New garden ordinance planned for Falcon Heights

By Anne Holzman

Falcon Heights is taking another crack at setting rules for home gardens after a series of council actions last spring left many residents frustrated with a temporary ban in place on all new or expanded gardens.

One yield from the garden discussion is a Change.org petition with 10,000 signatures by September asking to add vegetables to gardens and to grant a variance to allow a front yard, communal vegetable garden proposed online by a resident.

Community Development Coordinator Justin Markon said he expects the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing on amending the city’s vegetation ordinance at its Oct. 27 meeting. Markon added, “The draft ordinance that’s moving forward will not include community gardens on regular residential lots.”

One year ago, city leaders began discussing how to broaden an existing vegetation ordinance that allowed only turf and trees on residential lots—all other gardens required a permit, although those rules had not been routinely enforced.

City Manager Sack Thongvanh told the Bugle in early September that the original request to allow native plants had come from Quentin Nguyen, who had a widely admired, pollinator-friendly garden in St. Paul. Nguyen moved to a new address on Snelling Avenue in Falcon Heights and wanted to do the same thing there. After several discussions, the council in February amended the city code, adding native plants to the list of allowable vegetation with specifications for setbacks, maintenance and other concerns mainly pertaining to front yards. Soon afterwards, a buzz on social media reached City Hall. Nguyen had proposed a front yard vegetable garden and invited neighbors to collaborate.

Thongvanh said he’d heard from a neighbor who supported native landscapes but was less pleased with the vegetable idea. “It became a bigger deal when he talked about a larger scale garden,” Thongvanh said. “He was told by his neighbors multiple times that he should contact the city.”

The Bugle contacted Nguyen but he declined comment for this story. A GoFundMe online fundraiser had been created April 22 and signed “Quentin.” It had requested help to purchase a red kicker, 40 cubic yards of garden soil, wood chips and other supplies. The post suggested, “What else could be better than having some neighbors/gardeners pitch in and work together to grow vegetables for some healthy fresh produce during the short, Minnesota summer and especially during the pandemic.”

In early May, Thongvanh asked the council to look into the issue again. At a workshop meeting, he supplied summaries of nearby cities’ front yard policies and recommended an interim ordinance banning all new or expanded gardens for one year until the city’s vegetation ordinance is amended. At its May 13 meeting, the council unanimously adopted the interim ordinance.

Shortly afterwards, a Change.org petition appeared online, posted by Colin Cureron, who lives in St. Paul and works in the Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics at the University of Minnesota. The petition stated the interim ordinance “appears to be an action specifically targeting a local homeowner, Quentin Nguyen.” It noted that Nguyen received a letter immediately after the ordinance passed but other nearby homeowners with front yard gardens did not.

The petition calls on the city of Falcon Heights to extend the vegetation ordinance to include vegetables, and to issue a variance for Nguyen’s project. As of early September, Change.org had recorded more than 10,000 signatures on the petition. At its May 27 meeting, the City Council heard a request to rescind the interim ordinance. “The minister shows that council member Mark Miaga said, “We always strive to cultivate a caring community, but I think in retrospect we made a mistake.”

Comments from 21 members of the public are recorded in the minutes, along with passages from five letters. Comments cover a range of concerns about the rules, both for and against the interim ordinance. The motion to rescind failed 3-2, with Kay Anderson, Melanie Leehey and Mayor Randy Gus­tafson voting to keep the interim ordinance in place. Miaga and Yankaub Wehyre voted to rescind. In June, the Planning and En­vironment commissions formed a garden subcommittee to solicit feedback and propose further code amendments. In August, residents were invited via the city’s weekly online newsletter to participate in a survey about residential and community gardens. The subcommittee met in September to prepare language adding edible plants to the existing list of vegetation allowed in home gardens. Thongovan said the October hearing will be open to all and held in person. As of mid-September, the city was on a waiting list to install technology for online participation. Thongvan said the goal is to amend the ordinance by the end of the year, which would end the ban on new gardens in time for residents to plan for next spring.

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Anne Holzman, a former St. Antho­ny Park resident, is a regular Bugle freelancer who covers Falcon Heights and Lauderdale news.
Como and St. Anthony Park Community Council news

District 10 Community Council

Assistance brewing for new coffee shop

The proposed Sacred Grounds Community Coffee Shop is one of 20 projects recommended to receive Neighborhood STAR funding from the St. Paul City Council. The funding—a $37,560 grant and a $37,500 loan—would help the 28-seat coffee shop to finish construction of its retail space and adjacent patio at 883 Front Ave.

Kowalsky-Grabhek elected

Benjamin Kowalsky-Grabhek has won the special election in September to fill a vacancy on the Como Community Council board. He will represent Sub-District 4, which is South Como and Energy Park.

Downtown decisions in the neighborhood

• Ramsey County has contracted with the Ben Western hotel in Run­dana Square for up to 80 rooms to provide emergency shelter to homeless people who had been living on the street. The coun­ty is using this site exclusively for living on the street. The coun­ty has previously purchased 4.5 acres of land across a 49-unit co-op. HealthPartners Avenue in 2015 to build Zvago, acres at Luther Place and Como Greenway Village. Senior hous­ment buildings on Eustis Street to of its property for several years. In 2015, the seminary sold five apart­ment buildings on Eustis Street to Greenway Village. Senior hous­ment developer Exumten bought 1.6 acres at Luther Place and Como Avenue in 2015 to build Zvago, a 49-unit co-op. HealthPartners purchased 4.5 acres of land across from its Como Avenue building in 2016 to build a replacement clinic.

The council has approved a concessions contract for Como Park Pool with Be Graceful Bakery and Catering for the 2021 season.

The council also approved two sets of conduit bonds, totaling $42 million, for Hmong College Prep Academy’s proposed middle school addition on its Brewer Street cam­pus. (Conduit bonds are municipal securities meant to raise capital for projects that benefit the public.) One set of bonds is through the city Port Authority, the other is through the St. Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority. About $26 million of the bonds are for new construction; the rest refinanc­es previous bonds issued on behalf of the charter school.

Notice of meetings

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

All meetings begin at 7 p.m.

• To obtain links, phone numbers, or other access information, send a request by email to district10@ stpaulmn.gov, or call 651-644-3889.

Upcoming meetings:

• Neighborhood Relations: Tues­day, Oct. 6. Topics will include EDIB initiatives, children’s health needs, Wi-fi hotspots and headphones.


District 12 Community Council

SAPC October meeting dates

• SAPCC Board Meeting: Thursday, Oct. 8, 7 to 9 p.m.

• Equity Committee: Monday, Oct. 26, 5:30 to 7 p.m.

• Transportation Committee: Tuesday, Oct. 27, 7 to 9 p.m.

Luther Seminary from p. 1

Additionally, the council hopes that students and families from Jennings and Avalon schools, as well as board members from the St. Anthony Park School Associa­tion participate in the forum.

For further updates on the Zoom forum, check District 12’s Facebook page or website at sapcc.org.

Notice on legislative races

Due to a lack of space in this issue of the Bugle, we will be posting online stories on state legislative election races in October that are relevant for our readers. Check our web­site at parkbugle.org.
Park Bugle 2020 readership survey

Come share your thoughts! The Park Bugle exists to help connect, inform, inspire and enhance participation for a healthy community. The Bugle wants to be here supporting this community for a long time to come. Part of shaping a strong and thoughtful Bugle for the future is taking an honest look at where we are now. We would love your input.

Please complete this short survey and mail back to the Bugle at Park Bugle, P.O. Box 8126, St. Paul, MN 55108 or leave them at drop boxes at Park Service station, 2277 Como Ave. The names of people who complete all survey questions and leave their contact information are eligible to compete in a random prize drawing for a $50 gift card to Tim & Tom’s Speedy Market.

On the survey, circle all answers that apply. Your voice matters. Deadline to receive surveys is Oct. 23.

Look for results in the Bugle. Thanks for your help in creating a bright future for the Bugle!

Reading Habits

1. How often do you read the Bugle (published 12x per year)?
   - Under 18
   - Young Adults age 18-24
   - 25-40
   - 41-55
   - 56-70
   - 71+

2. Last visited www.parkbugle.org
   - This week
   - In the past month
   - In the past three months
   - I have not visited the site

3. Which sections do you like to read the most? (Scale: Always, On Occasion, Rarely, Never, Not Sure)
   - Front Page
   - City Files
   - Editorial / Letters to the Editor
   - Transition Town
   - School News
   - Business News
   - Neighbors
   - Events
   - Lives Lived
   - Classified Ads
   - The Birdman of Lauderdale
   - School Sports

4. What kind of articles/news would you like to see more?

5. Comments. Please use the space below to provide any suggestions or feedback for our managing editor on the editorial aspects of the Bugle. How can the Bugle better meet your needs? Anything else you would like to add?

Advertising Questions

9. Which of the following statements are true of you? (mark all that apply)
   - I am more likely to patronize a business that advertises in the Bugle.
   - I feel positive about a company because they support the Bugle.
   - I seek out Bugle advertisers when I need their services.
   - I look in the Bugle for local providers first.
   - I do not notice/read ads in the Bugle.

10. In the last three months, have you purchased any of the following products or services from a local independent business in the Bugle’s distribution area? (Como Park, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, St. Anthony Park)

11. Do you plan to move in the next two years?
   - Yes
   - No

12. Do you plan to do remodeling, renovations or improvements on your home in the next two years?
   - Yes
   - No

13. What other neighborhood publications do you read?
   - Midway Monitor
   - Highland Villager
   - Women’s Press

Reader Demographics

7. Where do you live?
   - Como Park
   - Falcon Heights
   - Lauderdale
   - St. Anthony Park
   - Minneapolis
   - Elsewhere within Minnesota
   - Outside Minnesota

Thank you for your participation!
Bugle's survey of readers and annual fundraising appeal

It is a busy time for the Bugle as we launch our annual fall fund appeal and forge ahead with a strategic review of our newspaper and its operations.

As we begin considering how to better serve our readers and communities, we are conducting a readers’ survey. The 13-question poll can be found on page 3 of this issue and is designed to help us learn what you think of the newspaper. What do you like best about the paper? What kind of news would you like to see more of? What, if anything, is missing?

You can make an online donation at https://www.parkbugle.org. Click the green DONATE button on the home page and scroll down. Or you can mail us a check to the Bugle’s PO Box.

As always, we look forward to continuing to serve you and we appreciate your support and generous donations.

Food & Drink guide, election coverage and more

As we head into fall, this issue of the Bugle is jammed pack with news and information. First, our annual Food & Drink guide appears with an update on how some local restaurants are faring with the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

We also are getting a jump on election season with stories on the races with the St. Paul School Board and the Lauderdale City Council. Because of space constraints, stories on state legislative races that are relevant to Bugle readers will be posted online at our Bugle website during October.

It is a busy time for the Bugle as we strive to promote freedom of expression, unbiased of ideology and opinions in these communities. The Bugle strives to promote freedom of expression, unbiased of ideology and opinions in these communities.

We invite you to partner with us in the Bugle’s crucial work.

Sincerely, your volunteer Bugle board of directors

Gabrielle Lawrence, chairperson
Josh Becerra
Rosann Cahill
Liz Danielson
Barb Hauer
Becky Lonnquist
Bobb Magstad
Steve Plagens
Merry Rendahl
Kristin Wiersma

With your help, we can continue to build a strong and healthy community in a world that desperately needs it. Please consider sharing your financial gift today and investing in the Bugle’s work to connect, inspire and engage.

GABRIELLE LAWRENCE

The Bugle is a monthly non-profit community newspaper serving St. Anthony Park, Lauderdale, Falcon Heights and Como Park. The Bugle reports and promotes accurate information and promotes the exchange of ideas and opinions in these communities.

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GABRIELLE LAWRENCE
Lauderdale city elections

By Anne Holzman

Lauderdale residents will go to the polls Nov. 3 to elect a mayor and one City Council member. The Bugle asked the candidates to discuss their experiences, goals if elected and views about the demand for housing development in inner ring suburbs such as Lauderdale.

Mayor

Mary Gaasch is running unopposed for another two-year term as mayor. If elected, this would mark the start of her 11th year on the council. Previously, she served two four-year terms on city council.

Gaasch said she her top priorities are addressing streets and park needs, including pedestrian access on Eustis Street. She hopes to see a “thriving little business district” develop along Larpenteur Avenue with a coffee shop and restaurant. She values ongoing work towards racial equity.

Concerning housing development, Gaasch praised citizens “advocating for the preservation of our Brick Woods,” which is a part of the Luther Seminary site under consideration for redevelopment. She said a new city conservation ordinance “will protect the woods and create a development that is an asset to our city.” (Editor’s note: For more information on the Luther Seminary redevelopment project, please see related story on page 1.)

At the Lauderdale School site, Gaasch said, the city’s success in getting citizen feedback “has helped us craft a project that will make our city stronger, generate revenues that will reduce individual home owners’ tax burdens, and welcome new neighbors.”

City Council

Jeff Dains is running for re-election to city council. He previously served as mayor and currently represents the city on the Metropolitan Council Transportation Accessibility Committee and at the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization.

Dains said he would seek pedestrian and bike safety on Eustis Street, expand environmental programs and protect green space and parks. He wants to involve more residents in events and committees, especially newcomers.

“Lauderdale has always been committed to meeting affordable housing standards,” including plans for affordable senior housing at the Lauderdale School site, Dains said.

He said there is a potential to put multifamily housing on the southwest corner of Larpenteur Avenue and Eustis Street. “My goal would include a mix of commercial and residential construction. This would revitalize our city and increase the city’s tax base,” Dains said. He added, “In any new development we want to enhance green space.”

Duane Pulford is Dains’ challenger and is a first-time candidate for public office. He has served in organizations such as Dorothy Day Hospitality House in Rochester, Rochester Kennel Club, a townhouse association board and a local union.

Pulford said his priorities, if elected, would be to maintain the city’s mix of affordable housing and support the community’s diversity of blue-collar and white-collar workers.

Pulford added, “I would like more development of the retail property we have on Larpenteur Avenue. A coffee shop or a dental office or something like that for our city.”

Regarding new housing, Pulford said, “There is not much land in Lauderdale for development of multifamily housing,” but that he is not opposed to it and would consider the possibilities for it at both the Luther Seminary and Lauderdale school sites.
Six vying for St. Paul School Board

By Cigale Abidquist

Six candidates are running in the Nov. 3 general election to fill the remaining year of the Saint Paul School Board seat term held by of Marny Xiong, who died of COVID-19 in June. Because the vacancy occurred more than 90 days before Election Day, state law required the board to appoint someone to fill the seat for the rest of this year.

Charlotte “Charlie” Castro

Castro, who has taught in the communication department at Century College and North Hennepin Community College, says her educational background and experience bring on by the pandemic,” Castro says. “I know the stress of working through remote learning, technology and getting students from where they currently are to where they need to be. That perspective will make me the most effective board member.”

Castro, who says being a Latinx woman of color gives her a unique perspective, counts resources for teachers and students (including access to the arts, dance, advanced classes and internship/apprenticeship programs) as one of the biggest challenges.

She also wants to conduct listening sessions with the community to implement ideas from “voices that have largely gone unnoticed.” She wants to work with community leaders, parents, teachers and students to create the schools for work for all the students that attend those schools,” she says.

James Farnsworth

Farnsworth, a 2016 graduate of Highland Park High School and a resident of the Summit University neighborhood, is executive director of the Highland Business Association and chairman of the Southwest Business Coalition.

Farnsworth, a senior at the University of Minnesota studying human resource development in the College of Education and Human Development, says his background in governance and passion for public education will serve him well, if elected.

“I believe that now more than ever, students and parents need informed and engaged advocates at the table for the numerous significant decisions that will be made in the coming months that have the potential to reshape education as we know it,” Farnsworth said.

Farnsworth, citing a June 28 report projecting a loss of $228 million in state funds in the district, says declining enrollment and racism and inequity are among the biggest challenges.

“Since then,” he said, “uncertainty surrounding enrollment has only increased due to an extended period of distance learning and other disruptions to educational delivery due to COVID-19.”

As for leveling the playing field, “we must all be willing to have open, honest and uncomfortable conversations about the intersections of race, class and privilege,” Farnsworth said. “Disrupting and dismantling racism and deeply ingrained systemic inequities must be at the forefront of ongoing conversations.”

He also wants to build on community partnerships. “When schools are lifted up and supported by their surrounding community, it’s a win-win for all.”

Keith Hardy

Hardy, a project manager at Wells Fargo who lives in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood, says he previously served on the board for eight years until losing the seat in the 2015 election. He also cites, as other qualifications to return to the board, serving in community groups focused on education equity and student achievement, and 25 years in training and information technology.

He says he’s running again to help shape policy that:

• Ensures students and families have access to consistent internet service or an alternative.
• Plans how to reach students who don’t have stable housing.
• Help educators and support staff prepare to deliver distance/online instruction.
• Work with the Student Engagement and Advancement Board and communities to keep students engaged as learners while helping particularly their mental health needs that have been impacted by the pandemic and the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder.

The board’s greatest challenges, Hardy says, include ensuring distance learning meets special education standards of service.

Jamila Mame

Mame, who moved to Minnesota as a teenager from Ethiopia, joined Action MN in June 2019 as its woman of color organizer.

She experienced as an English Language Learners student and her work with families of ELL students prompted her to run for the board.

“We have one of the most diverse school districts, and yet there are areas who are struggling to feel supported and thrive in their school environment,” she said. “How can our families be engaged in their child’s education when they struggle to understand the meaning of school policies and decisions?”

Mame advocates for greater investment in translators and a commitment to understanding the cultures and customs of diverse groups.

“I see an investment in . . . educators who speak second and third languages,” Mame said, adding that she can speak to the fears and struggles of new immigrant communities.

Mame sees fully funding schools and addressing distance learning challenges and inequalities as key issues.

“Learning during this pandemic has revealed the educational inequalities that exist for students who are Black, Indigenous and people of color and has further exacerbated these inequities,” she said.

Mame, a resident of St. Paul’s East Side who created the African Youth Development Center and mentors 49 public school students, credits her work as a community organizer in helping her understand the role of public schools in the health of a community.

Omar Syed

Syed, 43, who immigrated to the United States in 1997 as a refugee from Somalia and moved to St. Paul two years later with no previous formal education, graduated from Arlington High School and earned a public health certificate from Century College.

The Summit-University resident ran unsuccessfully for an at-large school board seat last year. He is a small-business owner and a member of St. Paul’s Planning Commission and several Somali-East African civic organizations.

Syed says the help he received from St. Paul Public Schools in getting an education spurred his interest in serving and giving back.

One of his goals is to focus all funding toward student success.

“I hope to close the achievement gap by increasing investment toward students’ well-being and access to diverse teachers and ensure a high quality curriculum is provided

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“I hope to close the achievement gap by increasing investment toward students’ well-being and access to diverse teachers and ensure a high quality curriculum is provided
Fall brings hearty takeout, a new restaurant and big dark beers

By Maja Beckstrom

On sunny fall mornings, the sidewalk walk outside of Colossal Cafe on Como Avenue is full of people eating at 10 tables scattered up the church steps next door and around the corner post office. The lively outdoor dining scene has helped keep the eatery going through COVID-19.

But it’s coming to a close soon. “It’s been really fun to have people outside eating everywhere this summer,” said owner Elizabeth Tinucci. “But everyone in the restaurant industry is very concerned for the winter.”

With COVID cases still high in Minnesota, many people still avoid indoor dining, especially in small spaces like the ironically named Colossal Cafe. Tinucci hopes to reduce the indoor risk with some new air purifier units, but she’s also promoting takeout. Her efforts are one example of how local food and drink establishments are improvising to keep sales up as temperatures fall.

“Take-and-bake is going to be really great for the fall, as we get into that cozy season,” said Tinucci. “We’re going to offer heartier items that are best heated up and eaten at home.” Look for dishes like meatloaf, beef stroganoff, pot roast and ribs. New menus are posted Sundays and food is picked up Thursday and Saturday.

Tinucci created the take-and-bake menu only after COVID-19 hit. “When you’re trying to make up a drastic loss of sales, you have to do something drastically different,” she said.

New Karta Thai location

What could be more drastically different right now than opening a restaurant? Sandy Khunuri and husband Terry Spotts, owners of Karta Thai on Como Avenue, purchased an old Taco Bell in Roseville more than a year ago. After holding off as long as financially possible, they finally opened it at the end of August and are offering “takeout-only” at both locations. Khunuri initially had planned to do away with the drive through, but then realized it would be an asset. “It will be good for the winter,” she said. “It’s cold and there’s the snow and people don’t want to get out of the car.”

As a bonus, the Roseville location is open Sunday when the Como location is closed. She’s feeling lucky that total sales are only down 25 percent at the Como spot. “Neighbors support us a lot,” Khunuri said. Now she hopes she can build takeout business in Roseville.

New beer release

Dual Citizen, which opened its brewery and taproom almost three years ago on Raymond Avenue just south of University, can’t rely on takeout-only, though it does sell growlers online to be picked up at the bar.

The brewery expanded its patio by moving five picnic tables into the parking lot. Now they’re extending the outdoor season with a half dozen patio heaters and walls on the patio tents. “We know that Minnesotans don’t mess around,” said marketing director Becca McDermott. “We’ll come out for a beer if we’re not freezing our butts off.”

Tables indoors and outside are well spaced, bar service has been suspended and people order and pay for beer on their phone with delivery available.

Delivering great beer.

Dual Citizen taproom manager Candis Clendening pulls a pint at Dual Citizen Brewing Co. Photo by Maja Beckstrom.

Fall to p. 9
Tips for dressing up at-home meals

By Jenni Wolf

In this new pandemic age of working from home, schooling at home and just all-around staying at home, we also are all eating at home more now than ever.

While options to dine out have increased over the summer, we are now moving into chillier months and may see those options limited again as we lose the outdoor friendly warmth of the season. Add in the fact that we all may not have the budget to dine out, or feel comfortable doing so in these times, home-cooked meals may look bleak, feel redundant and leave us unsatisfied.

Still, nourishing meals at home are important for our bodies, minds and souls in pursuing health and wellness and, let's face it, can provide a way to find some joy these days. Read on below for a few of my favorite, simple ways to elevate any meal at home.

• Make a copycat recipe: Craving that warm naan from your favorite Indian place? Make it an afternoon baking project. Love the local coffee shop's scones? Try baking your own at home. It may even pay to ask if the recipe can be shared!

• Purchase product: Many restaurants sell goods such as condiments, dry bread mixes, prepared or frozen entrees (Colossal Café pot pies, anyone?!), pizza dough, coffee and tea blends that you can purchase and add to meals at home.

• Prepare an appetizer and dessert: We all probably have a bit more time on our hands now too—spend that time preparing a few additions to your meal or incorporate happy hour with a fun cheeseboard to re-create the three course experience you may miss from dining out. Adding a fun drink or dessert takes things up a notch, too!

• Select with the seasons: Many local restaurants use the seasons to guide their menus. Do the same to inspire your make-at-home meals and visit the farmers market to pick up in-season produce. I'm thinking pumpkin chili, stuffed acorn squash and apple crisp.

• Channel your inner chef: Think like a chef and notice the extras that elevate a restaurant meal. Is it the homemade salad dressing? The honey butter for the rolls? Or the freshly made salsa? Whip up one of these extras to transform mundane meals into something more. These things might sound complicated but are easy to make. My favorite one for fall is a simple compound butter—soften a stick of butter and mix in a few tablespoons of your favorite herbs + garlic. Store it in the fridge and use it all week on bread, potatoes, rice—anything!

I would be remiss if I also didn’t remind and encourage us all to give ourselves a night or two off from the kitchen and to support our local, neighborhood establishments through takeout or delivery when able, as they are a valuable part of our community—and need us just as much as we need and enjoy them!

Jenni Wolf is a member of the Como neighborhood and a practicing, registered dietitian in the community who is passionate about helping others achieve a positive and balanced relationship with food.
Dock & Paddle is the perfect place to unwind in a beautiful, safe and socially distant environment.

Located in the Como Lakeside Pavilion
Monday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Open Sat. & Sun. with beginning Oct. 1

dockandpaddle.com  @dockandpaddle

Ty Barnett, co-owner of Workhorse Coffee Bar on University Avenue hands coffee to a customer. Photo by Maja Beckstrom.

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

2020 Food and Drink Guide

Lebanese American Cuisine Deli
Wide Variety of Vegetarian & Vegan
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2020 Food and Drink Guide

SOUP
Is Back!!!!!!!!!!!!

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Image by Annches, Shutterstock.
By Scott Carlson

Meghan Gordon remembers when she was not very adept at cooking and baking.

“I didn’t have the patience for it,” Gordon recalled. “I couldn’t even boil water. I was a disaster.”

But then something wonderful happened one day after she and her husband Adam moved to St. Anthony Park 10 years ago, buying the home of celebrity TV chef Andrew Zimmern. She got inspired to cook an Italian pasta dish and discovered she could cook—and actually was very good.

“I had a craving for risotto,” Gordon said. “I was able to perform a minor miracle and made an asparagus and mushroom risotto in my rice cooker that was a wedding present and hadn’t been used in 15 years!”

Eight years ago, the former professional ballroom-dancer-turned-nanny started cooking some dinners for her nanny family. “I enjoyed cooking with the kids and wanted to take dinner off their parents’ to-do lists after kids and wanted to take dinner off their parents’ to-do lists after.

“Cooking and baking” is a way of showing love to other people. “Cooking and baking” is a way of showing love to other people.

Gordon is gaining a following that has inspired her to seek city licensing for her home-based business and make it a full-time endeavor. “This is my new passion and calling,” Gordon said.

Gordon said the arrival of the global pandemic forced her to stop being a nanny. But that loss has given her the undivided time to pursue cooking and baking on a more serious basis. She is calling her business “The Chocolate Chickadee.” The name is a nod to her grandfather who used to call her “his chocolate covered chickadee” when she was a child, Gordon said.

Prior to discovering the joys of cooking and baking, Gordon was a professional ballroom dancer with her husband. For 16 years, she taught ballroom dancing at the Dancer Studio off of Snelling Avenue in St. Paul. After leaving the Dancer Studio, Meghan started her own dance program called Baby Ballroom, which taught parents and grandparents to ballroom dance with their babies as their dance partners.

Adam, her husband of 22 years, and Meghan have two children: daughter Lily, 18, who is a student at the University of Minnesota, and son Ian, 16, who attended Roseville Area High School.

To find out more about Meghan and her business, visit her website at www.thechocochickadee.com and her Facebook page called The Chocolate Chickadee.

Scott Carlson is managing editor of the Bugle.

By Sarah CR Clark

Meghan Gordon samples one of her cookies. Photo from Meghan Gordon.

Summer Mural Project

Meghan Gordon samples one of her cookies. Photo from Meghan Gordon.

New, bright and original murals have been appearing on building walls in the industrial Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ) neighborhood in South St. Anthony Park, despite the postponement of the Chroma Zone Mural & Art Festival.

The second annual festival, originally scheduled for September, was postponed because of COVID-19. However, the organizers wondered how they “could use this time of uncertainty and change to support local artists and businesses affected by the COVID-related economic downturn,” according to their website.

The result: A summer initiative, called the CEZ Summer Mural Project, producing a series of new murals by local artists.

“The summer mural project gives us a chance to extend the narrative in and of our neighborhood,” said Catherine Day, CEZ founder and board chairperson. “We want people to find connection, beauty, and engagement here.”

One of the summer artists, Xee Reiter, began work on her mural (located at Oak Tree Art, 809 University Ave.) in early September.

“I want it to look like a girl painted it!” she said. Her mural is in honor of her teenage daughter, Alice, and will include some themes from “Alice in Wonderland.”

Reiter, who is a first-generation Hmong American, specializes in watercolor and pen and ink illustrations.

Her work includes children’s book illustrations and she has worked with local museums, TPT PBS, MPR and The Ordway.

Angela Casselton, project manager of the CEZ Summer Mural Project, reflected on the project.

“We are thrilled with both the opportunity and the outcome,” Casselton said. “Our artists have been amazing to work with, our business partners generous and supportive, and the community is both appreciative and excited. We know from last year’s festival that the murals have had impact and we really wanted to keep that momentum going.”

Sarah CR Clark is managing editor of the Bugle.
Governor Walz visits Como High School; classes commence with distance learning

By Eric Erickson

The steady stream of school buses in and out of Como Park High School might lead some to think this academic year is business as usual. But with students attending classes from home on their iPad screens, the buses only carry food—boxes and boxes of healthy meals transported to families across the St. Paul Public Schools district.

Como High is the staging area for the food distribution program. With SPPS reporting a total of more than 8 million meals delivered since the pandemic began, Governor Tim Walz stopped by in early September to see the operation.

Walz praised the Nutrition Services staff, helped load a bus and thanked all the drivers and support staff who provide the door-to-door delivery. As for academic instruction, student and staff opinions on distance learning are generally positive given the circumstances. “Overall, I think the school and district have a much better understanding of the ins and outs of distance learning than they did last school year,” said senior Keith Deal. “This has led to a much less confusing and more smooth transition back into school than what we had last spring.”

Como staff developed a schedule for instructions that is focused on students with consistent times for class meetings (via Google Meets) set between 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Teachers all hold virtual office hours from 2 to 3 p.m. on the Google Meet platform. Teachers all hold virtual office hours from 2 to 3 p.m. on the Google Meet platform.

“I love the format of the schedule,” said ELL teacher Suzanne Susens. “I tried Nearpod and Google Classroom, and I wasn’t able to attend a virtual class due to technology glitches, health or family responsibilities.”

“Teaching through the screen can be impersonal and the magic is harder to find. It’s challenging to not have the real human connection between everyone in the classroom, as that brings out the sense of community. The virtual meetings do help, but there is still a void with the digital interface.”

Given that reality, why are we doing it? Perhaps senior Emilie Hansen reminded us best. “Distance learning is preventing the spread of COVID-19!”

Eric Erickson is a social studies teacher at Como Senior High School.
Cheap clothes have human, environmental costs

By Karen Lilley, Commentary

Closet cleaning was a satisfying pandemic project for many. Another project might be to consider where those clothes came from and where they’re going.

Clothing is a $2 trillion global industry

In the U.S., 97 percent of our clothes are produced overseas, mostly in developing countries where some 40 million garment workers—primarily women—earn as little as $2 per day. It is the world’s most labor-intensive industry and the second most polluting (after oil).

Cheap clothes contribute to low wages, unsafe sweatshops, child labor and unhealthy environments.

Even in America, undocu- mented garment workers toil in deplorable conditions and fear deportation. For what? At the extreme, “fast fashion” is so cheap it’s disposable. Styles change weekly so shoppers can continuously renew their wardrobes. Some feature their bargains on Instagram and then never wear them.

In the U.S., Americans discard an average of 80 pounds of clothing per person per year. That amounted to 12.8 million tons in 2017, according to the most recent Environmental Protection Agency data. That year, clothing waste was almost double that of 2000 and 10 times that of 1960. Only 13 percent of clothing waste is recycled, although 95 percent could be.

We clearly need to hold the industry responsible for this human and environmental destruction. Patagonia is one brand leading the way with Fair Trade and “worn­wear” clothing. But we can all do our parts as individuals, too.

Here are some ways to be a responsible clothing consumer:

- Go a year without new clothes. Rethink your closet and get out of the buying habit. Wear the clothes you like best or have just rediscovered. Shopping takes a lot of time as well as money, and both add up.
- Repair, recycle or upcycle your wardrobe. If you sew, use that not­shopping­time to refresh and refit what you have. YouTube can demonstrate any technique you need. Or use the money you saved to hire a seamstress to remodel or update. Invest in your best pieces to enjoy them longer.
- Help create a new standard for clothing—worn, repaired and patched are acceptable. Let your clothes show the wear, like the professor’s elbow patches or frayed cuffs. A little fading or bagging is ok. Comfortable is really OK. Patch a tear with contrasting fabric and boldly stitch with an unexpected color, then repeat the same fabric and thread elsewhere on the garment. Google “visible mending” for ideas.
- Use clothing as fabric. I made COVID-19 face masks out of my son’s and husband’s cotton shirts. You can also repurpose adult clothing into kids’ clothes, reusable cloth napkins, or patchwork garments.
- Donate clothing you’ll never use so someone else can. Goodwill, for example, could send it to one of their 3,500 thrift stores, by-the-pound outlet stores, bulk auctions or furniture stuffing vendors. They also sell bales of clothing to developing countries, although such imports can both help and hurt economies and cultures.
- Buy used clothing, giving you a new life to your wardrobe. Some feature their bargains on Instagram and then never wear them. ThredUP, for example, could send it to one of their 3,200 thrift stores, by-the-pound outlet stores, bulk auctions or furniture stuffing vendors. They also sell bales of clothing to developing countries, although such imports can both help and hurt economies and cultures.

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CoCreate closes
The owners of CoCreate, the community co-office sharing venture at Raymond and University avenues, in early September, permanently shut down their nonprofit enterprise, blaming the coronavirus for the closing.

In a statement, the group’s founders said, “We opened CoCreate as a community center for gatherings and coworking for South St. Anthony Park, but the COVID-19 pandemic has made that goal unreachable. Being inside a building with people you don’t live with should be limited to only short periods of time, or for longer periods, only for frontline workers or urgent situations. Coworking meets none of those criteria.

“At this point in the pandemic, it’s clear that being outside is much safer than being inside, and that masks and being six feet apart help. But to what extent masks and distance help in an enclosed space when people are together for hours at a time, sometimes talking, is not a known thing, and we don’t want to market a business that asks people to be human guinea pigs. That is counter to our community-based purpose.”

Virtual series on American Presidency
Hannaton J.B. Andersen will lead a virtual lecture series on the American presidency at 1 p.m. on Tuesdays during October, through the Ramsey County Library.

Andersen will look at some of the most desperate moments in U.S. electoral history—how they happened and how our nation survived. The schedule is:

Oct. 6—Elections at the beginning: Founding Fathers Argue
Oct. 13—Entrenched Political Parties: In Fighting and Out Fighting
Oct. 20—Campaigning Begins: Slogans and Sound Bites
Oct. 27—Modern Era: Corruption Aplenty

These are online programs offered remotely using Zoom. You must register in advance for the event through the Ramsey County Library website or by calling the library at 651-724-6001. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

This series is co-sponsored by the Other Lifelong Learning Institute of the University of Minnesota with financial support from the Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries.

St. Paul Parks and Rec update
Saint Paul Parks and Recreation is planning to offer modified youth programming in the fall, including Rec Check, Smore 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.spaul.gov/rec-reimagined for more details.

Lunch bunch
The St. Anthony Park Area Seniors is planning virtual “lunch bunch” activities from noon to 1 p.m. on Oct. 7 and 21. Call the seniors office at 651-642-9032 for connection information.

Oct. 13 online discussion

Transition Town program: The True Cost
Watch first, then discuss this documentary about the clothes we wear, the people who make them, and the impacts of the global fashion industry (2015: https://truecostmovie.com). Stream it on Tubi (free 52-min. version) or Amazon Prime (92 min.). It’s also available as digital download, DVD, and Blu-ray. Watch the movie on your own, then join a Zoom discussion Oct. 13 at 7 pm. A guest from the University of Minnesota College of Design will participate in the discussion. Contract KLL@umn.edu for session link and other info.

Note: See Transition Town column p. 12

Virtual Connections with Lutheran Social Service Companion Program

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A former dentist, a successful business executive and a long-time Lauderdale resident are among the people we remember in this edition of Lives Lived.

Marlene Buckard

Marlene Buckard, Falcon Heights, died Aug. 7, 2020. She was preceded in death by parents, Albert and Frances Johnson; and son Joe. She is survived by husband John and daughter Kate.

Jean Christophen

M. Jean Christophen, 80, of Lauderdale, died June 22, 2020. She was a sweet and gentle soul. She is survived by her husband of 58 years, Clayton (Whitney). Readers know her as the “Birdman of Lauderdale” for her regular column; sons, Eric (Ellen) and Andrew (Kathry); daughter, Bethany Evink; and five grandchildren.

Raymond Gerst

Dr. Raymond H. Gerst, died Aug. 7, 2020. He was born in St. Paul on Nov. 12, 1931 and raised in Highland Park; the son of Raymond R. and Laura and Karen (Kake) preceded in death; the father of Fischer, T ex.; Eric of Reno, Nev.; and Duncan (Rebecca) of Plymouth, Minn.; and daughter Grenchen (Hendrik) Voegel of Deephaven, Minn.; plus nine grandchildren. Memorials preferred to Minnesotta Public Radio or the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

Beverly Paul

Beverly Paul died Sept. 2, 2020, one day short of her 90th birthday, due to Alzheimer’s and non-COVID issues. She was long-time resident of Como Park. Beverly was preceded in death by husband, Edwin “E.J.”; great-grandchild Chad Jr.; parents William and Minnie Sullivan; four brothers and four sisters.

School Board candidates from p. 6

that gives students an equal opportunity to succeed,” he said. Syed says suspension rates, safety and security and the lack of minority teachers are big issues. “Repetitive suspension among minorities reinforces academic and racial disparities,” he said, adding that schools must invest in support services, re-evaluate offenses deemed suspendable and hire more social workers, school counselors and mental health professionals.

Jim Vue

Vue, the short-term appointed board member now, is a Hmong father of five who has seen St. Paul public schools firsthand. He says that how well the district operates directly impacts students’ educational success and that his experience as a school parent would continue to serve him well on the board. “I have many years of experience with engagement in district-wide parent advisory councils,” Vue said, also noting his Army Reserve service in Operation Iraqi Freedom. “As a Hmong father, I am bringing a wide swath of practical application of district traditions and operations to the school board to ensure all students succeed.” Vue says the biggest challenges facing the district are identifying white supremacy as a dominant ideology, and then addressing it. “Race operates as the logic of white supremacy,” he said. “It pervasively orders and arranges what we experience through systemic operations to the point where we perceive this kind of world as reality.” Vue, who is a writer and cultural educator at the St. Paul non-profit In Progress, also wants to improve communications from district headquarters to the classroom to students’ homes, especially those where English is a second language. “English as the primary language tends to be the unquestioned form of communication,” he said. “But many families in the district speak Hmong, Spanish, Somali, Karen or something other than English. I think it is critical that students and their families be able to advocate in their own language.”

Cigale Almqvist is a Twin Cities freelance writer.

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For more information, please contact the church office.
Letters from p. 4

school was already facing financial problems. Not having a full roster of students enrolled would mean it would have to close down permanently. Now, the school has reopened. They’ve taken some safety precautions, like keeping class sizes small, using outdoor spaces and improving the HVAC system. But there’s still a lot of uncertainty about what this school year will look like. We still don’t have a vaccine and until we do, there will always be a risk for infection.

Throughout the pandemic, President Trump has said he wants things to return to normal as quickly as possible. He wants football stadiums to be filled with fans. He wants to return to doing political rallies ahead of the election. He wants schools to reopen. And while I want my daughter to see her teachers and classmates, I struggle with the very real health consequences that come with that.

From the beginning, scientists and public health experts should have taken the lead in our national response to the pandemic. They were sidelined. I wonder how many families would have responded differently to the survey if the only voice they heard was from a public health expert, rather than President Trump?

One of the pledges Joe Biden made if elected is to ask Dr. Fauci to stay on and help with the government’s response. Following science is how we’ll get out of this crisis.
Como cross country runners reaching for “PR”

By Eric Erickson, Sports analysis

Personal records, or “PR.” Competitive racers and casual runners share a knowledge of the acronym. The pursuit of a PR is one stimulating element to help perseveres through difficult training. Or in the case of the Como High School Cougars cross country team, it’s a motivating force to help navigate a season amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Without traditional races such as the Roy Griak Invitational or the Section 4AA meet serving as benchmarks, and without large races among many teams, this year has a different feel.

But to run and represent school, outside with friends, in a supportive environment and with a goal of setting a personal record? They’ll take it!

As usual, the Cougars have decent numbers out for cross country with 35 committed runners. There are more boys than girls, but it’s one cohesive program that trains and bonds together.

The competitive meets are less frequent because of COVID-19. They’re also smaller, with no more than 25 runners on a course at one time. Many venues, including parks, aren’t willing to host even those smaller events, which has led to more races being held on school facilities.

Getting creative

Coaches have been creative, setting up new courses and formats making some waves, setting a PR for a 2-mile run with a time of 10:34—and taking first place overall in the conference preview. Power-Theisen also took first place in the team’s first standard 5K race versus Central High School. An all-conference runner last year as a freshman, his results this year are due to increased strength and disciplined summer workouts.

The top training group for the boys features eight runners who are capable of earning variable points (which are distributed to the first six finishers on a team). Close behind Power-Theisen is senior Shakur Bati, then a group including senior captain Mohamed Aboushanab, junior captains Soren Sackreiter and Dylan Aarness, junior Owen Finlay, sophomore Sig Isaacson and freshman Mason Aarness.

Experienced girls varsity

The girls varsity lineup is loaded with experience. Senior captain Justine Wulf is leading the pack and placed second overall in the dual meet versus Central. She was also a top-tier finisher in the conference preview with a 2-mile time of 15:46. With an all-conference award last season, she’s hoping to repeat that performance and set a new PR.

Along with Wulf, the senior varsity runners include captain Claire Olson, captain Addie Anderson-Loupe, Ruby Kosiak and Audrey Power-Theisen. Also contributing at the varsity level are freshmen Anna Lovat and Laila Diaz.

Coach Tim Kersey is in his eighth year of guiding the Cougars. He appreciates the team’s commitment, evident in the voluntary summer trainings that were well attended. And he’s grateful that even with the COVID pandemic, cross country is having a season.

“Everything is a little bit different, (but) nothing is completely different,” Kersey said. “We still have meets. We still have an opportunity to compete. But it’s just with a smaller group of kids in a race. Distancing in warm-ups, different heats in the meets, kids wearing masks when they’re not running, these are adjustments we can do.”

Como’s captains have been willing to make the accommodations and comply with protocols in order to keep the season alive and prevent the spread of the virus. Beyond helping enforce coach’s directions at practice, the effort extends into altering the team’s traditional bonding activities.

“Team bonding has been definitely different than previous years but we’ve been trying some new things,” Anderson-Loupe said.

“We did a bonfire one night,” Sackreiter said. “And we’re going to work on bringing the pasta dinner to a park instead of all going into people’s houses.”

“We’ve also done some of our traditional breakfast runs on Saturdays,” Aboushanab said.

Anderson-Loupe added that in those fun runs, as well as practice, it’s natural to end up shoulder to shoulder with a talkative teammate, which requires intervening yells of “spread out!”

There are many laughs at a Como cross country event, along with a determination to reach that peak performance.

“Coach is really committed to helping each individual,” Olson said. “For every workout, he gives each of us a goal he wants us to make.” Kersey’s thorough planning and strategic goal setting challenge every Cougar runner to reach their best. Not just for a PR in cross country. It’s building a foundation for planning the necessary steps to try and achieve any short-term or long-term goal.

The physical activity, social interactions and the unofficial support network that are Como cross country combine to make it a positive influence in each participant’s life, especially given the tumultuous times of 2020.

After a long training run, as the six Como cross country captains stood in a socially distanced circle, Wulf said, “This is good for our mental health.” Every head nodded in enthusiastic agreement.

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