Pastor Victoria Wilgocki leads worship over Zoom in the sanctuary at Saint Anthony Park United Church of Christ. Photo by Maja Beckstrom.
District 10 Community Council

An uptick in crime

Crime in the Como area is up in almost every category in the first six months of 2020 compared with the same period in 2019, according to city statistics.

Residents, visitors and businesses reported 463 crimes in District 10 from January to June, a 17.2 percent increase from crimes reported in the same six-month period of 2019. That is in line with crime in Saint Paul as a whole, which increased by 16.8 percent from 2019 to 2020, according to preliminary reports compiled by police in the city’s Crime Incident Report Dataset.

Among the more disturbing trends:

- Confirmed reports of gunshot increases from 10 in 2019 to 32 in 2020; this year’s number is more than twice the previous 5-year average.
- Robberies increased from 6 in 2019 to 20 in 2020; this year’s number is almost four times the previous 5-year average.
- Domestic assaults increased by more than a third, from 13 to 18 in the six-month period.
- Theft increased 11.1 percent overall, driven by a 40.5 percent increase in stolen vehicles, and a 17.2 percent increase in vehicle break-ins. Vehicle break-ins, in fact, have now more than doubled from three years ago.
- Burglaries increased 18.9 percent in total; cases in which burglars forced their way into a home, garage or business nearly doubled from 11 to 21.
- Theft, robberies, vandalism, and gunshots are at their highest levels in the six years for which statistics are readily available.

The only major category where reported crimes decreased was narcotics arrests, which fell from 26 to 16.

Meanwhile, however the neighborhood continues to have the third-lowest crime rate in Saint Paul, a ranking that has not changed. Only Highland and MacAlester-Groveland have lower crime rates.

Special election set in South Como, Energy Park

Community members in South Como or Energy Park can vote between Sept. 8 and 15 in a special election to fill a vacancy on the District 10 board. Residents can vote absentee in two ways:

- You can vote online by requesting a ballot before noon on Tuesday, Sept. 15. District 10 will email confirmed reports of gunshots are at their highest levels in the six years for which statistics are readily available.

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- You can vote by mail; the District 10 office must receive your paper ballot no later than Tuesday, Sept. 15, at 5 p.m.
- To request a ballot: Fill out the form at www.district10comopark.org/ballot.html. Or, call the district office at 651-644-3889.
- Who can vote: All residents age 16 or older who live in Sub-District 4 are eligible to vote. So are authorized representatives from a business or nonprofit organization with a physical location in Sub-District 4. The Sub-District 4 boundaries are Dale Street on the east, Snelling Avenue on the west, and the two sets of BNSF railroad tracks on the north and south.

Become a candidate

Community members in Sub-District 4 can file as candidates to join the board by filling out the form at www.district10comopark.org/d0 election.html. The winning candidate will serve until April 2021, filling the remainder of the term left vacant by Bob Jacobson, who is moving out of District 10.

The filing deadline is Monday, Sept. 7.

Call or link into D10 Meetings

Pandemics or not, renters, homeowners and other community members are always welcome to participate in District 10 board and committee meetings. Join either by video conference or by phone.

To obtain links, phone numbers, or other access information, send a request by email to district10@district10comopark.org. Or, call 651-644-3889. Upcoming meetings:

- Neighborhood Relations: Tuesday, Sept. 1
- Land Use: Wednesday, Sept. 2
- Environment: Wednesday, Sept. 9
- Board meeting: Tuesday, Sept. 15

All meetings begin at 7 p.m.

Submitted by Michael Kachna, District 10 Community Council executive director.

District 12 Community Council

Board Election Candidate Form 2020-21

Elected/appointed delegates or alternates to the St. Anthony Park Community Council serve as a member of its Board of Directors which is responsible for governing the organization. Voting will be available online to maintain safety according to state shelter-in-place guidelines.

Candidates are asked, among other things, to tell voters something about themselves, what makes them a good candidate and how they will help foster the future of St. Anthony Park. For more information, go to sapcc.org/election.

Community Zoom-gagement series

The Community Council is hosting a series of virtual meetings— the final two will be held on two Tuesdays in September: Sept. 8 and Sept. 22. There will be afternoons and evening time slots on both days from 12 to 1 p.m. and 6 to 7 p.m. These will be informal and open-ended to get feedback from community members on a range of topics.

Top of the list is anti-racism and equity work. But any and all ideas and questions are welcome. These meetings will be over Zoom. Email emily@sapcc.org for further information.

SAPCC September meeting dates

Land Use Committee: Thurs., Sept. 3, 7 to 9 p.m.
SAPCC Board Meetings: Thurs., Sept. 10, 7 to 9 p.m.
Environment Committee: Wednesday, Sept. 23, 7 to 9 p.m.
Equity Committee: Monday, Sept. 28, 5:30 to 7 p.m.
Transportation Committee: Tuesday, Sept. 29, 7 to 9 p.m.

Meetings subject to change.

Submitted by District 12.

Front Avenue Pottery Pop-Up!

Outdoor Back Yard Pottery Exhibit & sale.
A socially distanced, masked event.

Fri., Sept. 11 noon-7
Sat., Sept. 12 10-5
Sun., Sept. 13 10-5

301 Front Ave. E N St. Paul, MN 55101
info@frontavenuepottery.com/859-294-6126

Make a Difference!

Join the SAPCC Board.

The St. Anthony Park Community Council is now accepting candidate applications for new board members to fill vacant seats for the 21/22 term. If you are a SAP resident, share in a collective vision of unity, care, and inclusion, and want to make a difference in your community, now is the time to join! Application deadline is 9/21.

BIPOC, LGBTQ+ folks, people with different abilities, renters, and folks of all ethnic backgrounds are encouraged to apply. The Board should reflect the community it serves.

Visit sapcc.org/candidate or pick up an application at the Hampden Park Co-op.
Lauderdale shifts fire service to St. Paul

By Anne Holzman

The city of Lauderdale has negotiated a fire services agreement with the St. Paul Fire Department and has, as of July 30, stopped routing calls from within its municipal limits to Falcon Heights. Lauderdale was already receiving ambulance and emergency medical services from St. Paul. At Lauderdale’s June 23 City Council meeting, Mayor Mary Gustafson noted that since December 2019, the Falcon Heights fire department has been receiving assistance with training and administration from Roseville and has been recruiting more firefighters. She said the department underwent an audit published in May.

Anne Holzman, a former St. Anthony Park resident, is a regular freelance contributor to the Bugle.

Churches from p. 1

couldn’t be held as members drove by his house in a parade of cars. The popular vacation Bible school was canceled. There is no choir or congregational singing.

Butkowski said Lauderdale would continue to remit payments to Falcon Heights as agreed through 2020 but would no longer be routing calls to them. She said the increased cost for the St. Paul service, likely around $38,000, might be covered by keeping the St. Paul Fire Department and said that the explanation had been that a volunteer fire department could not be expected to answer all calls.

“The needs of our citizens have increased in cost to go with St. Paul Fire Department service, the City Administrator Heath Gaasch reviewed concerns that the fire contract in the preceding weeks.

Asked about the expected increase in cost to go with St. Paul Fire Department service, Lauderdale City Administrator Heath Gaasch said, “We have been working hard this past year-and-a-half to rebuild our department and continue to meet the public safety needs of our community which includes Lauderdale.”

Gustafson noted that since December 2019, the Falcon Heights fire department has been receiving assistance with training and administration from Roseville and has been recruiting more firefighters. She said the department underwent an audit published in May.

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The congregation is finding other ways to stay connected. A few members delivered bologna to every member for Easter. A group meets virtually for Wednesday night Bible study. “I’m astounded at how many 80-year-olds were willing to learn how to Zoom,” Pogue said with a laugh. Another group meets one evening every week to discuss C.S. Lewis book “The Great Divorce.”

But in-person worship is perhaps the most precious. “It’s been so awesome to see each other,” Pogue said. “I’m going to do it until it snows. I just think it’s so important for us to gather and be together.”

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

Are you looking for a PCA or Homemaker? We can help!

In need of assistance with bathing, grooming, dressing, food prep or other tasks? We can help! Do you want to hire a loved one to provide personal cares for you? We can help!

Caring Professionals Homecare has staff with years of homecare experience and waiting and waiting to help you determine your needs and and the level of care you require. We are dedicated to providing quality services to our elderly and disabled and help keep their independence in the comfort of their home. Call our office today!

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By Scott Carlson

COVID-19, churches and a new people feature

As COVID-19 grinds on, infecting millions of Americans and causing more than 170,000 U.S. deaths at press time, the Bugle is continuing to chronicle how the pandemic is affecting life in our local community.

In this issue, journalist/writer Maja Beckstrom gives readers an inside look at how local churches are doing to cope with the pandemic. She chronicles how congregations are staying connected to meet their members’ spiritual needs.

Meanwhile, we also look at how local schools are gearing up for the start of the new academic year. Not surprisingly, it’s going to be “back-to-school back at home.” At least for the first few weeks, distance learning will be the primary method to carry out classes. In this issue, we have school stories from Sarah CR Clark, Eric Erekson and yours truly.

Last but not least: In this issue, we kick off a new, recurring feature I am calling, “People in Your Neighborhood.” Our first subject is Cecilia Ruesga, a St. Anthony Park sixth-grade student who is serving on the St. Anthony Park District 12 Community Council’s Transportation Committee.

These “People” features will be short profiles meant to enlighten you about people in your community and tell about their interesting activities and pursuits. If you know of someone who would make a good interview pro-file, please drop me a line at editor@parkbugle.org. And thanks in advance for your suggestions.

Bugle annual fund appeal coming

With the start of the Bugle’s new fiscal year on July 1, our board of directors is preparing for our annual, fall fundraising appeal. Now, more than ever, during these uncertain times due to COVID-19, your financial support of the Bugle is critical in keeping the newspaper vibrant and strong.

For fiscal year 2020-2021, the Bugle raised slightly more than $52,000, nearly reaching our target of $52,000.

Although we have yet to set a new fundraising goal, I know the Bugle will continue to need significant support in 2020-2021. While we are a nonprofit organization, we are very much caught up in rough economic times, relying on advertising and donations to meet our financial needs.

Time for a Change

Hope for the best and prepare for the worst: a good mantra for the start of WWII—and now again in the Trump presidency.

In both cases the future is like a centipede living in the apartment above you. There is always a bigger shoe to drop, when and where you never know. I, along with many others, wake each day wondering what blunder will be perpetrated next, what national embarrassment, what adolescent tugging over what impulsive decision will put us in danger; health or otherwise?

Unfortunately, we have two dynamics at work that may not be all that rare in the general population. But combined in a nation, they are a disaster. We have elected a narcissist and he suffers from the “Dunning-Kruger syndrome or effect, which is characterized by the inability to be aware of their incompetence or ineptitude.” Experts say that is a cognitive distortion by which a person who actually has little ability to perform an activity, thinks he has a lot. Even more than some experts.

Nearly every public appearance by Trump seems to support the above; be it on Fox News; hundreds of tweets a month; attacking the media, any and all who dissent, courts, governors, Congress, public education, science and various public and private agencies, as well as public servants—all who were hired by his administration.

These two facets of his personal being make it impossible for him to negotiate, compromise or even listen. And there is no real reason to read (even daily briefing reports) for he is his own expert.

We see this in how Trump celebrates fear, divisiveness, impulsiveness, pompousy, exaggeration and lying, self-indulgence, wealth, political theater and recognition. He lives in his false reality—permitted and promoted by a Senate—many who ran against him. Yet, he is as far from Republican principles as I am from a hole-in-one.

The most recent shoe to drop from above, a steel-toed, knee-high combat-boot, is the most harmful yet: Trump’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Losing valuable time, he denied its existence for weeks. Now, six months in and there is still no national plan to defeat the pandemic—while we approach 80,000 to 100,000 (as of July 27) new cases per day. Thus, while other

Pedestrian safety

Every year at back-to-school time, I think about all the ways we can be better community helpers. That has resonated with me since I learned how we may all look out for one another and help each other from Mrs. Austin in kindergarten at St. Anthony Park Elementary School.

And this year, while it means to return to school may be different because of COVID-19, being good community helpers never seemed more important.

It’s no secret that crossing some streets in our lovely and caring community is at times risky. Hurried cars race through intersections and rumbling trucks cause commotion at crosswalks. So, what should a pedestrian do?

This question has troubled me since kindergarten, so much so that this is not the first letter I have written on the subject. I now believe that the answer is actually quite simple: pedestrians and drivers can be on the lookout and watch each other.

First, pedestrians must not enter a crosswalk if a vehicle is so close that a driver cannot see. Minnesota’s pedestrian law also requires that drivers must stop for crossing pedestrians at marked crosswalks and at all intersections without crosswalks or stop lights.

One thing that considerably helps drivers be more aware of pedestrians is slowing down to neighborhood speed limits, many of which are now being lowered by the City of Saint Paul to make travel safer for both drivers and pedestrians. Be on the lookout for new speed limits throughout Saint Paul: 20 mph for local smaller streets and 25 mph for larger, arterial city-owned streets. County-owned streets remain at their 30 mph or sometimes higher speed limits.

You may pick up your own “20 Is Plenty” yard sign at Tim & Torni’s Speedy Market on Sept. 12 from 10 a.m. to noon or Hampden Park Co-op on Sept. 13 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. or reserve one today by emailing emily@saapc.org.

Let’s all be good community helpers, protecting the safety of St. Anthony Park’s many avid pedestrians. Our kindergarten teachers will be proud.

Cecilia Ruesga, sixth-grade student St. Anthony Park District 12 Community Council Transportation Committee

PARK BUGLE  ●  SEPTEMBER 2020

EDITORIAL

From the Desk of the Editor

Next deadline: Sept. 16, 2020

Publishing dates:

Distribution: 5 to 7 business days

The Park Bugle is a monthly nonprofit community newspaper serving St. Anthony Park, Lauderdale, Falcon Heights and Como Park. The Bugle reports and analyzes community news and promotes the exchange of ideas and opinions in these communities. The Bugle strives to promote freedom of expression, enhance the quality of life in the neighborhood communities and encourage community participation.

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Letters to p. 5

Classified advertising

651-440-8360

classified@parkbugle.org

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Cecilia Ruesga is a sixth grader and a member of the District 12
Community Council Transportation Committee. She also loves music,
including playing the flute. Photo submitted by Tara Smith.

By Scott Carlson

As a member of the St. Anthony Park Community Council’s Transportation Committee, Cecilia Ruesga is leading a safety campaign for pedestrians and motorists.

What’s extraordinary about Ruesga? Cecilia, of St. Anthony Park, is 11 years-old, perhaps the youngest person ever to serve on a District 12 committee.

Cecilia has been concerned about pedestrian safety since she was a kindergartener and found it difficult navigating a crosswalk at the intersection of Raymond and Gordon avenues. Seems that she’s seen motorists too often rumble through the intersection without regard to walkers.

So, Cecilia, who attended St. Anthony Park Elementary, wrote letters about her experience to the District 12 council. A year ago, a member of the District council, Pat Thompson, invited Cecilia to come to a transportation committee meeting to share her concerns.

After attending a couple more meetings with her mother, Tara Smith, Ruesga accepted an invitation to join the transportation committee.

Cecilia, who will be a sixth grader this fall attending Southview Middle School in Edina, said joining the committee has been an educational experience. Smith noted her daughter is learning how to participate in civic activities and move an idea forward.

“The committee was very welcoming and supporting of her (Cecilia),” Smith said.

Cecilia’s next step in her safety campaign: Participate in distributing signs that publicize lower speed limits taking effect in St. Paul residential neighborhoods. She will be helping pass out “20 Is Plenty” yard signs at Tim & Tom’s Speedy Market from 10 a.m. to noon on Sept. 12 and at the Hampden Park Co-op from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sept. 13. (For further details, see Cecilia’s letter on our editorial page in this issue.)

When Cecilia is not involved with pedestrian safety, she spends time playing the flute, guitar and piano. Her career aspiration is to become a professional actress.

Know of someone who would be a good subject for “People in your neighborhood”? Send your suggestions to Scott Carlson at editor@parkbugle.org

**Letters from p. 4**

countries have instituted national plans with maximum testing and contact tracing before it got out of hand.

More than one study shows thousands of Americans have died of COVID-19 because of Trump’s unwillingness to listen to the medical field. And there will be no change as it is simply not in his DNA. He is uneducable!

The Grinch stole Christmas. Trump stole our peace of mind and our national moral authority. Unfortunately, there are many boots yet to drop before November. Mask up and stay safe.

Jack Neely
St. Anthony Park
Como High staff and students size up distance learning

By Eric Erickson

St. Paul Public Schools will start the school year with distance learning.

Before the pandemic, students and staff at Como Park High School would be preparing to congregate in classrooms. But since COVID-19, they have had to shift to adjust for the new reality.

Science teacher Robyn Asher was relieved by the School District’s decision. “Starting the year in distance learning has relieved so much of my anxiety around safety fears for our community,” she said. “We don’t know enough about COVID-19 long-term effects and the health of students, staff and families is most important.”

Jill Wielgos, an English language learner teacher, also applauded the school district’s decision. While distance learning was “adequate at best” last spring, it’s rushed to adapt last spring, and did a pretty solid job. But I’m hopeful that we’ll have more structure in place this fall with the time to prepare. We can control some aspects of this otherwise tumultuous experience, which should bring structure to our students’ lives. Many people would agree the desire for structure is strong and forsking regular routines has been challenging for people in daily society, including those in our schools. As a junior last spring, Justine Wulff missed daily instruction and interactions since students weren’t required to be in class at designated times. She hoped to start her senior year with a synchronous schedule and at least some in-person learning.

“The decision to go all online for the beginning of the year was much to my disappointment, but I understand that the school year will have to be different than past years due to the pandemic,” Wulff said. “I’m hopeful students will still have the ability to learn.”

Initially, Delaney Register-Brown was disappointed to get the news about distance learning. She has come around to appreciate the safety aspect, but her experience with distance learning at the end of her junior year was challenging.

“I found it very hard to feel motivated. I struggled to keep social contact with my peers, which made me feel really sad and alone,” Register-Brown said. “I’m hopeful that we will be back in school at some point this year, so I will at least get to have some fun, senior year experiences as opposed to being stuck at home.”

Senior Mabur Bility also supports distance learning for this fall, even though she longs for school routines.

“I was very happy with the district decision,” Bility said. “I have personally, and I would like to keep it that way. It is the safest solution for all of us.”

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

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Initially, Delaney Register-Brown was disappointed to get the news about distance learning. She has come around to appreciate the safety aspect, but her experience with distance learning at the end of her junior year was challenging.

“I found it very hard to feel motivated. I struggled to keep social contact with my peers, which made me feel really sad and alone,” Register-Brown said. “I’m hopeful that we will be back in school at some point this year, so I will at least get to have some fun, senior year experiences as opposed to being stuck at home.”

Senior Mabur Bility also supports distance learning for this fall, even though she longs for school routines.

“I was very happy with the district decision,” Bility said. “I have personally, and I would like to keep it that way. It is the safest solution for all of us.”

Eric Erickson is a social studies teacher at Como Park Senior High School.
because he’s younger and needed so much of my help,” Ali said. In response to this kind of feedback from many parents and guardians with experiences like Ali, Saint Paul Public Schools officials said they hoped changes they have made this fall would make for better distance learning. “We are calling our new version of distance learning, Distance Learning 2.0,” the school district’s website states, promising personalized experiences for students, more synchronous learning (at the same time but not in the same place) and more time for students to collaborate with their peers and connect directly with their teachers.

Karen Duke, principal of St. Anthony Park Elementary School, is ready for the new school year and said, “I’m very confident the school district is thinking about all the aspects of this back-to-school process. The SAP Elementary staff was great last year. If anyone can do it again this year, we can.”

The principals of Murray Middle School and Como Park High School also said they were ready to begin this unprecedented year. Murray Principal Jamin McKenzie said, “I am 100 percent confident that we have the best staff to get the job done and an extremely supportive community.”

Yet, both principals recognize there will be challenges. Como Park High’s Kirk Morris explained, “Yes, we’ll do the online learning and 2.0 will be better than 1.0. Still, the social opportunities for students and staff will be lacking and we’ll need to get to know each other as best we can through a computer screen.”

Sam O’Brien, head of school at Great River School, reported his school was also considering starting the year with distance learning. Many Great River students and staff identify themselves as immune compromised, which left O’Brien feeling torn about the best way to proceed, he said, “Our society is not providing sufficient additional funding to create more transportation routes, or obtain additional space for school.”

Similarly, Tim Quealy, teacher and program coordinator at Ava- lon School, explained that their school planned to offer four days a week of distance learning and one day of in-person activities. “We miss our kids and are ex- cited to engage with them again, however we can,” he said. Meanwhile, many teachers had to prepare multiple versions of les- son plans for this fall.

Erin Dooley, a Murray science teacher, spent a lot of her summer getting ready for Distance Learn- ing 2.0, creating lessons that can be conducted virtually and, at some point, in regular classrooms. Over the summer, she also par- ticipated in Murray’s Equity and Restorative Justice Book Club and collaborated with the U of M Raptor Center to create virtual teaching around birds.

Tim Chase, another Murray science teacher, described his sum- mer as taking “the classic ‘hurry up and wait’ approach” as he waited to hear from the superintendent and district staff.

“My preparation for the year has been . . . collaborating with co-teachers about tools we might consider for distance learning,” he said. Still, the pandemic is weighing on people. Amy Jo Henriksen, mother to a third grader at Falcon Heights Elementary, which is starting the year with blended learning, said, “I am not feeling great about school starting up again, mainly because of all the unknowns.”

She wonders whether teachers will be stretched too thin teach- ing both online and in person and fears in-school restrictions on students might negate any possible in-person benefits. And yet, Henriksen chooses to remain grateful. “I am very thankful Minneso- ta is being thoughtful about how best to send kids safely back to school.”

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Hodan and Mohamed Hassan pose for their first day of school for the 2019-2020 academic year. Photo by Sulekha Ali

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Why a column about white privil-eCommentary

Unearned white privilege—different life experiences

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Funding support provided by the Falcon Heights/Lauderdale Lions Club

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Unearned white privilege—different life experiences

By Ranae Hanson, Commentary

Why a column about white privilege from a group focused on climate change?

Because racial justice is essential to climate justice. We wonder sometimes why we don’t revolt more strongly against impending climate disaster. It may be that our privilege as white people enables us to feel distant from the climate trauma already devastating many people of color, locally and globally. To look at the privileges that distance us may help us acknowledge deeply that we are all one.

These scenes from my own life show just a few of the times my white privilege has been brought home to me.

Shaken by my thoughts

On a college campus where I taught a class some years ago, I saw a young pregnant woman and heard myself think, “I hope she won’t go on welfare.” I cringed. My first impulse was to pretend I hadn’t thought that. Instead, I stepped to lean against a staircase. I had to acknowledge that I’d had that thought simply because the woman was Black. I was, at the time, a rather poor single parent. I was at risk of needing food stamps, did, in fact, sometimes use a food give-away program. I am White.

At that moment I realized that, if I walked through a college building pregnant, few people (maybe none) would assume that I would become a “weight on the system.” But with my thought, I had projected that attitude onto her.

My privilege: not to be thought of as a likely welfare recipient. My wound: to have gone along with my culture’s encouragement to see others as problems instead of as people, companions and potential friends.

Ignorant, proud, yet kindly treated

Years ago, new to any knowledge of Islam, I taught the first session of a world religions course pronouncing the word “Muslim” the way I had heard it in my hometown, the first syllable rhyming with “buzz.” After class, a student came to me and said gently, “I am Muslim. That is how we pronounce the word.” The first syllable, as she spoke it, rhymed with Fuss. She didn’t criticize. She just informed me.

I had been too proud to ask. I thought I knew.

Her son, my son

During the half-time break in a night class, a Black student about my age came to me. “Dr. Hanson,” she said, “I’ll need to leave early so I can get home before dark to meet my son at his work and walk him home.”

That day there had been an assault in a neighborhood about as close to my home as hers. “If I walk with him,” she explained, “he is less likely to be picked up by the police.” Her son, like mine, was 16. My son would also be walking home after dark, but I had no fear that the police would question my boy. She was right; they would likely stop hers.

In addition to the privilege my son enjoyed, and my peace of mind as his parent, I had another unearned advantage. I could stay through to the end of class.

Who gets a record?

A Minnesota man I know well had a record. He could have been mine. He sold drugs; he was locked up; his parole officers who insisted on asking. That White man I know sent him to prison, and it is his career. He was right; they would likely stop hers.

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Ruby Thompson, a Twin Cities artist who grew up in St. Anthony Park, created this illustration for Ranae Hanson’s Transition Town column.

The week after George Floyd was murdered

Amina and Hawa, both Somali-American mothers, spoke to a group gathered on Zoom. Their voices shook as they told us how it feels to raise Black sons. They tell their boys, even as pre-teens, not to wear backpacks into stores, not to wear their hoodies up, to keep their hands away from their pockets when talking to anyone in authority.

Their sons ask why they can’t do what their White friends can do. The mothers explain realities they wish their sons didn’t have to know. They beg the boys to call them when they arrive safely wherever they are going, to answer the phone whenever they call.

At age 16, one son asks his mother for a second ID card. She is confused. Isn’t one enough? No, he needs the second to keep on the dash of the car. The boy understands by then that it would not be safe to reach into his pocket when a police officer stops him.

Amina and Hawa wept as the world mourned George Floyd.

“He could have been mine. He could have been my son on the ground.”

Ranae Hanson, a writer, taught for 31 years at Minneapolis College, MCTC. Her book Watercolor: An Ending to Body and Earth in Dis-trees is scheduled to be published in spring 2022 by University of Minnesota Press. Visit her at ranaehan-son.com.
Seeing one bird at a time

When I first began bird watching more than 30 years ago, I often walked the three or four blocks to Walsh Pond where Lauderdale borders the Midland Hills Golf Course. I carried a small spiral notebook and wrote down every bird species I saw with notes on any I couldn’t identify so I could look them up later. I’d sit by the pond and see what showed up.

Even though I listed every bird I saw, I wasn’t as obsessed as Richard Koeppel, whose son, Dan, wrote “To See Every Bird on Earth,” about his father. I confess I kind of wanted to see every bird in Minnesota, but not every one on earth.

Instead, I began rather fanatically trying to identify every bird I saw. I’d be disappointed if I couldn’t find the bird in my field guide.

I got a copy of Bernie Fassingerhaus’s “Bird Watcher’s Life List and Diary” and entered each of my first-time sightings in that book. It has space for the date, location, habitat and notes. It helps to bring the memory back to life.

I began to take an international trip with two or three buddies about once a year beginning in 1995. The first trip was to Church Manhattan, in Canada. Then a maritime trip to Nova Scotia, chill, Manitoba, in Canada. Then a trip to the Florida Keys. These were all trips to Central and South America. I added them to my North American life list.

But then we began taking trips to Central and South America. The birds on these trips were a real challenge.

There were lots of similar looking birds, all in the same category. Take woodcreepers, for example. There are some 15 woodcreepers in the field guide for Costa Rica, and they all look very similar. I hadn’t done any real in-depth studying before the trip, so I had to rely on the trip leader or one of the more studious birders to identify which specific woodcreeper we were seeing.

I began to feel like I was just a checklist taker, not really seeing and identifying the bird for myself. And I wasn’t learning about most of the birds. I was just checking them off a list. It was frustrating.

Fast forward to my retirement in 2005. One of the people I worked with gave me a lined journal and I decided to title it “The Birds of Retirement.” I kept it beside me at the kitchen table and recorded the birds I saw out the front windows. We’ve got six or seven feeders in the yard or hanging from the roof overhang.

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Expect owl for virtual poetry reading

An owl has accepted a neighborhood invitation to join a virtual poetry reading Monday, Sept. 14, at 7 p.m. And why wouldn’t it? The bird’s affinity for a nature-themed event was obvious to poet Mimi Jennings of the climate action group Transition Town-All Saint Anthony Park. Its handlers at the University of Minnesota’s Raptor Center agreed.

The feathered ambassador will share screen time with local poets Rose Costello, Alice Duggan, Mary Moore Easter, host Mimi Jennings, Carmen Johnson and Nicole Lynskey. A short open mic will follow.

For several years TT-ASAP has presented biannual, environment-themed readings at the former Micawber’s Bookstore and at CoCreate. This is the first online one.

For more information, contact the host: Communications@TransitionASAP.org.

Washington joins Federal Reserve

St. Anthony Park resident Dominic Washington has been named the assistant vice president for strategic communications at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

Washington will lead the bank’s internal and external communications, including media relations; and web, design, editorial services; and social and digital media.

Washington joins the Minneapolis Fed from Minnesota Management and Budget, where he served as the director of policy research and planning and interim director of legislative and intergovernmental relations. He previously held communications leadership roles at the Minneapolis Foundation, the Bush Foundation, the University of Chicago and UnitedHealth Group, among others.

“Dominick brings significant leadership and expertise to the Minneapolis Fed,” said Amy Phener, the bank’s senior vice president for public affairs. “His experience across sectors, including academia and state government, will complement the bank’s strong research and policy focus.”

Schubert Club concerts update

Based on guidance from state health officials, the Schubert Club is either postponing or moving online all remaining performances in 2020. This includes the Club’s popular “Music in the Park” series where it holds music events at St. Anthony Park area churches.

“Music in the Park” concerts that will be held online are: Pacifica Quartet—4 p.m., Sept. 20, and Imani Winds—4 p.m., Oct. 11. These concerts will be available for viewing on Schubert Club’s website, YouTube channel and Facebook page (with no live audience present) on their originally scheduled dates and will be free to watch for a month following the performance dates.

The Music in the Park concert featuring David Finckel, Wu Han and Friends that was scheduled for Nov. 22 has been postponed to a later date.

Decisions about 2021 winter and spring concerts will be announced in late 2020 and will be made in response to guidance at that time, Schubert Club officials said.

SAP Community Blood Drive

A community blood drive is scheduled from 2 to 7 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 8 (after Labor Day) at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Ave.

Sign up online at www.redcrossblood.com using code SAPL. For COVID-19 safety, please wear a mask, and walk-ins will not be accepted.

Tuesday scholar series online

The Ramsey County Library’s “Tuesdays with Scholar Series” goes online with retired history teacher Janet Woolman leading a four-part program titled “Voices for Women” on the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Woolman will present her talks at 1 p.m., Sept. 8, 15, 22 and 29 via Zoom.

This is the centennial anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. Woolman, who taught at Blake School, will speak on the history of the amendment and how it changed the lives of women—and men.

This is an online series offered remotely using Zoom communication software. You must register in advance for this series through the Ramsey County Library website https://rclreads.bibliocommons.com/events or by calling 651-724-6001. Before the first program, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

St. Paul Parks and Rec update

St. Paul Parks and Recreation is planning to offer modified youth programming in the fall, including Rec-Check, S’more Fun, Pre-K and youth sports.

Programming will be held in accordance with CDC and State of Minnesota COVID-19 health guidelines. Due to space constraints and limited staffing resources, program capacities and locations may be limited. Please visit www.stpaul.gov/rec�因地制宜 for more details.

Lunch bunch

The St. Anthony Park Area Seniors is planning virtual “lunch bunch” activities from noon to 1 p.m. on Sept. 9 and 23. Call the Seniors office at 651-642-9052 for connection information.
German Immersion School opens with a new wrinkle

By Scott Carlson

After months of legal wrangling in 2019 over whether they would be able to tear down the former St. Andrew's Church to make way for a $6 million building expansion, leaders of the Twin Cities German Immersion School weren't sure then if they would actually begin the 2020-2021 academic year in their finished facilities.

But after awaiting COVID-19 health meeting guidelines from the state and polling the parents of German Immersion students, the school's leaders in mid-August adopted a hybrid plan that would consist of some in-class and some distance learning, said Ted Anderson, executive director of the Twin Cities German Immersion School.

“TCGIS has presented to the community a plan that has K-4 in a hybrid model through September,” and then reassess its options, Anderson said in mid-August. “Grades 5-8 will start with one ‘connection week’ and then will go into distance learning for the foreseeable future.”

Anderson said a “connection week” is when “50 percent of our non-online-only students are on campus. Other districts will likely call them ‘hybrid weeks.’ We are using the term ‘connection’ because we assume distance learning is coming for all at some point and we are focusing our on-campus time on students’ chance to connect with their teachers and with each other.”

Meanwhile, the 30,000 square-foot addition at the German Immersion school, 1031 Como Ave., boasts several enhanced amenities including a new 7,056-square-foot gymnasium. “This will be the first time for hosting home basketball and volleyball games,” Anderson said.

Other features include: a 2,300-square-foot cafeteria, able to seat up to 212 people, and five new classrooms that average 720-square-feet per room and can accommodate, in normal times, 24 students. In COVID times, the classrooms can accommodate 10 to 14 students and still achieve social distancing.

The school has 610 kindergarteners through the eighth-grade students and employs 85 to 90 people, including about 45 teachers.

The German Immersion School’s parent company bought the St. Andrew’s Church and school property in 2012; then later developed plans for remodeling the school property to better meet its growing enrollment and educational needs. From about 2013 to 2018, the school’s enrollment grew from about 330 to 555 students.

In mid-2019, the German Immersion School razed the former Catholic church building after fending off a challenge from a neighborhood group called Save Our Historic St. Andrew’s that contended the structure was historic and should be preserved. The church teardown occurred after the neighborhood group ultimately failed to post a $1.9 million security bond to continue on its legal challenge. Despite the neighborhood group’s setback, further legal challenges continued until last October when school officials gained the right to start construction.

Asked whether the school has patched up its differences with some neighbors, Anderson said, “We have relied on District 10 (Community Council) to be a connection with the neighborhood.”

Scott Carlson is editor of the Bugle.
Lived.

Janet Bjorkland
Janet M. (Sorenson) Bjorkland, 90, died July 22, 2020. She was an avid baker, card and Scrabble player, fishermanwoman and embroiderer. Above all else she was a wonderful wife, mother, grand- mother, sister and special friend. She was preceded in death by her husband, Lloyd Bjorkland. She is survived by her children, Wendy Bjorkland and Bob (Rose) Bjorkland; three great-grandchildren; twin sister, Jeannette Johnson; and best friend, Bob Hoffmann.

Memorials preferred to St. Timothy Lutheran Church or the American Heart Assoc. Janet was interred at Fort Snelling.

Charles Cermak
Charles J. Cermak, 76, of Mission, died unexpectedly July 24, 2020. He was preceded in death by his parents Paul and Hilja Karvonen (Craig) and brother Dan.

Memorials can be directed to St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church.

David Karonven
David Karonven, 81, died in his sleep Aug. 11, 2020, in Roseville. He was preceded in death by his wife Marjorie, parents John (Tanya) and Andy (Sonya), two grandsons, sister Kathy Frye (Craig) and brother Dan.

Memorials were preferred to the organ fund of St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church.

Nadean Larson
Nadean Marie Hruby (Ives) Larson, 86, died July 24, 2020, after a brief battle with cancer. Nadean was born on Nov. 7, 1933, in Montgomery.

She was preceded in death by her husband Ron; her sisters, Ruth and Ena; her brothers, Bob and Larry; and step-children, Betsy (Mike), Jeff and Katie (Eric); 13 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents Louie and Jennie Hruby; her brother Bob; her sisters, Ruth and Ena; her brothers, Bob and Larry; and step-children, Betsy (Mike), Jeff and Katie (Eric); 13 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

Carol Lukenbill
Carol A. (Bakken) Lukenbill, 85, St. Anthony Park, died July 24, 2020. She graduated from Murray High School in 1954 and was a long-time member of St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church.

She was preceded in death by her husband Verdal, and granddaughter Kimberly Lane and great-grandson Asa Bost. She is survived by son Terry (Melody) Lukenbill, daughters Kim Lane and Jodi Lukenbill, four grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Her graveside service was July 28 at Sunset Memorial Park Cemetery.

Dr. Bjorn Monson
Dr. Bjorn Karl Monson, 78, St. Anthony Park, died July 25, 2020. Bjorn was born in Canby. He graduated Luther College, the University of Minnesota Medical School and interned at the University of West Virginia, Morgantown.

After serving two years in the U.S. Air Force, he resumed his medical training, completing a general surgery residency at Hennepin County Medical Center, a thoracic surgery residency at the U of M Medical School and a fellowship at Boston Children’s Hospital.

He began his medical practice at Hennepin County Medical Center in 1978. He began his thoracic surgery practice at Methodist Hospital and established the first heart surgery program in 1985, now known as Park Nicollet Heart and Vascular Center. He retired in 2008 due to Parkinson’s Disease. He was a professor of surgery at U of MN Hospitals. He was a recipient of the Park Nicollet Foundation 2006 Earl Young Physician of Excellence award.

The thoughtful presence of his colleagues and the loving professional care from hospital staff while a patient in Methodist Hospital will especially be remembered for the comfort it gave him and his family.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Leonard and Enice. Bjorn is survived by Margot, his wife of 53 years; daughters, Betty Lukenbill, 59, St. Anthony Park, and Loretta (Bjorn) Perdik, 56, St. Anthony Park.

Memorials can be directed to Open Hands Midway where she was a frequent volunteer, https://www.openhandsmidway.org/.

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nmeeden@cburnet.com

Lives Lived from p. 12

wife of 53 years, son Bjorn Mon- son II, daughter Amy (Eric) Wil- liams and three grandchildren. He is also survived by sisters Stefani (Jim) Lee and Kirsten (Duane) Monick and sister-in-law, Wanda (Hank) Fredenburg. 

Memorial to Grace United Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Park Nicollet’s Foundation of Minne- sota or Park Nicollet Foundation.

Rev. Robert Rankin


Bob, an Episcopal priest, served congregations in Connecticut, Minnesota, Oregon, Alaska, Ha- waii and even Ncy. He was an avid musician (clarinet, piano), ball and Scottish dancer. He took up watercolor, painting and boxing

VOICES: Harry Boyte

By Sarah CR Clark

Harry C. Boyte is a self-described public intellectual and communi- ty organizer. In the 1960s, Boyte worked with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference headed by Martin Luther King Jr. After mov- ing to Minnesota, he founded the Center for Democracy and Citiz- enship at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the Universi- ty of Minnesota. He is currently a co-director of the Institute for Public Life and Work at Augsburg University.

Boyte and his wife, Marie Ström, live in St. Anthony Park. Harry identifies himself as Scot- tish American. The following is my conversation with Boyte:

Q: Where did you grow up and go to school?

A: I grew up in Atlanta, Ga., and lived there until high school, and then we moved to North Caroli- na. I went to Duke (University) because I wanted to stay in the South. The Freedom Movement was capturing my passion, and I wasn’t about to be involved.

My parents were rare, outspok- en opponents of segregation. My mother helped desegregate the li- braries and the League of Women Voters in Atlanta.

And Dad, who eventually was the only white person on King’s executive committee, desegre- gated the Red Cross and started an organization to keep public schools open.

There was a lot of violence and fear around that. I remember his name was in the paper when I was 12. I came out early in the morn- ing and there was a cross burning in the yard, and we received 15 threatening phone calls in one week. So, I changed my path to the grade school because the sher- iff up the street was in the Ku Klux Klan. I don’t remember fear exact- ly, but I do remember turmoil as a young kid.

After my junior year of high school, I went to a Quaker work camp in Philadelphia and we were working in a low-income, Black neighborhood. It was a significant time for me. We were kids from all across the country and I remem- ber it as an electric experience, an intellectual experience.

Q: The racial climate today has been compared to 1960’s civil rights movement. What do you think?

A: The South was much more racially inflamed and repressive than things generally are today. In the world I grew up in, people were scared to say anything. On the other hand, the disciplines of nonviolence have pretty much eroded today.

For example, one of the prin- ciples of nonviolence that shaped the Freedom Movement was that you don’t demonize or humiliate your enemies. Rather, you try to figure out where they’re coming from. It was not only individuals trying to practice this, it shaped the whole movement’s strategy.

So for example, the Great March on Washington, D.C.: The organizer of the March was Bayard Rustin, a brilliant strat- egist. He theorized that one-third of the U.S. was in favor of the movement, one-third were oppo- nents and one-third were vaguely sympathetic but not advocates. Rustin framed the whole event not as a protest but as a conversa- tion with America. And that was embodied not only in King’s “I Have a Dream” speech (which, as a kid, I heard the night before when he practiced in his hotel room) but in the discipline, solemnity and dignity of the marchers.

Today’s strong “war meta- phor” encourages protests to seem good versus bad. It’s hard to make conversation.

Q: As a public intellectu- al, people often ask for your thoughts. I’m wondering, how do you feel in this dual-pandem- ic time (with COVID-19 and in- stitutional racism)?

A: This is a moment of huge tran- sition. And while it’s a dramat- ic time, there have been some silver linings to the coronavirus pandemic. A CDC public health study, just published, determined that high community strength was an indicator for resilience during a pandemic, for instance. This sort of language, affirmed in the study, is powerful.

I am also worried about the intensification of war language around this election. Trump didn’t invent this problem; he is the cul- mination of a very long and dan- gerous trend.

Q: So many neighbors are strug- gling with how to begin dismantling systemic racism. Do you have any ideas?

A: It’s important to work through the fact that European-Americans live in bubbles. And that’s true no matter socio-economic or educa- tional status.

The best thing you can do is get to know people from different backgrounds. I have been enjoy- ing the work of an organization called Braver Angels (braveran- gels.org). And then, while there is a plethora of victim stories, sto- ries of ingenuity and resilience are missing. Seek out great stories of Black people and immigrants who build and create things in the face of oppression.

A: As a public intellectual, how do you feel in this dual-pandemic time?

Sarah CR Clark lives in St. Antho- ny Park and is a regular freelance writer for the Bugle.
COVID-19 knocks 2020 murals off the walls

By Sarah CR Clark

After a summer of cancellations, the blank walls awaiting fresh murals in the Creative Enterprise Zone neighborhood in south St. Anthony Park will remain blank a while longer.

“Indeed, we canceled Chroma Zone 2020 due to COVID-19,” explained Catherine Day, one of the festival’s organizers. Organizers plan to bring the festival back in droves.” said. “The community came out full and full of storytelling,” she said. “The community came out in droves.”

The first Chroma Zone Mural & Art Festival occurred in September 2019 and included the live painting of 12 new murals by 15 local and global artists along with brewery parties, artist talks, bus tours and gallery exhibits. Of last year’s festival, Day reported it exceeded expectations.

“The artists created murals that are true gems—complex, beautiful and full of storytelling,” she said. “The community came out in droves.”

Last year’s murals are indeed treasures, worth another visit. Here is the roster of artists and mural locations from 2019’s Chroma Zone Mural & Art Festival:

Chock U at Spot Weld, 2290 Wycliff St.
Priscila De Carvalho at Budget Sign Shop, 2474 W. Territorial Road,
Cey Adams at Hampden Park Co-op, 928 Raymond Ave.
Mariela Ajras at Wycliff, 2327 Wycliff St.- south side.
Claudia Valentino and Daniela Biamchini at Precision Coatings, 2313 Wycliff St.

The council directed the city to continue efforts to obtain an agreement with the area’s resident landlord to allow time to complete the mural on the side of the building. The agreement has been under negotiation this summer.

Due to ongoing waiting lists for garden plots at Community Park, council members said they want to add nine plots, which would mean expanding the fenced area and adding beds. Currently, plots are renewable year to year, which council members said might favor homeowners over renters because renters are more mobile. Also, there are non-residents who use the public garden, and council members asked whether resident priority should be strengthened. Council member Melanie Leehy asked whether resident priority policy should be strengthened.

Council member Melanie Leehy suggested the city find ways to inform renters about the availability of the plots. The council also discussed whether to reserve any new plots for renters and of reviewing the resident priority policy. The council directed the city staff to develop a plan to expand the garden space that it can consider at a future meeting. In a related matter, Council member Kay Andrews asked about the status of the city’s vegetation ordinance, which was updated last winter to accommodate native landscapes and then became controversial when a resident proposed putting a community vegetable garden in their front yard.

An August survey of residents is expected to help staff draft a revised ordinance for council review, according to Justin Markon, city development director. “The new proposal could add more types of vegetation in front yards, including vegetable gardens,” he said. ■

Anne Holzman, a former St. Anthony Park resident, is a regular Bugle contributor.

In Falcon Heights, the plots for gardens thicken

By Anne Holzman

During their Aug. 5 workshop meeting, Falcon Heights City Council members briefly discussed two garden related measures that they are expected to deal with in the coming months. Due to ongoing waiting lists for garden plots at Community Gardens, he said.

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Anne Holzman, a former St. Anthony Park resident, is a regular Bugle contributor.
to help in his 28-year combat with Parkinson’s Disease.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Susan; three sons, Samuel (Erica), Jesse (Maya) and Robert Andrew “Andy” (Jennie); six grandchildren; his sister Missi (Fred) Missis; and his sister-in-law Mary Johnstone (David) Hardman. He was preceded in death by his parents and his brother, Glennys and Curtis moved to Madagascar for the Lutheran printing plant there. After six years in Madagascar, Glennys and Curtis moved to St. Paul, where they started a consulting company in the graphic arts industry.

Glennys was also parish secretary for St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church for almost 14 years. During that time, she also managed her and Curtis’s consulting business.

Glennys was preceded in death by her parents, her three brothers and sisters and brothers. Dick Schoonoer

Dick Schoonoer, 84, of Woodbury, died July 9, 2020. Dick graduated from Mounds High School in 1955, where he played football, basketball and baseball, earning a letter in all three sports over four years.

He was preceded in death by his grandson, Patrick. He is survived by his wife of 64 years Beryl; sons and 12 great-grandchildren.

Nicholas (London Savant), Scott and Morgan Schmidt Ramgattie; as well as sisters and brothers.

Memorials were accepted to Murray High School in 1975.

He is survived by his daughter, Morgan Schmidt Ramgattie; as well as sisters and brothers.

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Memorials were accepted to Murray High School in 1975.
Cougars eagerly navigate altered sports schedule

By Eric Erickson
Sports analysis

Game on!
The Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) took on the unenviable task last month of determining how to proceed with athletic participation amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Aug. 4, days after Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz released guidelines for reopening schools, the MSHSL Board of Directors voted on if, how and when to conduct athletic seasons for the 2020-2021 school year.

With a variety of strong opinions from communities across the state, various levels of infection rates and differing beliefs about the virus and its spread, any decision was bound to be met with both cheers and tears.

For Como student athletes, who already knew they and their St. Paul Public School peers wouldn’t be returning to in-person classes, there was joyful surprise in learning that a plan to play sports was in place. That plan, as of now, includes running a number of fall sports now but moving football and girls volleyball to spring of 2021.

How things play out remains to be seen. The plan could work. The plan could be shut down if COVID cases increase. But for now, preparing to play feels good. Senior Kevin Iragaba enjoyed voluntary summer soccer practices with teammates. Now, he’s thrilled to officially start his senior season of soccer for the Cougars.

“I wasn’t expecting to have the season. I was excited to hear the decision and be able to play the game that we all love,” Iragaba said.

Senior Kevin Iragaba enjoyed voluntary summer soccer practices with teammates. Now, he’s thrilled to officially start his senior season of soccer for the Cougars.

“I’m happy to have my senior year playing with my brothers,” echoed Kyaw Myint Oo.

Senior Anna Weins said voluntary summer workouts for the girls soccer team have been productive and fun, but she also feared the momentum might end. She had a feeling the season was going to be canceled or at least pushed back until the spring or summer if necessary,” Weins said. “So, I was definitely surprised when I heard that the state high school league was allowing the soccer season to happen this fall.”

The soccer season will be scaled back with restrictions on travel. Games will be limited to a maximum of two per week, only against local opponents. Also, the season is being cut which means for Cougar teams that they’ll play a 10 or 11 game conference schedule instead of the standard 16-game regular season which includes non-conference opponents.

A wait and see approach is being taken regarding all section and state tournaments with tentative plans subject to change. Senior Emmanuel Molinos Lopez, from the boys team said, “I think that the plan the state high school league mapped out is pretty good. Should the plan work out, the season should be a good one.”

Beyond mapping out schedules, the priority issue of public health is omnipresent. The MSHSL stated, “The first week of practice should focus on implementing effective protocols and routines for pre-participation screenings, effective social distancing, compliance with all health recommendations, establishment of pod limits of 25 or less, and additional actions that mitigate the spread of disease and enhance safety of students and coaches.”

Those protocols were already in place during voluntary summer workouts, but were being intensely reinforced for all fall sports that started on Aug. 17: boys and girls cross-country running, girls tennis, and girls swimming in addition to soccer.

These traditional fall sports are considered lower risk for COVID transmission. The other two traditional fall sports of football and girls volleyball were considered higher risk – football because of its intense close contact and volleyball because of airflow in indoor gymnasiums.

After much debate and narrow voting margins, the MSHSL moved football and volleyball to the spring in what will become a traditional trainings.

If the fall is successful, the winter sports season would run between November and early March with all the usual offerings — Nordic skiing, basketball, wrestling, gymnastics and boys swimming at Como — to be followed by football and volleyball in a spring season from mid-March through May.

The traditional spring sports — softball, baseball, track and field, golf and boys tennis at Como — actually would be held during “summer” from mid-May until early July.


Como football coach Kirby Scull is intrigued by the idea of inviting soccer players and cross-country runners to give football a try in the spring. Meanwhile, they’ll keep running voluntary trainings.

“We will for sure be having workouts and practices this fall,” Scull said. “The players that are comfortable coming to practice need that outlet. We will probably be having a couple practices a week, keeping them productive and fun, not a grind.”

Volleyball players can have socially distanced sessions this fall, as well. Senior Hannah Hausman is thankful for the opportunity.

“As I think about it, I’m not very concerned about this season change,” Hausman said. “It gives us more time to prepare, it is a safer option, and we will have more time throughout the school year to get the word out and expand our team. It may even allow for some fun new additions of other Como athletes interested in volleyball.”

As for spectators, school and state guidelines are still being set. However, the student athletes are aware of priorities, girls soccer player Weins explained.

“Part of the fun and spirit of the game comes from the cheering in the bleachers from our support- ers,” Weins said. “But of course, there’s also the big concern/chal- lenge of making sure everyone on the team stays safe and healthy so there isn’t an outbreak that would cause us and our families to get sick, which would also make us unable to play.”

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

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