2021

By Nancy Meeden

Come home to University Grove

Designed by Elizabeth & Wiston Close in 1969, this Mid-Century Modern home is offered by the original owners. The L-shaped living/dining area has raised beamed ceiling with wood burning fireplace and floor to ceiling windows facing South. Located in the heart of University Grove this home offers the privacy of a planned community plus convenient access to all that St. Anthony Park and the Twin Cities provide.

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$450,000

SOLD

Nancy Meeden
Coldwell Banker Burnet
Office: 651-282-9505
Mobile: 612-790-5033
nmeeden@cbburnet.com

Twin Cities Academy is a free public charter school in St. Paul serving students in this lively, 3-12th grade college preparatory program. Twin Cities Academy is committed to developing leaders through academic rigor, social justice and giving back to the community. The goal of 2020-2021 is to empower students to lift up their communities, find their voices, work together, and build a better world. The sooner that we can stand shoulder to shoulder, white with people of color, the sooner that healing will happen.

TCA is now enrolling for the 2020-2021 school year. Please visit our website at www.twincitiesacademy.org • 651-205-4797

Twin Cities Academy is a free public charter school in St. Paul serving students in this lively, 3-12th grade college preparatory program. Twin Cities Academy is committed to developing leaders through academic rigor, social justice and giving back to the community. The goal of 2020-2021 is to empower students to lift up their communities, find their voices, work together, and build a better world. The sooner that we can stand shoulder to shoulder, white with people of color, the sooner that healing will happen.
For high school graduating classes, 2020 has been a year like no other. Starting in mid-March, the nation’s coronavirus pandemic prompted Minnesota to implement “shelter-in-place” mandates that included canceling in-school classes for the remainder of the school year and instituting, in its place, distance learning through Zoom technology and other online platforms. In addition, spring sports got scrubbed and high school proms were canceled. And most significantly, the rite of high school commencement via large mass gatherings in auditoriums, sports stadiums and other venues also gave way to virtual ceremonies. However, through it all, graduates and their families have been creative. One example: Commencement car parades that have been held in St. Anthony Park and other communities across the Twin Cities. For that resiliency, the Bugle salutes the classes of 2020.

We are so proud of what you accomplished throughout your high school careers. Your future is bright. Better get some shades!

Congratulations to Avalon’s 2020 Graduates!

Avalon School
700 Glendale St., St. Paul, MN 55114 • 651-649-5495
http://www.avalonschool.org/

Mission Statement: To provide a rich learning environment that challenges and supports all students in finding and developing their own gifts and continuing the journey to reach their potential.

Caroline Gautier celebrates her graduation from Roseville Area High School in a car parade on June 7. Families in north Saint Anthony Park organized the parade to honor seniors whose in-person graduation ceremonies were cancelled due to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions. About 30 graduates from various high schools gathered in decorated cars at Langford Park and then looped through the neighborhood. Photo by Tyj Sassaman

JULY 2020 • PARK BUGLE

Congratulations 2020 Graduates!

Isabella Maria DiGiorno
Roseville Area High School
Congratulations, Bella! We will miss all of your activities and YOU next year.
Love, Mom, Dad, Margaret, Aidan & Chloe

Keith Seiji Berry Eicher
Stanford University
Seiji, many congratulations on your B.S. in Mathematical and Computational Science! We’re so proud of you.
Love, Mom, Noonan and Sister

Russell Sweet
University of Minnesota
Congratulations to our favorite saxophonist on your Bachelor of Music Degree!
Love, Mom, Dad, Kimberly, Methoka & Andrew

Congratulations to the Class of 2020!

Como Park Senior High School
740 Rose Avenue West
St. Paul, Minnesota 55117
651-293-8800
www.spps.org/comosr

Vision Statement: As a community we stretch for the horizon to attain a diverse community bound together by our commitment to prepare our young people to become caring, productive citizens in a dynamic and changing world.

Joe Andersen • Lily Barnes • Layshia Bender • Daniel Medin Berkson
Timothy Jen Brand • Emilienne Rael Castillo • Aikun Chang • Martin Gremath
Myler Delerio • Jyelin Delistrat • Henry Dukat • Jackson Quinn Hansel
Emi Garrett • Georger-Rob • Logan George • Brady Violan Hansen
Aaron Lucile Harris • Ianmeal Christian Harris • Stella Corley Hasley
Mara Harry Howard • Wesley David Jacobs • Nick John • Classic Kaiserman
Elie Phillip Kelzarev • Neal P. Kindly • Reid Card Kote
Tara Anthony Rachael Krager • Logan Delaz • Love • Conner Barton Magoo
Skyler Elizabeth Rosemadow McElhiney • Minerva Paulette
Lilly Perry-Flores • Attila Grace Powers • Tommie Jake Radcliffe
Henry Schwinn • Benjamin Nico Stewart-Zabel • Marlon Tabadoe
Arielle Tingue • Eamon Turner • Jordan Wilson

Congratulations 2020 Graduates!

Joshua Audette
University of Vermont
Congratulations! Love, Mom, Nick, and Marketa

Sami Banat
Roseville Area High School
Proud of you and all you do.

Luci Black
Central High School
Lucie, You’re a force to be reckoned with. There’s always room for another seat at the table here. I’m proud of you, lady. go girl!

James Carlson
Central High School
We are proud of you and wish you exciting discoveries at St. Olaf and beyond.
With love, Mom and Dad

Juliana Dokas
St. Olaf College
We are so proud of you, Juliana! Love, Mom and Dad

Kiersten Howatt
Como Park Senior High School
Congratulations, Kiersten! We love you! You’ve gotta do great!

Nicholas Jacobsen
Como Park Senior High School
Congratulations, Nick! We love you, and we wish you all the best in your future adventures! Love, Horn, Dad, and Sister

Ali Granovsky
Roseville Area High School
Congrats Ali! We are so proud of all of your accomplishments. Your future is bright. Better get some shades!

Nathan Kolin
O’Gara High School
Good luck at Fordham Nate!

Vlad Riley
Central High School
Graduating is great and all...but I am still worried about your future, Vladimir. For the last time jeans are NOT loungewear. Stay

Clara Sorensen
Great River School
We are so proud of what you accomplished in high school and can’t wait to see what you’ll accomplish at Smith.
Love Dad, Mom, Nick & Rosie

Maddy Schilling
Murray Middle School
We love you Maddy! “Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the wind longs to play in your hair!”

Charles Rogers
Creston Durham Hall
We’re proud of your academic excellence and sportsmanship qualities. Go with confidence. Success is within you! Good luck at Colorado U!

Pete Fortier
Montevalle Academy
Congratulations Peter! We are so proud of you! We wish you the best at St. Olaf College next year.
Love, Mom, Dauphine & Claire
Como High student plumbs the news for art theme

By Eric Erickson

Como Park High School junior Kashia Vang recently completed a piece of artwork that illustrates some major news events—and has gained her some critical praise.

Vang’s piece of art incorporates the global pandemic, death of George Floyd and civil unrest—a work that she shared with her teachers and that, in turn, led to widespread viewing in virtual classrooms and positive postings on social media.

“No matter how hard everything may seem, just know that the good outweighs the bad,” Kashia says in describing the message of her drawing. “No matter what color or race you are, we are all humans, we are in this together. Always love and show kindness. Here is a drawing I made to represent all of us together.”

In other Como Park High news

The end of the 2019-2020 school year marked the retirement of eight longtime Como staff members and the departure of Principal Stacy Thieren-Collins who will become principal at Richfield High School.

After two years as Como’s principal, preceded by five years at Murray Middle School’s principal, Thieren-Collins is leaving the St. Paul Public Schools. During her tenure in St. Paul Public Schools, she has provided the community dedicated and organized leadership. But she said she now feels a need, for personal reasons, to change.

As the July Bugle went to press, St. Paul School District Superintendent Joe Gothard announced that Kirk Morris will become Como Park High’s new principal, starting for the 2020-21 academic year. Morris has been a classroom teacher, coach, assistant principal and most recently the principal for Benjamin E. Mays IB World School in St. Paul.

Meanwhile, the Como staff members who retired at the conclusion of the school year had a combined 229 years of service in education. Each retiree has positively influenced countless students with their commitment, diligence and talent. The retirees are:

Kathy Kahn—Kahn was a teacher for 37 years, including the past 30 years as a biology instructor at Como.

MaryClare Bade—Bade was a health teacher at Como for the past 34½ years. She spent a total of 36 years in education.

Carole Whitney—Whitney provided passionate service as Como Park’s choir director and theater director for 26 years.

Lori Belair—Belair spent 26 years with the St. Paul Public Schools. She taught family and consumer sciences at Como since 2010.

Dave Stahlman—Stahlman was a social studies teacher at Como for 25 years.

Walt Lofquist—Lofquist was a math teacher at Como for 20 years, with 21 total years in St. Paul.

Joy Fausone—Fausone cheerfully worked in the Como cafeteria for 30 years.

Ruth McPhillips—McPhillips was an educational assistant for 28 years, with four years at Como.

Eric Erickson is a social studies teacher at Como Park High School and a regular contributor to the Bugle.

Got an idea for a commentary? Submit it to: editor@parkbugle.org
JULY 2020  ■  PARK BUGLE

Combs a finalist for Minnesota Teacher of the Year

By Scott Carlson

From the time he was a young­
ster, DeWayne Combs knew he
would become a teacher.

Staring as a camp counselor
age 14, Combs has continually
worked with kids, most of those
years in coaching and as a physi­
cal education teacher.

Now, 29 years into his career
the St. Paul Public Schools,
Combs is one of 10 finalists for
2020 Minnesota Teacher of the
Year. He was selected from a
group of 36 semifinalists. (For
further information go to https://
edmn.gov/2QgWx.

The following is a Q and A
session with Combs. Education
Minnesota is expected to an­
nounce the 2020 Teacher of the
Year later this summer.

Q: For how long—and at what
schools—have you worked as
an educator in Saint Paul?

A: I have been an employee of
Saint Paul Public Schools for 29
years. I started on May 11, 1991. I
worked for 10 years at Saint Paul
Secondary ALC (Alternative
Learning Center) as a physical ed­
ucation teacher and activities coor­
dinator. I worked 10 years at Battle
Creek Middle School, four years at
Ramsey Middle School and four
years at Johnson Senior High as
a physical education teacher and
athletics director. Recently, I’ve
been at Murray Middle School as
a physical education teacher.

Q: Why did you want to be­
come a teacher?

A: Working with kids has been
my calling. Working with kids is
the only work I have ever done.
I started as a day camp counsel­
or at the age of 14. I continued
to work with kids as a referee or
camp counselor. I have
always known I would be a phys­i
cal education teacher since I was
very young.

Q: What’s the best part of your
job?

A: The kids, I look forward to
each and every day to making
a difference in the lives of the
learners that I teach. They are a
big part of my success as a teacher.
The relationships that I have built
over the last 29 years continue to
this day.

Q: What’s the biggest challenge?

A: The number of kids that I see.
Two hundred kids a day and
tomorrow a different 200.
Four hundred kids every two
days. I know all of their names
and I have a personal relation­
ship with each and every one
of them. Right now, I can meet
their energy. As I age, I have
wonderings.

Q: What is the most important
thing your students have taught
you?

A: The students have taught me
patience. They have also taught
me to meet them where they are
and design individual educa­
tional learning plans to fit their
needs, instead of getting them to
do things that fit the teacher.

Q: If you weren’t a teacher, what
profession would you choose?

A: There isn’t any other job or
profession for me. I have been put
on this earth to be a teacher and
that is all I have ever known. It is
the only job that suits me. I also
like the summer off.

Q: What does being nominat­
ed for Minnesota Teacher of the
Year mean to you?

A: At first, it was no big deal.
I have gotten a lot of attention
since the announcement of my
nomination. I really do not
get for extrinsic rewards. But it
does feel good after 29 years of
hard work to be considered for
an award.

Scott Carlson is managing editor
of the Bugle.

Jennings Community School
has new executive director

It is the changing of the guard
at Jennings Community School
in south St. Anthony Park.

Krissy Wright on July 1 be­
comes the school’s new execu­
tive director, succeeding Bill
Zim­niewicz, who is retiring on June
30 after 14 years at the helm.

Wright worked at Academic
Arts High School for seven years
as a special education teacher and
evocational director before leav­ing
the school at the end of the 2016­
17 school year. She then worked for
a year providing professional devel­
opment to school teams through­
out the country before joining the
Jennings team as an advisor.

Wright graduated with a B.A.
in psychology from Minnesota
State University-Mankato. She
then worked for five years with
patients at the security hospital in
St. Peter, Minn., before return­ing
to school to earn her teach­ing
license in special education at
Benilde-St. Margaret’s University.
While completing her course work
for her teaching license, Krissy
vol­unteered at Jennings for a year.

Zimniewicz began his career at
Jennings Community School
back in 2006 as executive direc­
tor. He began his career teaching
in 1983 at a Native American Al­
ternative School after receiving
his bachelor’s degree in second­
education from the University
of Minnesota and his master’s
degree in teacher leadership.

During his career, Bill found­
ed the South St. Paul Area
Alternative Learning Center and
River Heights Charter School (now
known as Academic Arts High
School). Bill also has served as
president of Minnesota Associa­
tion of Alternative Programs and
has been a longtime advocate for
student centered learning and
democratic schools.

Jennings Community School,
2455 University Ave. W., is a
charter school serving seventh
to 12th grade students. It has an
approximate 15-to­
1 student to teacher ratio and
emphasizes individual based
instruction.


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When the waters of life are rough, stick to
your roots, and have a good estate plan!
Family models City Space Walk scavenger hunt

By Sarah CR Clark

On what felt like the umpteenth day of Gov. Tim Walz’s stay-at-home order, Bill Prouty posted a video on the St. Anthony Park Neighbors Facebook page introducing a free, kid-friendly activity created by his family.

“We built a little neighborhood science project, the SAP City Space Walk,” he stated. “It is hard to imagine just how huge and spread out our solar system is, so we made a scale model in our neighborhood that you can walk through.”

The Prouty Drajkó family describes their Space Walk as “a science project, a scavenger hunt, street art and a neighborhood experiment.” Participants begin their journey at the Sun, located on Knapp Street in front of the elementary school, and proceed to locate each planet as one’s smart phone directs.

Lilli Prouty, a St. Anthony Park Elementary second-grade student, advises in the video, “Walking between the inner planets only takes a few minutes, but you might want a bike to travel beyond Jupiter.”

Bill noted, “Picking a scale (for the solar system) was a little tricky. Too big and you end up in Stillwater; too small, and all the planets end up the size of grains of sand.” In the Space Walk’s final scale, Pluto is in Como Park and Earth is the size of a green pea.

The family’s idea for the Space Walk project came from a visit to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. Bill explained, “Last summer, Julianna and I took a trip to Washington, D.C., to celebrate her becoming an American citizen.” (Julianna, Bill’s wife is a native of Hungary.) While there, they visited a similar scale model of the solar system called “Voyage,” which spans the length of the National Mall.

“It really demonstrated to me how vast our solar system is in a way that books and multimedia can’t,” Bill said. “Ever since that trip to the Capitol (in Washington, D.C.) I’ve wanted to install a similar model somewhere in Minnesota. The pandemic gave us an excuse to work on a family science project.”

Lilli participated in the family’s science project, designing the signs and zip-tying them to posts. She also helped write the script for the video and wore her old Halloween costume as an astronaut for recording. She was most surprised to learn that Pluto takes 248 years to orbit the sun.

“We hope the project checks a few boxes for our neighbors during the pandemic,” Bill said, noting that it is free, fun for all ages, educational and helps get people outside and moving. The Space Walk scavenger hunt will continue through the summer.

Bill concluded, “On the sign for Earth we excerpted one of my favorite quotes that celebrates our connectedness in this moment of social distancing:

“Look again at that dot. That’s here. That’s home. That’s us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives . . .”


Lilli Prouty, a second grader, points the way on her family’s Space Walk scavenger hunt. Photo by Julianna Drajkó.
MBanda wins scholarship

The St. Anthony Park Community Foundation recently awarded its first Jon Schumacher Scholarship Award to John MBanda, a former Murray Middle School student and part of the environmental education class.

MBanda plans to take time off to visit Rwanda, his homeland, before beginning studies at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Ore. The scholarship is named after Schumacher, the longtime former executive director of the SAP Community Foundation.

Harwell named student of the year

Chavarious “Biggs” Harwell, a student at Jennings Community School, was awarded the Student of the Year award by the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs.

Harwell’s accomplishments include serving on his school’s board of directors, attending classes at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, becoming a published writer, directing and producing two documentary films and giving a presentation at a state educational conference in Duluth.

Cleaning up Como Lake

The Como Community Council has set up DIY (do-it-yourself) kits for people interested in pulling trash from the water and shoreline at Como Lake. District 10 will provide the gear: masks, grabbers, gloves, buckets, bags, rakes and advice on how to clean up correctly.

Sign up for the summer’s first do-it-yourself version of the Como Lake Clean-Up, letting District 10 know how many people will be in your cleaning party and what gear you want. Reserve your DIY kit at: www.district10comopark.org/lake_clean_up.html.

Two retire from SAP Area Seniors board

St. Anthony Park Area Seniors announced that Katherine Eklund and Gordon Murdock retired from its board of directors at the end of June. Eklund, a St. Anthony Park resident, has volunteered with St. Anthony Park Area Seniors since 2014 when she joined the organization’s board. She has rotated off the board after serving the maximum six consecutive years. She served on several committees during that time and since 2016 has been board secretary.

Murdock, a St. Anthony Park resident, also served a maximum six consecutive years on the board. During that time, he was on the strategic planning and finance committees.

Tuesday Scholars go virtual

James Stewart, a Macalester College emeritus professor of history, will discuss virtually “The Endless Civil War” at 1 p.m. on July 14 and 21 as part of the Roseville Library’s Tuesday Scholars program.

Stewart, a scholar of the abolitionist movement, will discuss the ongoing legacy of our nation’s most divisive conflict and how it continues to affect our lives today. These are online programs offered remotely using Zoom communication software and you must register in advance for the event at https://rclreads.bibliocommons.com/events. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. For further information, call the Library at 651-724-6001.

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Common grackle. Photo by Linda Krueger.

All about those dangled grackles!

Here in Minnesota, we have a black bird called the common grackle. But it’s ever others name too, some not fit to mention in a family newspaper.

It used to be called the crow blackbird because it’s bigger than most other blackbirds. It was also known as the purple grackle. That sound like a superhero name to me.

The most favorite name I heard was that used by an old timer in West St. Paul. One win- ter morning a few years ago, some friends and I were doing a bird count. As we walked by the old timer with our binoculars hanging around our necks, he told us about the birds he’d been having at his feeders.

“I like the cardinals and the chickadees and the other nice birds, but they damn Grackles!” he exclaimed. “How can I get rid of them damn Grackles?”

The short answer: There is no easy way as they can be very per- sistent birds. The common grack- le is the size of a mourning dove, about a foot long from tip of beak to tip of tail. It has a long, for- midable bill that comes straight off the face with no forehead. The tail is long, keel-shaped, straight and stiff.

The adult bird has a male-viol- ent yellow eye. In fact, noted author Pete Dunne declares that the grackle’s “expression is nefar- ious.” It’s definitely a bird with an attitude. Dunne adds that it “stalks more than it walks” and moves with “a haughty demeanor,” dominating other birds.

Adult males have iridescent plumage about their heads and necks that can appear green, blue or purple, depending on the viewing angle. The wings and bel- ly are brownish or bronzed, but in poor light, or at a distance, the entire bird just looks black.

Females are smaller and less iridescent. Young birds of both sexes are sooty brown with brown eyes and lack any iridescence.

Grackles eat in trees in which to nest, but they are birds of the open country. They spend their days in pastures, fields, corn- fields, plowed fields, suburban lawns, city parks, manors, open woodlands and swamps. But they avoid the interiors of extensive, dense, mature woodlands.

Grackles nest in small, loose colonies of 20 to 30 pairs in de- ciduous and coniferous trees up to 60 feet above ground. But they can also be found nesting in shrubs, roadside plantings, natural cavities, on ledges, even in cattail marshes, from one to three feet above the water. The nests are loose, bulky structures of weed stalks, grasses and debris, sometimes reinforced with mud on the inside. Then lined with grasses, feathers and fine debris.

They often roost and feed in tremendous aggregations with other blackbirds, which can total more than 100 birds. Grackles leave the roost at first light and re- turn at sunset, flying in long lin- ear flocks reaching miles in length that Dunne says are reminiscent of smoke on the horizon. They also do that turning and wheel- ing in unison in a maneuver that is common to starlings.

Winter roosts in southern states can reach up to several mil- lion birds that include starlings and other blackbirds.

The grackle demonstrates a fairly high level of intelligence. Arthur C. Bent, an ornithologist from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, tells of a letter he re- ceived describing a grackle work- ing on a hard crust of bread in a city park in Washington, D.C. The bird was having no luck pecking at the bread, so it picked it up in its bill, and flew a short distance to a bird bath set into the ground by a hydrant. There was already a pigeon soaking in the water and the grackle didn’t want to share its find with the larger bird. So, it walked into the bath, turned its back on the pigeon, dropped the crust into the wa- ter, waited a few seconds, took it out, hopped across the sidewalk, and gulped down its prize. The pigeon watched curiously.

Grackles have a varied diet, including insects, crustaceans, invertebrates, fish, small verte- brates, bird eggs, nestlings, fruit, grains, grass, seeds and acorns. A grackle’s bill is very strong. They don’t poke at acorns; they crush them, cracking them open at the back of their bills.

My friend George farms near Rochester. He says grack- les go down a row of sprouting corn plants, pulling up the short stalks. My reading suggests the birds may be looking for corn borer larva wrapped around the roots. But in reducing the corn borer threat, the birds are damaging the corn crop. I know George considers them those dangled Grackles!

PARK BUGLE • JULY 2020
months from now they won't be doing anything.”

Eagles and his wife have pledged new, ongoing financial donations to a couple of community organizations working in the Midway and in north Minneapolis. He believes broad change will only happen when underlying economic inequality is addressed.

“How do we support building more wealth in neighborhoods that don’t have any, and don’t have any because of policies and actions we have been taking for years?” Eagles asked.

Eagles is working with a group to create a real estate investment cooperative in the Midway to keep rent affordable for small local businesses, including black-owned businesses. The idea for a real estate co-op preceded Floyd's death, but it’s gained momentum as people look for new ways to support low-income neighborhoods and entrepreneurs of color.

Johnston, for example, said before Floyd she might not have been aware of discrimination in the traditional police department for something else. Now instead of being “dismissive and pessimistic” about defunding police, she and her 20-something friends are embracing the idea.

“I’m entering into conversations and finding out that there really are other options,” Johnston said. “If more people wrapped their heads around it we could have a future where the city doesn’t spend most of its budget on the police and instead spends more on mental health counselors and social workers and other people who might respond to crisis in a way that helps everyone. It now seems very realistic.”

Long-term effects from the protests have yet to be seen, but many people said that Floyd’s killing marks a turning point, coming as it has on the heels of COVID-19 that had already caused disproportionate suffering in low-income communities of color.

“It seems to be the straw that broke the camel's back in many ways,” said Scott Simmons, a Lutheran (ELCA) pastor who chairs of District Council 12’s equity committee. “This has heightened our awareness that something is moving and we need to pay attention.”

Simmons says he has invited more than a dozen leaders from congregations and religious organizations in the broad Saint Anthony Park neighborhood to gather on ongoing Zoom calls to talk about possible next steps.

“What I’m intending is not just one conversation or event, but an ongoing practice to stay open to what’s emerging out there,” Simmons said. “How do we create that environment where people who have voices that aren’t being heard are held up and the rest of us can step back with humility and listen?”

The equity committee has facilitated several new efforts in recent years, including weekly donations of fresh summer produce from the Saint Anthony Park Community Garden to the nearby Seal Hi-Rise public housing apartments. Simmons says he hopes it can do more.

As Huett-Slevetoff reopens Healing Elements, she says she also is looking for meaning-ful next steps. In the last weeks, she’s immersed herself in learning more about the history of racism—listening to podcasts, reading articles and having conversations with new people. She wants to see her business expand its mission to apply itself to healing racial injustice.

“I'd like to welcome in some new practitioners who could help facilitate this greater educational and awareness piece around racism and social justice,” she said.

One person Huett-Slevetoff has been talking to is Rosie Blanc, a Haitian-American life coach who lives less than a mile away on Como Avenue.

Until this spring, Blanc worked at Lutheran Social Services supporting pregnant teens and youth experiencing homelessness, work that directly addressed the mental health and economic wounds of long-term racism and poverty.

She left to start her own business, Transformative Rose, which uses deep breathing and meditation to help clients work through trauma. Blanc had taken classes at Healing Elements and now she and Huett-Slevetoff are exploring a staff training and a possible community conversation around racism.

Blanc, who came to St. Paul from Haiti with her family when she was 4 years old, was hit hard by Floyd’s killing. She couldn’t bring herself to watch the entire video of his death.

“As a black woman, it’s hard for me to look at black men being killed,” she said. In the past, she has scoured past stories about police killings “because it hurt so much. I didn’t know if I could walk around and stay sane after watching it. It can awaken that sense of justice—this is wrong—and that can lead to action. Or, it can just shut you down.”

This time, Blanc’s pain is leading to action. “Our community is going to need a lot of healing after this,” she said. She said people outside black communities seem largely unaware of discrimination and racism. “There is a choice that’s made to not look and not see,” she said. “Why is that?”

Blanc’s hope is that in the weeks ahead she can help facilitate the personal transformations that can plant seeds for bigger social change.

Maja Beckstrom is a journalist/writer who lives in St. Anthony Park.
Dona Clark

Dona Clark, 96, died June 3, 2020, from complications of COVID-19. Dona grew up in St. Anthony Park where her pleasant memories included a large extended family, riding lessons in the Hippodrome on the State Fairgrounds and streetcar rides to wherever she needed to go.

Dona graduated from Murray High School, then earned her degree in medical technology from Fairgrounds and streetcar rides to Anthony Park where her pleasant memories included a large extended family, riding lessons in the Hippodrome on the State Fairgrounds and streetcar rides to wherever she needed to go.

Dona graduated from Murray High School, then earned a degree in medical technology from the University of Minnesota. In a lab at the U of M, she met Robert Clark, her future husband, who was a medical student at the time. She worked briefly as a chemist at the Food and Drug Administration.

Dona and Bob married in 1946 and had five children. They lived in a WWII barracks in general, east of Como Park, near the U of M, then moved to Bloomington briefly, then Golden Valley for 28 years and lastly Bloomington for 30 years in retirement.

During her life, Dona was a volunteer in many activities. They included Cub Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Junior Great Books Leader, Planned Parenthood, DFL and League of Women Voters. In the early 1970s, Dona returned to the U of M and earned a master’s degree in counseling psychology. Afterwards, she worked many years as a marriage and family counselor.

In retirement, Dona continued to volunteer helping seniors complete their taxes, loved singing and entertaining family and friends and attending plays. She loved all things Jane Austen.

There was no skill, task or problem Dona wouldn’t undertake. She sewed most of her own clothes and even stitched together a screen house. She also became an accomplished amateur carpenter, designing and building much of the family lake cabin in, where the family spent many happy times together.

Dona was preceded by her parents, Helga and John Simpson, her husband Dr. Robert Clark, and her daughter, Margetta (Peggy) Cross. She is survived by four children: Anne Collins (John), James Clark (Kristy), Alice Coonley (Martin), Robert Clark (Joan) and six-in-law Stephen Cross; 11 grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren. A celebration of life will be held at a later date to celebrate Jan’s life. Memorials preferred to Como Park Conservancy.

Joyce DeMartino

Joyce Elaine DeMartino, 90, of Falcon Heights, died June 6, 2020. Joyce was a longtime member of and volunteer at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church.

Preceded in death by husband Marvin, Joyce is survived by her sons, Thomas (Jane) and Don and Cheryl; six grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; and one great-grandchild; great-grandchildren; and Loretta Langlo (Lou) and Mick Pederson (Lenny).

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated June 12 at St. Rose of Lima with interment at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. Memoirs preferred to New Harmony Care Center.

Joyce Kray

Joyce M. Kray, 75, died June 12, 2020. She was preceded in death by her parents George and Marie Edson and son Edward.

Joyce is survived by her husband of 54 years, Donald; children, Glenn (Gina), David (Carly), Thomas and Lorraine (David) Stafford; 16 grandchildren; and siblings, Daniel (Joanne) Edson, Joan (Jerome) Pieper, Gale Nelson, David (Shari) Edson and Linda (Dallas) Schulte.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated June 23 at Maternity of Mary Catholic Church.

Jean Magnuson

Jean Rosalie Magnuson was born March 11, 1935 and died May 16, 2020. She was preceded in death by many friends from Murray High School where she was the homecoming queen for the class of 1953 and was actively involved. She attended the University of Minnesota and taught at Roseville schools and schools on the east side of St. Paul.

Jean was a wonderful wife and mother and a dedicated teacher for students with Disabilities. She loved God, her extended family, her community and her church.

Family members said Jean battled dementia and then COVID-19 like she lived her life: with hope, faith, grace and love.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 74 years, Rod Magnussen, and parents Margarette and Pat Gallagher. She is survived by her daughter Daniel (Debby) Magnuson, Laurie (Bill) Hamen, Kristin Magnuson and Beth (Michael) Dempsey; 11 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; and sister-in-law Marian (Terry) Paige.

Jean’s funeral service was live-streamed May 20. Memorials can be made in Jean’s name to organizations that assist people with disabilities or for healthcare workers serving those with COVID-19.

Harriet Marks

Harriet L. Marks, 96, died June 1, 2020. She was preceded in death by husband Ezra and daughter Pamela; her parents William and Agnes Rote; siblings Edna Peter, Flo, Zoe, Elmer, Edgar, William, John and Ester Rote. She is survived by her son Alan H. Marks and sister Doris VanBusch.

Harriet’s funeral was held June 5 at Emmaus Lutheran Church, where she was a longtime member and church librarian. Memorials preferred to the church. Interment was at Roselawn Cemetery.

Raymond Pitzl

Raymond Anthony Pitzl, 95, World War II U.S. Navy veteran, died April 25, 2020. He was retired from Shaw Lumber Company. Ray grew up in the Frogtown area of St. Paul. He traveled the world on the Navy battleship Missouri during World War II and took part in many battles in the Pacific Ocean.

Due to a change from the service, Ray met and married his wife, Mary Ellen, in 1951. In 1960 Ray’s family moved to Sheldon Street near Como Park, where he lived until 1979 when he purchased a condo in Roseville after his wife’s death.

They raised their own until August of 2018. After a brief stay at Cherrywood Estates, he moved to New Perspectives, both in Roseville.

Ray belonged to the Roseville VFW, where he served as commander and was part of the color guard.

Raymond was preceded in death by his parents Stephen and Anna Pirzl, wife Mary Ellen, son- son-in-law Morris Krueger, brother Frances Pirzl (Mizie), six sisters, a brother-in-law and two sisters-in-law.

Ray is survived by son Stephen (Joe) Pirzl and Jane Krueger, four grandchildren, four great-grandchildren; special friend Marianne Keuprath, son-in-law Richard Stock, Rusty Pudas.

Due to the current restrictions, a private Mass will be held at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Roseville.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Mary Schmidt

Mary Schmidt, 89, died March 30, 2020. Margaret Mary Ryan was born to Donald and Eileen Ryan on March 8, 1931; born and raised in Brainerd. She married Donald Schmidt in 1951 and settled in Como Park, where she raised her children, Michael, Richard, Susan, Wally and Karen.

Mary attended at St. Andrew's and Maternity of Mary schools where she became a second grade institution.

Mary is survived by all seven children, Mark, Molly, Terry, Tim, Dick, Ellen and Zaida; and 11 great-grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She is preceded by, among others, her husband Donald. Her funeral will be held at a later date.

Memorials may be sent to Birthright of Brainerd, 401 W. Laurel St., Suite B, Brainerd, MN 56401, or to Maternity of Mary/ St. Andrew’s Catholic School, 592 W. Arlington Ave., St. Paul, MN 55107 for literacy programming.

Orrin Slind

Orrin Lee Slind, 91, died May 17, 2020, shipping free of earthly constraints on Syttende Mai (Norwegian Independence Day). Lee was born Aug. 3, 1928, in Minneapolis, to Dorothy and Orrin Cornelius Slind.

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Girls Soccer

The Cougars had a historic season winning the St. Paul City Conference championship for the first time since 2005. In the playoffs, Como advanced to the Section 4AAA semifinals and finished the year with an overall record of 12-4-1.

The key moment of the season occurred on the Cougars’ home turf versus the defending city champs from Central. After falling behind 1-0 early in the first half, Como rallied with two first-half goals of its own and played with poise and control in the second half to notch the critical victory.

With the Cougars undefeated record in the conference, award recognition was abundant. Players earning all-conference honorable mention were sophomore Mariana Kanu and juniors Htee Wah Paw and Olivia Barnes. All-conference selections included junior Abesanna Armenta and seniors Diana Rodriguez, Tina Million, Ree Bar Htoo and Shar Too.

Volleyball

Como volleyball had a resurgence in 2019 with the varsity improving its record by eight games, finishing 13-8 for the season. The Cougars’ 4-4 conference record was good for a third-place finish.

Season highlights included a thrilling five-set victory over Central in front of an energetic home crowd, and an eight-match winning streak during the second half of the season. Senior setter Anisa Smith and junior outside hitter Hannah Hausman were recognized as all-conference. Senior middle hitter Carter Brown received honorable mention.

Girls Basketball

The long, cold winter sports season had plenty of hot nights in the Como High gym as the energy from the Cougar girls basketball team came streaming off the floor. Fans were thrilled by the spirited play of five starting sophomores and a combination of senior leadership and even more youth coming off the bench.

The Cougars’ dominance of the City conference continued as their St. Paul City winning streak dating back to 2015 reached 62 straight games. In the process, the Cougars secured a sixth straight conference championship. With a hard-fought victory over Minneapolis South in the traditional Twin Cities Championship game, Como also attained its sixth straight Twin City Title.

The Section 4AAA play-offs presented an opportunity and challenge for the young Cougars. The chance to reach the state tournament for the second time in program history was in sight. But to achieve that, the Cougars would need two upsets in a difficult tournament to reach the state tourney.

As the No. 3 seed, Como cruised in the quarterfinals before it faced No. 2 seed St. Croix Lutheran in the semifinals. A gritty 62-58 Cougar win set up a Section 4AAA championship game in early March against No. 1 seed Simley. The Spartans were older, bigger and stronger with four starting seniors and earned the win.

The runner-up medals didn’t fulfill the Cougars’ dreams. But their runner-up finish may very well serve as the inspiration and motivation for individual summer workouts in order to reach the next level in 2021.

Wrestling

The Cougar wrestling squad entered the 2019-2020 winter season as the defending city champions. While the matches among St. Paul foes were closely contested as usual, the results tipped the other way in team competition with losses at the margins leaving the Cougars tied for fourth place.

However, wrestling is a unique sport where individual competition exists alongside the team format. Section tournaments for wrestling include brackets by individual weight class, with the top two finishers qualifying for the state meet at the Xcel Energy Center.

Nor one, but two Como High Cougars clutched their way through Section 4A to claim a spot at state. Junior Bleah Paw qualified for state in the 113 lb. division. Junior Sully Lucy qualified for state in the 195 lb. division. With several other returning lettermen, the future of Cougar wrestling still looks strong.

Coming this fall

Students, coaches, parents and the entire high school sports commu- nity are hopeful the 2020 fall sports season commences with practices on Aug. 17, as scheduled, and COVID-19 is under control. Only time will tell.

Eric Erickson is a social studies teacher at Como Park High School and a longtime coach of school and youth sports in St. Paul.