By Cigale Ahlquist

Jennette Gudgel misses her outings to Como Park Zoo, Minnesota Opera and Goodwill. But she has kept busy since the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in earnest last spring.

The 85-year-old former College of St. Catherine marketing management associate professor took up writing in retirement. Since the COVID lockdown began, she has compiled rough drafts of two novels: one about a homeless boy who witnesses the death of George Floyd and the other about a group of nursing home residents who expose drug pushers.

Characters in the latter tale are composites of fellow residents of the Lyngblomsten Care Center, where Gudgel has lived for three years.

“I got a lot of my information at meal time, when we sat together,” Gudgel said. “With COVID, we can’t do that. We go to the dining room, but it’s just one person per table.”

Meanwhile, monthly meetings of the Minnesota Christian Writers Guild that Gudgel used to attend in person have moved online during the pandemic. Gudgel talks often by phone with a fellow writer in the group.

COVID-19 has been especially difficult for those in all forms of senior housing.

Lyngblomsten CEO Jeff Heinecke said everyone at the facility—made up of three buildings housing the care center for 225 residents, 60 market rate apartments and 105 subsidized rentals—has had to adjust.

“The biggest changes were frequency of in-person visits and large group gatherings,” said Heinecke, also interim administrator. “It has been really difficult for families, so we’ve been doing a good number of virtual visits since September.”

Lyngblomsten has a closed-circuit camera that allows residents to view entertainment or religious services in the chapel while remaining in their units. The chapel also is used as a meeting area for in-person visits. Both Lyngblomsten and the Saint Anthony Park Home, which is home to 74 residents, have opened to visits by designated essential caregivers.

By Sarah CR Clark

In December, Kari Van Schyndel and her family drove to Kansas City, Mo., to pick up their new puppy. Her family, which includes a fourth grader and a sixth grader, describes their Spanish water dog named “Viggo” as fluffy, friendly and snuggly.

Originally, Van Schyndel and her husband Ryan planned on getting a dog a couple years from now. However, they decided to find one sooner, taking advantage of their time at home during the pandemic.

“We’re not the only ones with this idea,” Van Schyndel said. “We ultimately found Viggo through a breeder in Oklahoma. Holly Nitch, a certified veterinary technician at Minnepa Veterinary Clinic at 918 Raymond Ave., noted many families have added new pets during this pandemic year.

“Since more families are staying home due to COVID, they have more time for pets and the training and socializing that follows,” Nitch said. “People desire companionship during these difficult times.”

Navigating the pandemic with pets

By Sarah CR Clark

In December, Kari Van Schyndel and her family drove to Kansas City, Mo., to pick up their new puppy. Her family, which includes a fourth grader and a sixth grader, describes their Spanish water dog named “Viggo” as fluffy, friendly and snuggly.

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Como and St. Anthony Park community council news

District 10 Community Council
Banfield Pet Hospital coming

Banfield Pet Hospital has bought and plans to expand the Larpenteur Animal Hospital, 1136 W. Larpenteur Ave.

Banfield’s plans also include leasing the building to the west at 1144 Larpenteur Ave. and adding a vestibule connecting the two buildings, according to David Sorenson, project manager with Colliers, which is handling the construction work for Banfield.

Demolition work is already underway in the west building, he told District 10’s Land Use Committee on Jan. 6.

The company hopes to begin new construction at the 1144 Larpenteur Ave. building in February and finish by the end of this summer. The project does not require variances or zoning changes.

The 1136 Larpenteur Ave. building then will be renovated in the fall. When finished, the clinic will have more than 1,000 square feet. The project does not require variances or zoning changes.

Banfield has more than 1,000 U.S. locations. The company hopes to maximize the Como site’s proximity to the University of Minnesota’s veterinary school, Sorenson said.

The Banfield project will include new landscaping, additional lighting and some parking lot revisions, including the likelihood of eliminating the driveway at Dunlap just south of Larpenteur Avenue, Sorenson said. The addition connecting the two buildings will include an elevator to provide accessibility that does not currently exist, he said.

District 12 Community Council
New council members

The St. Anthony Park District 12 Community Council has welcomed several new members to its board of directors. They are:

- Business/Organization: Raymond Bryant (board co-chair), Sherman Eagles and Scott Simmons;
- North SAP: Michael Russelle (board co-chair), Tara Smith, Pat Thompson and John Maurer (treasurer);
- South SAP: Walter Johnston (secretary), Amanda Longley, Karen Nelson, Heather Humbert and Melissa Pappas (board co-chair).

Several seats still remain open for one-year appointments. Contact kathryn@sapcc.org for more information. Visit sapcc.org to learn more about board and committee leadership.

SAPCC February meetings

- Land Use Committee: 7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 4
- Board meetings: Thursday, 7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 11
- Transportation Committee: 7 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 23
- Environment Committee: 7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 24
- Equity Committee: 7:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 22

Excavation work last fall at Seminary Pond. Submitted photo by Capitol Region Watershed District.

Seminary Pond flood prevention project nearly complete

By Scott Carlson

A joint governmental project to minimize potential flooding at Seminary Pond and runoff water pollution into the Mississippi River is nearly completed.

The Capitol Region Watershed District said that in a recent news release on the project it has coordinated with Lauderdale, Falcon Heights, Ramsey County and the University of Minnesota. The project is designed to minimize flooding and prevent an estimated two and a half tons of sediment and some 10 pounds of phosphorous annually from entering the Mississippi River.

Besides improved water quality, the $400,000 project is expected to improve wildlife habitat by controlling invasive plants and replacing them with native plants in and around the pond, according to a Watershed District official.

“The improvements being made to Seminary Pond will enhance its storm water management functions and the surrounding natural area that is part of the larger, 7-acre Breck Woods, enjoyed by many local residents,” Anna Eliota, Capitol Region Watershed Division manager, said in the news release.

The improvement project involved removing 25 years of built up sediment and expanding the pond’s capacity by deepening it and raising a berm along its western edge, the Watershed District said. Rocks have been used to stabilize the channel, slopes and ravine leading to the pond. Iron-enhanced sand filters were added to the northern and southern ends of the pond to remove dissolved phosphorous, a pollutant in storm water runoff that fuels algal growth.

Eliota told the Bugle the project went smoothly “as a drier and slightly warmer fall was favorable for construction.” The project is scheduled to conclude with native plantings this spring.

Seminary Pond, located south-east of the intersection of Carl Street and Idaho Avenue, is a regional storm water pond receiving runoff from 128 acres of land in Lauderdale, Falcon Heights and St. Paul. The pond was created in 1994 and was originally designed to move and temporarily store storm water runoff. It has provided limited treatment of pollutants before it flows into the storm sewer system and the Mississippi River, the Watershed District said.

“Capitol Region Watershed District worked doggedly to pull together the partners and financial resources needed to accomplish this project,” Lauderdale City Administrator Heather Burkowski said. “The beneficiaries are the Mississippi River and all of us who are committed to doing our part to protect and improve our local natural environment.”

To learn more about the project go to capitolregionwd.org.

Scott Carlson is managing editor of the Bugle.
Gardening consultant will give beekeeping a try

By Anne Holzman

While Falcon Heights adopted a beekeeping ordinance last fall, Lauderdale has had beekeeping rules since 2015. But the Lauderdale ordinance will be used for the first time this year by sustainable gardening consultant Diane Galvin.

She applied last spring for permission to keep honeybees in a client’s yard, down the street from her Lauderdale home. She is the first resident to obtain a permit since the city passed its ordinance.

Galvin told the Bugle in early January she decided to try beekeeping out of professional interest. Her consulting business is EcoLogic. She has helped clients get started with chickens, and honeybees would likely have similar appeal.

She said, “This was something people were going to ask me about.”

So last winter, she took a community education course on backyard beekeeping. Her own backyard is too small, but a client suggested she try it on their property.

“It was an opportunity that fell into my lap,” Galvin said.

She said bees require shelter and food, and if they don’t find it, they’ll go elsewhere. So she assessed the existing plant life on the property and found ample support for the existing population of native bees plus an added hive.

“The more the merrier in the pollination world,” she said.

Falcon Heights leaders discussed a beekeeping ordinance in 2012 but dropped it without passage. Early last year, the Environment Committee revived the issue. The Planning Commission held a hearing in September.


Senior services

For seniors preferring to remain in their private homes, Saint Anthony Park Area Seniors provides a wide range of wellness activities, nursing care and caregiver support. In-person activities have been modified: exercises have been reduced, but it will be nice to do things together again,” said Katharine Tondra, program director. “We dearly miss the staff and seniors.”

Cigale Ahlquist is a Twin Cities environmental consultant. She has been a long-time resident of the Bee Lab at the University of Minnesota. Galvin wants to go over the years. No one appears with objections at the hearing, and the Falcon Heights City Council subsequently approved the ordinance.

Galvin said prospective beekeepers should start by checking their city’s requirements. Most require certificates of training as well as hive setbacks from property lines and other specifications.

She said there are lots of local resources available, including the Bee Lab at the University of Minnesota.

“But you don’t want to go into this on a lark,” Galvin added.

New bee hive boxes were being dried from a fresh coat of “stucco” colored paint to blend in with Diane Galvin’s house in Lauderdale. Photo by Diane Galvin.

According to the minutes of various meetings, there were concerns about bee allergies, about access to beekeeping for apartment residents and about what happens when neighbors come and go over the years. No one appeared with objections at the hearing, and the Falcon Heights City Council subsequently approved the ordinance.

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She said there are lots of local resources available, including the Bee Lab at the University of Minnesota.

“But you don’t want to go into this on a lark,” Galvin added.

Keeping honeybees requires investment in hives, protective gear, a smoker—and more equipment if you process your own honey.

Galvin compared the process to keeping chickens, which can be done in a few months from permit to first basket of eggs. Bees may produce only enough honey the first year to get the hive through the next winter and produce enough for harvest after the second year.

“It’s probably more reasonable to look at (beekeeping) as a two-year program,” Galvin said.

Anne Holzman covers Lauderdale and Falcon Heights government news for the Bugle.
**EDITORIAL**

From the Desk of the Editor

By Scott Carlson

Coping with COVID

Welcome to 2021! It promises to be a year of change and lots of news.

The subject that continues to dominate our lives and the news is the COVID-19 pandemic. In this issue we have news stories dealing with the impact of the pandemic on our businesses, senior citizens and nursing homes, student athletes and pets. In fact, there is so much COVID news that we don’t have room for all of it in this issue.

In the months ahead, we will continue to bring this subject as our nation presses forward with rolling out flu vaccines from various pharmaceutical companies.

In other news, Como Park High School social studies teacher Eric Erickson, a regular contributor to the Bugle, offers a personal reflection on how he and his students processed the events of Jan. 6 when the U.S. Capitol came under siege by rioters.

On a lighter note, we had our first reader contribution to our new Bugle online feature called Park Photo Galleries on our website http://www.parkbugle.org. The photo accompanies this article.

We invite readers to send us interesting photos of community activities or other happenings in your neighborhood. Send photo submissions to editor@parkbugle.org with the tagline “Photo Gallery.” We will then curate and post photos to our website.

As always, we appreciate when writers and readers submit their articles early. Aside from breaking news, most articles can be submitted ahead of the scheduled deadlines.

Please note our publication dates represent when the newspapers go out for delivery. Mail distribution of the paper may take up to several business days because of recent problems with U.S. Postal Service deliveries. Meanwhile, bulk drop-off of the paper around town are completed in two to three days after publication.

**LETTERS**

Addressing priorities

We all watched in horror on Jan. 6 as insurrectionists stormed the U.S. Capitol. Many of us questioned why this was allowed. Many of us questioned why so many who violently interrupted constitutional processes were allowed to walk away. Many of us have shared our voices that this is not what the United States should be and it must be changed.

Then a few short days later, peaceful protestors standing up against Line 3 were handcuffed and arrested in northern Minnesota. Their crime: Standing up against the well funded, well lobbied creation of a pipeline that will devastate the environment for future generations.

We here in Minnesota and in the country really need to get our priorities straight. Fast.

Tom Lucy Como Park

**ASK THE LIBRARIAN**

By Judy Woodward

Every month, the reference librarians at the Roseville Library receive dozens of questions from the public. Here is one of the more interesting queries we received recently:

Q. I’ve been watching “The Queen’s Gambit” on TV. Is that show based on a real person?

A. Unfortunately, the world has not yet seen an American female world champion chess player—much less one who made her way from a rural orphanage in Kentucky to the center of the chess world while acquiring a killer haircut and a to-die-for chic, 60s-era wardrobe along the way. As does the heroine of the TV series.

“The Queen’s Gambit” is fiction. To date, chess remains all-male as masculine pursuit as tackle football or college fraternity initiation rites.

The stronger female chess player ever is widely considered to be Hungarian Judit Polgar, who ranked 35th in the world about a decade ago.

In 2015, Polgar retired from competition and shortly thereafter she was named coach of the Hungarian national men’s chess team. Like Beth Harmon in “The Queen’s Gambit,” Polgar began her chess career as a child, regularly beating men who were decades her seniors. Unlike Harmon, she came from a supportive, chess loving family, who seem to have nurtured her talents without instilling self-destructive tendencies. Polgar’s thoughts on the comparative strength of male and female players are not known. But as a married mother of two, she did remark once that she had no intention of giving up “everything” to become a world champion chess champion.

“I have my life,” she told a journalist in 2002. (Internet Resources.)

Judy Woodward, who lives in St. Anthony Park, is a reference librarian at the Roseville Library. 2800 N. Hamline Ave. The library’s general phone number is 651-724-6001.

**Wellness**

Our annual Wellness special section

Coming in the next Bugle:
Park Bugle 2021 preview

By Scott Carlson

As the Bugle kicks off a new year of reporting, we expect 2021 to be every bit as eventful as 2020. Some items will be new while others will be a continuation of projects and events from 2020. Here are a few things to watch for:

Redevelopment plan for lower Luther Seminary

A real estate and construction firm’s plans to redevelop a 15-acre site on the lower campus of Luther Seminary are in flux. What is coming is anyone’s guess. The real estate firm, Master Properties Minnesota, has suffered numerous delays in proceeding with its project, which calls for building up to 450 to 500 units of new housing—from market rate family units to co-op housing for seniors—while preserving the campus’ 10-acre Breck Woods natural open space.

At press deadline, Master Properties was seeking a replacement partner for the United Properties assisted living component of the project that had been put on hold. Meanwhile, Master Properties’ purchase agreement with the Seminary had expired, freeing the religious institution to engage in talks with other developers about the campus redevelopment, said representatives for Master Properties and Luther Seminary.

Foundation seeks new director

A little over a year ago, the St. Anthony Park Community Foundation named Alison Schaub as its executive director to succeed the retiring Jon Schumacher, a 20-year veteran of the post.

Now, the nonprofit is beginning a search again for a new director in the wake of Schaub’s recent departure. For the next six months, Lauren Renner will serve as the foundation’s interim director, handling its operations and assisting the organization to find a new permanent part-time director. Renner is a St. Anthony Park resident and active volunteer, most recently serving as the president of the St. Anthony Park School Association during 2019-2020.

Founded in 1998, the foundation raises funds to support charitable and community activities that serve the needs of the St. Anthony Park community.

No SAP Arts Festival

Organizers of the St. Anthony Park Arts Festival have cancelled the 2021 arts festival due to continuing fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

The nonprofit recently issued the following statement: “Based on what we know about COVID-19 today and the time it takes to plan the arts festival, we are not able to host the event in June 2021. The Library Board voted unanimously in support of cancelling the arts festival for 2021. “Co-directors Tanya Andersen and Deanna Seppanen and the planning committee hope you all will support local artists over the holidays and also support our local library! The library is losing this annual fundraiser two years in a row because of Covid-19.”

Sholom Home site

A proposed redevelopment of the former Sholom Home care center into rental apartments is still in the works, according to Michael Kuchta, executive director of the District 10 Como Community Midway Community Group.

Bugs tops annual fundraising goal!

Wow! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! As of Jan. 12, more than 600 donors have contributed $55,030 to the Bugle’s annual fall fundraiser, smashing our campaign goal of $45,550.

This year we were blessed with many, many generous donations. In the 11th hour, we received a $5,000 grant from the Biglow Foundation. We are very grateful for your outpouring of generosity and thank all of our financial supporters for your confidence as the Bugle strives to produce great journalism that informs readers and supports the communities of St. Anthony Park, Como Park, Falcon Heights and Lauderdale.

While the fall fund drive is over, you can always make a donation any time during the year. You can give online at www.parkbugle.org or with a check, sent to The Park Bugle, PO Box 8126, St. Paul, MN 55108. Every gift matters! Now here is a list of our latest donors, from the period of Dec. 9 to Jan. 12:

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Haley Anderson
Kyle Anderson
Anonymous
Nina Archabal
Elizabeth bedell
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Saint Anthony Park Senior Support
Social studies students reflect on history in the making

By Eric Erickson
Commentary

What questions do you have? What reactions or feelings do you have?

Those two questions were the extent of my lesson plans following the failed insurrection of the U.S. government on Jan. 6, 2021.

When the attack on the U.S. Capitol occurred on that Wednesday afternoon, Como Park High School students were at home for a day of independent, asynchronous work. With online classes scheduled for all my 11th grade U.S. History and 12th grade AP Government classes over the next two days, I prioritized helping students process what we all witnessed. This was not a unique decision to my classroom. My Como colleagues and educators across the country adjusted plans to create spaces for students to speak about the chaos and threats to our democracy—the system of government our schools are responsible for teaching.

Democracy requires listening. And given the opportunity to be with my students during tumultuous times, I’ve found the best thing I can do to serve my students is listen.

Listening allows questions of confusion to be heard and addressed with available evidence. Listening allows questions of curiosity to be asked. We don’t have all the answers.

But peers and adults alike may draw upon our knowledge for precedent, or we may speculate given the historical and political context.

Listening allows social and emotional outlets for students. Reactions and feelings vary based on personal experiences and beliefs. But when our schools are working well, our classrooms can respect multiple perspectives, as well as the differing levels of information and knowledge our students may have.

Prior to my virtual classes following the U.S. Capitol riots, I pulled together 10 photos to present. After greeting everyone who popped into our Google Meet, we silently viewed each image for 30 seconds. These fresh primary sources reviewed and informed while allowing sufficient time to pose questions and express reactions to both. My students had a plethora of questions that fateful Wednesday:

“What were they (the protesters) trying to do?”

“What would they bring the Confederate flag in the building?”

“Do you think the 25th Amendment will be used?”

“Why weren’t the police stopping them?”

The abundance of questions guided our discussion. The students’ reactions and feelings revealed the challenges facing our nation:

“Surprised that I’m not surprised.”

“Sad and angry.”

“Trump’s supporters were adamant on the importance of the Constitution and rule following. Now they’re saying they only care about Trump and the Constitution and voting don’t matter.”

“I was confused as to why they were trying to invade and defile the most important federal building in the U.S. Seeing the pictures of police standing idly by made me even more upset.”

“There would have been cops in full riot gear to beat them back if it was Black Lives Matter.”

“A low point for American democracy.”

As a social studies teacher, I’m fortunate to process events with students. Listening to teenagers can be therapeutic. I don’t believe it’s my job to tell students what to believe but I love them all and try to model respect and hard work. I’m responsible for promoting and supporting critical thinking, and creating an environment for civil discourse. That starts with listening. And if we listen, there is still hope for this American experiment in democracy.

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

Pandemic Pets from p. 1

percent increase in new pet owners and an increased demand for appointments for new pets.

Some clinics are reaching their capacity and are unable to take on new clients,” Nitch explained. As the Bugle went to press, another local veterinary clinic, St. Francis Animal Hospital (Roseville) was not accepting new clients.

Where the level of business local veterinarians are experiencing, the Van Schyndels are plenty busy adjusting to life caring for a puppy, with the pandemic presenting training challenges.

“Viggo’s already starring to develop an instinct to protect his household,” Van Schyndel explained. “It would probably be helpful for him to meet people inside our home. But due to COVID-19 we don’t feel comfortable with this option.”

While friendly with people, Viggo is shy around other dogs. So, Van Schyndel and Viggo are participating in a socially distant, puppy socialization class called The Canine Coach. “Viggo likes to be with us 24/7,” Van Schyndel reported. But Viggo’s family is planning to return to school and increase hours at work in the near future.

“As of right now the only time Viggo is OK with being in his crate is when he’s going to nap.”

When schools and workplaces begin to reopen, separation anxiety will be an issue for pets adjusting to emptier households, particularly if that pet is a dog. Nitch said. Dogs suffering with separation anxiety might pace, pant excessively, vocalize more and engage in restless or destructive behaviors, she predicts.

Nitch and Mueller suggest taking a gradual training approach to transitioning pets to what post-pandemic life will be like. For example, leave pets home for longer and longer amounts of time, or slowly adjust work schedules to new, normal levels of being away.

“Pet parents can try calming supplements,” Nitch added. “We recommend contacting your pet’s primary veterinarian for recommendations.”

Viggo is a Spanish water dog.

Doggy daycare or hiring dog walkers may also provide healthy activity for lonely pets.

“I don’t think we are going to notice much with cats, since they are pretty independent animals,” Nitch said.

Sarah CR Clark lives in St. Anthony Park and is a regular freelance writer for the Bugle.
Restaurants, retail hope to rebound with easing of COVID-19 restrictions

By Cigale Ahlquist

Sandra Weise is hopeful.

With the easing of COVID-related restrictions for bars and restaurants on Jan. 6, Weise, the owner of the Finnish Bistro on Como Avenue, spent the next days preparing for the partial reopening of indoor service.

“I am better off than so many of my industry friends, and I am very grateful,” Weise said. “We are fortunate that we’ve maintained steady business.”

Not every restaurant planned on reopening, to the extent allowed.

Dino’s Gyros in Falcon Heights would continue only handling take-out for now, CEO Jason Adamidis said in mid-January. The company owns four Twin Cities area restaurants plus smaller operations at 10 corporate sites, which have been closed during the pandemic because large numbers of people have been working from home.

“Our stores are so small, there’s no way to do 50 percent,” said Adamidis, whose father started Dino’s more than 30 years ago. “Our stores are so small, there’s no way to do 50 percent.”

A plan to open a walk-up order-first-serve basis.

Sandra Weise is the owner of Finnish Bistro. Bugle file photo by Scott Canton

Cigale Ahlquist is a Twin Cities freelance contributor to the Bugle.

Once owner of Finnish Bistro

“January to March is the worst time for the whole industry. People make New Year’s resolutions to lose weight. They save money for spring break vacations, blizzards—that all hinders businesses.”

For the Finnish Bistro’s Weise, predicting how much business would pick up was a challenge. Staffing dropped from 22 to eight, including six dishwashers per shift, since the pandemic started. Because of that, she decided to serve everything in biodegradable, front-line people. But we are suffering in our own ways. When a restaurant closes, you hear, ‘It’s just a restaurant,’ but it’s more than that. I would lose everything. It ruins people’s lives.”

After nearly losing her 70-year-old mother to COVID-19 just before Thanksgiving, Weise is particularly cautious about safety, noting the Finnish Bistro’s cleaning protocols and advanced ventilation system.

“It lost a half-million dollars last year, but I still am on the side of safety,” she said.

Despite the challenges of the past year, including a burglary at the restaurant just before Christmas, Weise is optimistic about the future.

“We feel stronger and more prepared, and it feels less uncertain,” she said. “Even if we had to close again, it’s not survival of the fittest, but of the most adaptable. And we can ride it out.”

Will increased bar, restaurant foot traffic help retailers?

One retailer was hoping bars and restaurants weren’t going to be the only businesses affected by the Jan. 6 mandate change. bornGif Gifts & Goods, which opened in May 2019 in the former BiBeLo storefront on Como Avenue, hadn’t been open even a year when the COVID-19 shutdowns began in 2020.

“We were closed March to May,” said Janet Haugan, the shop’s co-owner with Peggy Merrill. “At that time, we developed a website and worked hard to do whatever customers needed: home delivery, curbside, help shopping over the phone, some Face Time.”

Despite their efforts, business last summer compared with the same period a year earlier was “dramatically different,” Haugan said. “Foot traffic dropped off completely.”

She was hopeful the reopening of restaurant dining rooms, along with the increased distribution of vaccines, would get more people out of the house and gradually restore shopping to pre-COVID levels.

“It’s going to be a long haul,” she said. “People are very, very cautious.”

Saint Anthony Park Area Seniors

This pandemic has thrown all of us for a loop and made us more isolated. As part of our mission to prepare seniors and caregivers we want to offer you this pyramid of ideas to fend off loneliness this year.

Tips for exercise, eating

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Bang Brewing finds opportunity in tough times

By Sandy Boss Fabbo

Editor’s note: In 2013, Bang Brewing opened at 2320 Capp Road as St. Anthony Park’s first craft brewery. Owned and operated by the husband and wife team of Jay and Sandy Boss Fabbo, Bang Brewing features all-organic beers and a sustainability ethic. The business reflects their values, building community along the way. Here, Sandy gives an update on their business.

“Biggest impact, smallest footprint.” These words lead each of our business decisions. It’s become our motto.

From the start, Jay and I have worked all aspects of our brewery operations—without investors and without employees—in our first two years. Only when you know what you do, can you do what you want. This led to three more mottos: “This is crazy,” “No sudden moves,” and, “Don’t go/Woof it up.”

“The Bin,” what we call our custom-built grain bin, serves as it can be done. Better. With less. And every day is a reminder to make our living one beer at a time. Our growth has been steady, our customers have become friends and our employees are now family (thank god for Marx). Our first seven years led to inspiring partnerships and multiple awards. We’re awed by the opportunities that have resulted.

Rolling with the punches 2020 began as our busiest year to date, with plans underway for the first in our Perennial Percent members. In Minnesota. Plural! We brewed a beer to celebrate. SUDS, a cream ale, features organic grains from Doubting Thomas Farms, malted by Minnesota’s own Verde Vertical Malte (which just completed their organic certification) and is the first in our Perennial Percent series in which each batch includes Kernza®, a new grain.

• We’ve partnered with the University of Minnesota to launch the Organic Brewers Alliance. We are aggregating a nationwide database of producers of organic, regenerative and sustainably farmed ingredients that will become a tool connecting farmers, mid-producers and brewers. Next steps: Map it out, identify clusters, shape cooperative purchasing opportunities and nurture its growth.

• That adjacent parcel? Slowly working on it. Step one, we removed some asphalt and extended our rain gardens to sink more stormwater runoff and allow for more beer garden space. Step two, we’ll continue to stare at the existing pole barn and think about what we might do with it.

We’re grateful to be where we are; this moment is important and it feels good to be moving forward. We’ll keep working on these projects while brewing and bottling our hearts out. Our taproom will remain closed through this pandemic. For everything 2020 dealt, and exposed, we found exciting opportunities and necessary responsibilities. Thanks to all for your continued support via our retail partners and curbside hours— it’s keeping us in motion and fueling these plans, one bottle at a time.

About Bang Brewing
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Find retail outlets at bangbrewing.com/find
Caribou ordering and pickup Tuesdays 4-6 p.m.

Affiliations and Awards
Founders, Organic Brewers Alliance
Member, Brewers for Clean Water Campaign
Partner member of Artisan Grain Collaborative
Sustainable Saint Paul: Green Products 2015, Water Quality and Conservation 2017
Blooming Saint Paul: Silver 2017, Gold/Lifetime 2019
Capital Region Watershed District, Project of the Year Star Tribune, Best Taproom Saint Paul

Sustainable Saint Paul: Green Products 2015, Water Quality and Conservation 2017

* Got an idea for a commentary? Submit it to: editor@parkbugle.org

** More information at TransitionASAP.org.
Grants are music to Grasselli’s ears for vocal academy

By Cigale Ahlquist

Forty years after discovering she could sing anything from country to classical songs, without injuring her voice, Diana Grasselli is still teaching others how to make the most of their vocal talents.

Grasselli has been teaching voice in the Twin Cities since 1979 after a professional career that included performing with Gilda Radner on Broadway and in the Nicklesh Nichols directed documentary “Gilda Live” and recording on Capitol Records as a member of the R&B/rock band Desmond Child & Rouge in the late 1970s and early 80s.

Her studio, Chanson Voice & Music Academy, a nonprofit organization with one location on Raymond Avenue in St. Paul and another in Minneapolis, recently was awarded a $1,000 grant by the St. Anthony Park Community Foundation. The money will help fund scholarships for St. Anthony Park residents, she said.

For Grasselli, the Foundation’s grant and financial support from others has been a boon to her academy, which got slammed in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“In March, we lost about 30 to 40 percent of the student base,” Grasselli said. “There was about a month with practically no activity. When things became clear about the shutdown, we quickly did whatever we could to jump online.

“It was a very harrowing time for everyone,” she recalls. “But God bless Minnesota … . St. Paul, grants from Minnesota, grants for small businesses. I really worked hard to write grants to flow through the hard time, beef up the scholarship program and subsidize teacher salaries.”

Grasselli’s efforts to shepherd the academy through this hard time has been born of her lifelong love of singing. “I explored all kinds of genres myself … was singing in all the popular idioms—rock, R&B, country, soul—and noticed so many had vocal issues,” said Grasselli, who developed The Vertical Voice Training Method.

She came from a family of singers and loved classical singing and explained, “I learned from bel canto training how the voice functions and never for a half-second had any vocal issues, yet I could express the (singing) styles with authenticity.”

After a freelance career as a vocalist that took her from New York City to Los Angeles and Paris, Grasselli yearned for a less hectic atmosphere and settled in Minnesota in 1998 after visiting friends who worked at the Guthrie Theater.

Grasselli’s initial foray into a solo teaching studio led to working long hours every day, she said, “I worked with anyone, whatever was going on with their voices. It got to the point: downsize or ask other people to join me.”

She did the latter and opened the Raymond Avenue location in December 2022. The studio, with its two locations, now has about 240 students and a staff of 25 teaching voice, guitar, piano and violin, along with music theory, composition, ear training and dictation. Students range in age from 3 through seniors.

Among Grasselli’s students is Rachel Dickinson, a junior at Highland Park High School who aspires to a theater career. She has studied with Grasselli since grade school and, besides participating in school choir and musicals, has 45-minute virtual private lessons with Grasselli weekly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“She’s a very important mentor to me,” Dickinson said. “She’s very good at combining everything—helpful in the technical side of singing, finding meaning from the words.”

Lucija Vacić, a senior at the St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists, works on technique with voice teacher Samantha Laumann.

Grasselli said, “One of our main thrusts is to provide music training to everyone who is interested, whoever is in need or wanting, we’ll go out of our way to accommodate them.”

Cigale Ahlquist is a Twin Cities freelance writer for the Bugle.

Diana Grasselli. Photo by Carina Photographics.

Chanson Vocal & Music Academy

Locations:
795 Raymond Ave., St. Paul
In the Semple Mansion, 100 W. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis.
Phone: 612-630-1599
Website: https://chansonvoicestudios.com/
New dentist
Saint Anthony Park Dental Care announces Dr. Nadine Yacoub has joined its clinic.

Yacoub, a native of Minnesota, completed her undergraduate and dental degrees from the University of Minnesota. She will begin working at the clinic in February on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

“She enjoys treating the full spectrum of dental concerns with a particular emphasis on caring for kids,” said SAP Dental Care’s Dr. Nathaniel Cogswell. “The most enjoyable part of dentistry for Dr. Nadine is building lifelong relationships with individual patients and their whole family. In her spare time, she loves to travel with her family, cook new recipes from all over the world and spend time with her boys.”

Lunch bunch
The St. Anthony Park Area Seniors is planning virtual “lunch bunch” activities from noon to 1 p.m. on Feb. 3 and 17. Please call the seniors office at 651-642-9052 for the Zoom links or further information. One additional note: SAPAS also has quite a few face masks available for seniors and jigsaw puzzles to share. Call their office for further details.

League of Women Voters program
The League of Women Voters St. Paul is hosting a program titled “Civics in Our Schools: What’s Going On?” at 7 p.m., Feb. 23, via Zoom. The panel will consist of local academic and experts as they share their knowledge on a variety of topics.

Here is the lineup of speakers through Feb. 23:
- Feb. 9: China Rising—Pros and Cons
- Feb. 16: LGBTQ+ History in Minnesota
- Feb. 23: Preview from p. 5

As always, the League of Women Voters St. Paul urges members and non-members to participate in these talks and vote in upcoming elections. For more information, call 651-724-6001. The League of Women Voters St. Paul is anequal-opportunity organization and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, creed, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or marital status.

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Tours from p. 5

Photo by Scott Carlson
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Como Park Lakeside pavilion parking lot
Look for reconstruction of the pavilion parking lot this coming summer.
Scott Carlson is managing editor of the Bugle.

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The Ramsey County Library concludes its six-week Wednesday virtual program on the presidency of George W. Bush on Feb. 9, 10 and 17. The remaining classes, led by popular local historian J.B. Anderson, will be broadcast online from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Although his legacy will be forever linked with the events of 9/11, the presidency of George W. Bush covered a wide range of issues, including two controversial wars, the new millennium and unprecedented standards for digital surveillance.

These program sessions will be conducted virtually via Zoom and participants must register in advance at the Library’s website or by calling the Library at 651-724-6001. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

The Smallest Museum is a 3- by 2-foot micro-museum housed in a vintage fire-hose cabinet outside of the Workhorse Coffee Bar.

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By Sarah CR Clark

Every June, rather than prepare for a summer vacation, salmon fisherman and Como Park resident Tijl van der Wege heads to Alaska for a season of intense work.

“One thing we leave the land, we basically don’t go back until the end of the summer,” van der Wege explained. “If we’re catching fish, it’s hectic the whole time.”

But, seven seasons into his fishing career, van der Wege embraces that crush of activity.

In the summer of 2020, van der Wege and a crew caught roughly 125,000 pounds of fish.

“Anything over 100,000 is a decent year,” he said. “They sell most of their fish immediately bled and iced for freshness, to Copper River Seafoods. Van der Wege also brings 3,000 pounds home to sell to personal contacts and at farmers markets.

Van der Wege met his fishing captain, Phil Zander, while both played baseball at the University of Minnesota.

Van der Wege recalled Zander’s initial invitation: “He (Zander) was like, ‘I’m working in Alaska on a fishing boat. One day I could run my own boat. Come work with me.’ He’s that kind of guy.”

He and Zander spent months planning for Zander’s first year as captain, which was also van der Wege’s first fishing season. The crew catches sockeye salmon on out of the Bering Sea near Naknek Harbor using drift nets that van der Wege heads to Alaska for a season of intense work.

Alaska’s salmon season, van der Wege travels in the fall and, then, again in the spring. Meanwhile, in the winter he coaches wrestling at Como High. “It keeps me connected with the kids and the school I went to,” he said.

van der Wege did not grow up fishing or hunting in Minnesota.

Sarah CR Clark lives in St. Anthony Park and is a regular freelance contributor to the Bugle.
Justice for George Floyd

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Facing the Special Care Unit

By Janet Wight

We all knew this might be our last visit with my husband’s Aunt Hazel.

We had discussed this possibility repeatedly, Hazel (not her real name) is in her late 80s and recently developed some type of cognitive dysfunction, possibly due to the aftereffects of back-to-back surgeries within the past year.

The last time we saw Hazel was on Thanksgiving Day 2019. We visited her in the hospital, and she seemed to be OK. She wrote us a detailed letter in December describing her rehabilitation.

But when we spoke with Hazel on the telephone a few months ago, we knew her mental state had changed. Later, we learned that she had been moved to the Special Care Unit in her senior community.

We set out for northern Wisconsin on a Saturday in late September. As we drove north, we admired the spectacular hues of the fall foliage, signaling the end of the growing season. I was contemplating the last few years of Aunt Hazel’s life, now in its final season, and how the best laid plans can disintegrate.

With fewer children and smaller extended families than in previous generations, it is not uncommon these days to be left with a meager (or non-existent) support system in old age. This is a challenge that many of us will face, yet it often remains unspoken.

For nearly three decades my husband and I have been visiting her aunt and uncle once or twice a year, and our daughters have attempted to join us on many of these outings. Since Aunt Hazel and her husband lived on the way to Duluth, it was easy for us to stop by, and we did so many times.

Even if we were not headed to Duluth, we would sometimes make the four-hour, round-trip drive as a day trip, sampling Aunt Hazel’s wonderful cooking and homemade baked goods upon arrival. We thoroughly enjoyed getting to know them and their way of life over the years. Graphically, they were our closest family members.

But everything is different now.

When we arrived at Aunt Hazel’s senior community, I briefly stepped inside the compact Special Care Unit to announce our arrival. In this small town there is no need to lock the doors or block access to the rest of the building, even though some of the residents have dementia. It is simple enough to locate someone who had wandered away. I found a staff member and asked for Aunt Hazel to be brought outside.

We had spoken with Hazel just four hours earlier.

But we were not sure if she remembered the conversation.

What was obvious, however, is that she was surprised and thrilled to see us. We had arranged four chairs on the small patio so that Aunt Hazel could join in the circle in her wheelchair.

Hazel could no longer fully comprehend our attempts at conversation, and it was hard for her to form the words that she wanted to say. She clearly knew the people in the old photos that we showed her on a large iPad, including herself as a girl along with her brothers and parents. She was delighted to have this connection to her family and to see familiar faces. Her face lit up with each new image. And she loved being pushed in her wheelchair as we walked around the perimeter of her building several times. She savored the fall colors and relished the change in scenery. But no, she didn’t seem to understand exactly who we were and didn’t remember our names.

Most of us expect that a spouse or child, or a close friend or family member, will be there for us in our time of need. And Aunt Hazel was certainly devoted to her husband during his many months of living with Alzheimer’s disease. Luckily, she still has dear friends including one who continues to visit her, and prior to being moved to the Special Care Unit she knew many people in her assisted living wing. Many of these residents had been former neighbors or acquaintances from the 50 years she has lived in the area.

Aunt Hazel’s children and grandchildren are not able to help out for various reasons, which is such a common occurrence in today’s society. These include geographic barriers, emotional distance and—saddest of all—estrangement.

We have discussed these issues with Hazel over the past few years along with our ideas and suggestions. We had even offered to help clear out her apartment after she passes away so she wouldn’t have to worry about what would happen. At this point she is no longer able to talk in depth about these individual family members, or even to express her most basic wants and needs. We already knew that she has been mostly alone for the past several years.

I wanted to visit Aunt Hazel because I realized how much she would enjoy seeing us, but that wasn’t the only reason. She has been my friend for nearly 30 years, and it was important to me to see her and talk with her again, especially if it turns out to be our last visit.

Despite the multiple phone calls and awkward difficulty in communicating, it was totally worth the effort. Aunt Hazel has been an important part of my life for a long time, and I wanted to make sure she knew that.
Taking a look at the American tree sparrow


The article on the American tree sparrow was written by A. Margarete Baumgartner, who contended the tree sparrow’s song sounds like “Margarete.” At the time, she was studying tree sparrows near Churchill, Manitoba, and it gets pretty lonely up there.

The tree sparrow breeds in far northern Canada where the only trees are stunted spruce and willows. In fact, Baumgartner thought the bird might be more properly called the brush sparrow because it usually nests on the ground and is seldom found in trees, summer or winter.

Baumgartner studied their nests and found lemming fur in some of them! I think that’s fasci- nating. I’ll bet the sparrows didn’t chuck the fur off a live lemming (running for a cliff!) but found clumps on bushes and such.

She also found the nest lined with Ptarmigan (grouse) feathers. I was in Churchill in June of 1955 and we were able to see a willow ptarmigan. It’s about the size of a large pigeon. The ptarmigan changes from an all-white winter plumage to speckly brown feathers for the summer. The bird we saw was still white on the bottom half, not quite fully dressed for summer.

The sparrows’ nests are usually on the ground in a grassy sward (bunch) or a shallow depression, rarely in a shrub or low tree. The nests are compact, made of grass, rootlets, moss, forbs (non-grass flowering plants), inner bark and, as Baumgartner noted, sometimes lined with feathers or fur.

Tree sparrows arrive at their northern habitat just about the time of the ptarmigan’s spring molt. The ground is littered with white feathers and the sparrows add these to their nests. I think it’s interesting that the tree sparrows we see here in Minnesota have spent time in the company of lemmings and ptarmigans.

The female lays three to five eggs, pale blush or greenish-white, marked with brown spots, and about eight-tenths of an inch in length. The female sits on the nest.

Insects in the far north become active in mid-June, so tree sparrows time their nesting to have nestlings before May. Young are fed nearly all insects; initially, parents nectarate food for the nestlings. Having been in Chur- chill in mid-June, I know first- hand that the tree sparrows have picked a good time and place to get insects: Blackflies swarm any warm-blooded creature! As the fledglings leave the nest to begin foraging on their own, their diet includes some spiders, seeds of grass, sedge, forbs, buds and catkins of willows and birches and a few berries.

At night, most of the birds roost individually in sheltered spots on the ground.

By December, most tree spar- rows have headed south on their fall migration. Their wintering grounds are across the entire United States, a journey of 1,500 to 2,000 miles. It’s a trip they take at night.

The longevity record for the tree sparrow is 10 years, 9 months, but the average life span is proba- bly 4 to 5 years. Tree sparrows are with us here for the winter. They subsist mainly on seeds. I’ve seen a small group of tree sparrows foraging among grasses, leaping up to attach seeds from the weed heads. Then peck- ing at the seeds that have fallen on the snow. Very resourceful.

I’ve never seen it, but tree sparrows have been known to roost under the snow’s surface. That sounds chilly on the face of it. But the snow would be good insulation from the wind. Tree sparrows can survive temperatures below -18 degrees Fahrenheit. They also roost in conifers.

Tree sparrows will readily come to feeders. One of their most diag- nostic features is a bicolored beak, if you can get a good look at it. The upper mandible is black; the lower is bright yellow with a dusky tip. And look for a clear gray breast with a single black “tie tack” on the chest. They have a cherron cap, a rusty eye-line and two white wing bars. That chestnut cap brings to mind the chipping sparrow we see in the summer, which gives the tree sparrow its nickname of the winter chippy.

Most birds don’t sing much when they’re away from their breeding grounds, but the tree sparrow will sing on a bright and sunny day in winter. Their singing increases by February. American author Henry David Thoreau described their song as, “twitter twitter twe twe.” He said he thought their call sounded like the tinkling of an icicle.

And then, from early March to late May, with a peak in early April, they’ll take those long nights flights back north to the tundra to start the cycle again.

Clay Christensen lives and writes in Lauderland, Minn.
Real estate pioneer Mary Ann Milton dies

Mary Ann Milton, 99, of Mound, died Jan. 2. She was for many years a familiar business figure in St. Anthony Park and developed Milton Square here.

A Scots-Irish immigrant, her parents, James and Cecelia Mellon, came to St. Paul in 1928. She grew up in a newspaper family and attended St. John's University in 1968 and cum laude from the University of Minnesota School of Law in 1972.

Milton ran a private real estate company, became the first woman real estate broker in Minnesota and president of the Minnesota Board of Realtors.

She owned and developed many properties, but her favorite was her creation of Milton Square in St. Anthony Park. This charming European-styled commercial and residential property in St. Paul is where she took great pride in mentoring and promoting many local businesses. Mary Ann was also active in supporting the St. Anthony Park neighborhood and its many businesses.

Preceded in death by her husband Gerald, her sister Marlon and brother-in-law Gerald, Milton is survived by three children, Michael, Patrick and Heather (Stephen) O'Malley, seven grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service is being planned and will be held in the future.

—Mary Mergenthaler

ROSELAWN CEMETERY

LIVES LIVED to p. 15
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20/20 HOUSE CLEANING. Perfect house cleaning. W/ over 25 yrs exp. in the area. Family-owned & operated. 651-922-9228

QUALITY CLEANING AT REASONABLE rates. Painting area over 30 yrs. Pita & Molly, 612-414-8241

A TREE SERVICE, INC. Tree removals, trimming and limb grading. Over 38 years of experience. 612-724-6045

Evelyn Vik

David Vik, Jeffrey Vik (Lisa) and Rhonda Morrison (David); seven grandchildren; sister Irene Hildebrandt and brother Leroy Prinboh (Bobbi)

Martha Yonker

Martha Mae Yonker, 89, died Jan. 2, 2021. She was born to Martin and Anna Mae Andersen on Sept. 7, 1931, in Lake Benton. She was preceded in death by her parents, seven siblings, hus- band Glenn and son Paul. Martha is sur- vived by her children Vivian Andersen (Daryl), Faye Corbett, Sharon Vedrus (Stev- en), eight grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. A private service and burial will be held. Memorials can be made to Como Park Lutheran Church or charity of your choice.

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Martha Yonker
Winter sports giving it a go

By Eric Erickson

High school sports in the St. Paul Public Schools resumed on Jan. 14, 10 days later than the Minnesota State High School League’s official return to play. The athletic directors of the St. Paul City Conference and school administrators have taken a more cautious approach than the rest of the state, given the high number of COVID cases in Ramsey County and the district’s distance learning.

For Como Park Athletic Director Koua Yang, the management of activities has been challenging. “There are constant changes from the MHSFL, and then coordinating their expectations and recommendations within our district,” Yang said.

“Each community is unique and has its own challenges and some do not agree with the decisions that are being made. Many parents have opted (to take their kids) out of sports.”

With evolving situations amid our nearly yearlong global pandemic, there will undoubtedly be adjustments to schedules as winter sports are administered. But two Como programs in particular are starting from positions of strength, based on recent history and enthusiasm for the activity itself.

Girls basketball

The Cougars have been the dominant force in the St. Paul City since 2015, evidenced by their current 62-game winning streak and has their own challenges and enthusiasm for the activity itself.

Girls basketball

The Como Cougars girls’ basketball team won their 6th consecutive conference championship in 2020.

With a schedule limited to five games per month and a shortened season, head coach Saylor Landrum has had to change the focus of their practice.

“Early in the season we were more focused on keeping everyone healthy so we can have as full of a season as possible,” Van Voorhis said. “I think team goals for this year are a little less race focused and more focused on keeping everyone healthy so we can have as full of a season on snow as possible,” Van Voorhis said.

“Our start date for the season has been moved three or four times. Races have had to be postponed or cancelled, and we still aren’t 100 percent sure about what the format for our conference championships and section race will be,”

The changing start dates based on Department of Health mandated pauses have been disappointing to Cougar skiers, even though they understand and accept the reasons. The kids just want to get going.

So does the coach. While Van Voorhis deals with scheduling headaches, he’s happy that the MSHSL has expanded the season into the middle of March (assuming public health permits) instead of concluding in early February.

Regardless of races and formats, the Cougars can count on two juniors to lead the way in practice.

“Saylor Landrum and Owen Finlay are both strong, experienced skiers that lead by example,” Yang said. “They do a great job of helping new skiers how to ski and trying to foster a team dynamic within our sport.”

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