Kraus-Anderson breaks ground for housing project

By Scott Carlson

Construction is underway for a 220-unit apartment complex at the northeast corner of Raymond and University avenues, making it the latest housing project in St. Paul’s south St. Anthony Park area.

And its imminent arrival is being cautiously anticipated by the St. Anthony Park Community Council.

The developer, Minneapolis-based Kraus-Anderson, expects to complete the $31.5 million, six-story project in June of 2022.

“We love the activity of the intersection and the history of the neighborhood,” said Tim Marco, Kraus-Anderson director of development. “We think this is an up-and-coming neighborhood that is also maintaining its history.”

Marco told the Bugle the apartment complex, which at the Bugle’s press deadline was unnamed, will feature a mix of market-rate studio, one- and two-bedroom units. The complex will have two levels of underground parking for residents and earmark 2,000 square feet for commercial use on the building’s first floor.

“We’ve worked closely with the St. Anthony Park Community Council and with the guidance of the City’s Heritage Preservation Commission to deliver a vision that will enhance and complement this strong and invested community,” Marco said.

He noted the one-acre site is one block from the light rail Metro Green Line station, offering residents easy access to mass transit. Kraus-Anderson bought the site from US Bank, which had a branch office there until the land sale and the construction firm tore down that building to commence the apartment complex.

Kraus-Anderson said its project, designed by Urbanworks Architecture, is being designed to appeal to young professionals with transit-oriented lifestyles. Besides underground parking, the project is scheduled to include a fitness center, outdoor courtyard with pool, clubhouse, fully automated building access systems and rooftop patio.

The Kraus-Anderson project is the latest multi-unit complex slated to serve south St. Anthony Park. In recent years, other multi-unit complexes had been planned but not nested in the back of new developments or zoning changes. However, the Kraus-Anderson complex is of some concern to the St. Anthony Park District 12 Community Council.

“The diversity of housing should not just be for market-rate, single people, but also for families to support the schools, and seniors wanting to age in place, to support the schools, and create a view from the front line

By Maja Beckstrom

Doctors battling Covid-19: a view from the front line

Shortly after Dr. Jonathan Kirsch discharged his first COVID-19 patient from Bethesda Hospital in March, he decided to record “Here Comes the Sun.”—Here Comes the Sun.”

At first Kirsch, as a volunteer, thought it was someone’s mobile ringtone. Then he realized the Beatles tune was played on hospital loudspeakers to celebrate each victory over coronavirus. With so many ill people admitted to St. Paul’s designated coronavirus facility last spring during the height of the pandemic, every recovery got a sendoff.

Kirsch, a St. Anthony Park resident, is an internal medicine doctor at the University of Minnesota Medical Center and like many health care workers in the neighborhood, he cared for COVID-19 patients over the past year.

American’s ambitious vaccination program may soon control the virus and better treatments are helping more people survive serious cases. But health workers remember those uncertain early days.

“Some people were very ill and so we did everything we could. But that was when (COVID-19) tests took five to seven days to come back with results,” Kirsch recalls. He and colleagues cared for suspected coronavirus patients with inadequate masks and protection. They didn’t know yet what treatments might save lives.

“We were figuring things out and trying to apply new knowledge as we could,” he says. When Bethesda Hospital, just north of the State Capitol, was staffed for the expected surge of COVID-19, Kirsch volunteered...
District 10
Community Council
Report: Como Lake water quality improving
The herbicide that the Capitol Region Watershed District used in 2020 to battle invasive curly-leaf pondweed in Como Lake, and the alum it used to battle excessive phosphorus, both are showing early success in improving water quality.

The bottom line:
• The number of curly-leaf pondweed plants decreased 56 percent in 2020 and the number of reproductive turions, or seeds, decreased 79 percent. “It was a plant that had taken over the lake, greatly reduced habitat quality within the lake and outcompeted the native plants,” said Bob Fossum, a Watershed division manager.
• The injection of alum in 2020 helped reduce phosphorus concentrations by 62 percent, compared with the historical average from 1984 to 2019. For the first time on record, the average phosphorus concentration in Como Lake in 2020—65 micrograms per liter—nearly met the state standard.

“It was tremendous improvement,” Fossum says, “the lowest reading we’ve ever seen on Como Lake.”

Curly-leaf pondweed is the lake’s main internal source of phosphorus, which collects in bottom sediment until being released. The biggest challenge with curly-leaf is that—unlike native plants—it grows in the winter, under the ice. It dies off in June or July, creating dense mats near the water’s surface and releasing a surge of phosphorus into the lake.
That surge provides perfect fuel for algae and further chokes off oxygen when levels already are low because of peak sunshine, warming temperatures and the lake’s shallow depth.

“It’s a perfect recipe for a mid-summer algae bloom,” Fossum says.

While the herbicide attacks phosphorus levels by reducing the volume of curly-leaf pondweed, alum—liquid aluminium sulfate—further cuts phosphorus levels in the water by instead locking into lake sediment.
The Watershed District repeated the herbicide treatment again this year, applying Fluridone on March 31, shortly after ice out.
Later this year, the district plans to do further shoreline maintenance to help native plants rebound.
In addition, filtration projects completed on the Como Park golf course in 2020 (which will eliminate about 55 pounds of phosphorus from flowing into the lake), plus additional storm water run-off treatment in the watershed, should reduce phosphorus even further, Fossum says.

These actions are part of the Watershed District’s 20-year adaptive management plan for the lake, which includes continuous monitoring of the lake and fish management to increase the number of predators such as walleye, bass and northern pike.

Como Lake “is doing much, much better,” Fossum says. “Year one results were very good.”
But he adds that improving Como Lake’s water is a long-term commitment.
“It’s the cumulative impact of a number of different efforts, large and small, that are going to get Como Lake to a healthy, balanced ecosystem.”

Old media navigate a new era
As more people get their information (and misinformation) from social media sites, and as daily, weekly and monthly local newspapers scale back or fold altogether, what’s the future of local news?
The Como Community Council’s Sunday Series features a panel discussion with Tesha Christiansen from the Monitor, Scott Carlson from the Park Bugle and Kelly Smith from the Star Tribune.
The online presentation is scheduled for 1 to 2:30 p.m., Sunday, May 2. To attend via phone or Zoom, email district10district10@comopark.org.

Vote on a mascot
We invited your ideas for a neighborhood mascot—and you replied. Como residents submitted almost two dozen suggestions of what could serve as a recognizable symbol we can identify with, call our own and use to promote and enliven District 10 events.
The Como Community Council narrowed the list; now it’s your turn to vote.
Pick your favorite at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/district10mascot
Vaccines “a game changer”

Vaccines have also been a game changer in the delivery room, says Katie Pfaff, a certified nurse midwife at Hennepin Health Care, and another St. Anthony Park resident. The number of pregnant women testing positive for COVID-19 has gone down in her practice. At the same time, some women are hesitant to get vaccinated because they worry about the effect on an unborn child.

“We think it’s safe in pregnancy,” says Pfaff. “But we can’t say that for sure, although we do know there are thousands of health care workers who have received it and are fine.”

Just recently Pfaff cared for a woman who came to the hospital vomiting and feeling sick. The woman thought she was in labor. It turned out she had coronavirus, though not a serious enough case to require hospitalization.

“We feel like we’re over the hump of the pandemic,” said Pfaff. “But this was a sobering reminder we are still dealing with.”

One of the biggest changes over the past year has been the enforced separation from family and friends. Women in her care could only bring one person to be with them during the birth.

“There were sad stories about grandparents who didn’t meet their grandchildren for months,” she says. But while some new families struggled with isolation after the birth others found an oasis.

“Sometimes the bubble was a bit of a blessing,” Pfaff says. “If you have a new baby it can be a time when you want to go to a quiet protective place. And people were able to do that.”

Kirsch says he also has seen a small, unexpected upside to the pandemic. The higher rates of COVID-19 among people of color and people in poverty have brought attention to longstanding health disparities and prompted the Otto Bremer Trust to give $1 million to the University of Minnesota to purchase and equip a mobile health clinic.

The new clinic on wheels builds on a summer course Kirsch teaches to U of M medical students and residents to improve health care to migrant workers.

“The new van holds two tiny exam rooms and a lab and will hit the road in May, bringing blood pressure screening, hepatitis tests, and yes, COVID-19 vaccines, to community events year-round in places that are part of the discussions such as financial aspects and community values and expectations that are part of the discussions we will hold in the coming weeks and months. At present, because the process is just officially beginning, there are no details of what a contract with Saint Paul Police will entail.”

Meanwhile, Thongvanh and his staff are working with St. Paul Police to begin covering Falcon Heights starting next January.

In an email newsletter to residents, Mayor Randy Gastulf wrote about the contract talks. “There are many nuanced topics around law enforcement service such as financial aspects and community values and expectations that are part of the discussions we will hold in the coming weeks and months.”

Meanwhile, the issue of who can best offer public safety in Falcon Heights has been on the agendas of city leaders at least since Phillipardo Castillo was killed by a St. Anthony police officer in Falcon Heights on July 6, 2016. An Inclusion and Policing Task Force, convened during 2018, issued recommendations. That led to a series of Community Conversations in December 2020 and January 2021 when participants responded to updates on the contract situation.

At the third meeting in the series, held Jan. 7, a survey showed the participants’ preference for St. Paul Police over an alternative possibility of reinvigorating a contract with St. Anthony police.

A summary of responses to a survey about satisfaction with the Ramsey County Sheriff notes, “There was satisfaction with the sheriff in the beginning, but the majority opinion has now gone the other way—to unfacilitate.”

The survey summary further says, “Community members want improved communication and transparency from police.”

Anne Holzman is a Bugle freelancer who covers government news from Falcon Heights and Lauderdale.
St. Anthony Park
Como Park

Distribution: 5 to 10 business days

By Gabrielle Lawrence and Kristin Wieruma

The Bugle board of directors comprises members who are passionate about the newspaper and its role as “a community connector.” During the past nine months we have worked on a rigorous assessment and planning process that has culminated in a revised mission statement, a re-imagined vision, affirmed core values and produced a thoughtful strategic plan for the next three years.

We are proud of the work we’ve done and excited to share our vision of the Bugle’s future with you. Here are the highlights of what we accomplished:

- We listened to the community through a readership survey, a business/advertiser survey and two community listening panels.
- We looked at the central purpose or mission of the Bugle, we identified the values guiding the work of the Bugle and we discerned a strong vision for the future. We then created an ambitious strategic plan to more deeply engage and serve this community.

What is the board’s vision for the Bugle?

Our vision describes what we want the future Bugle, our dream Bugle, to be.

- We’re fortunate to live among neighbors who care about the community we live in. We have strong businesses and institutions with long histories.
- The Bugle is part of the legacy of our community. For over 40 years we have been sharing the stories of the people who live and work in our community. As the digital age sweeps through our lives, we envision the Bugle continuing to provide a ready-made digital platform that can be read at one’s leisure.

The Bugle continually shares news, information and opportunities to build partnerships with local resources. The Bugle is the hub where staff and volunteers with a passion for our community work together to create timely, quality journalism with a neighborly voice.

We have an ambitious three-year plan in the works including specific goals for the remainder of this fiscal year and into 2021-2022, which starts in July.

This next year, we will focus our attention on developing innovative strategies to connect with readers, expand board leadership, plan and secure necessary staff resources, fund raise and develop community partnerships. We will work towards understanding our community’s role in perpetuating institutional racism and will pursue stories to explore these issues.

We are thankful for this community that loves and values the Bugle. We look forward to continuing the conversation with you as we move forward into the Bugle’s future.

Gabrielle Lawrence is chairperson of the Bugle board of directors. Kristin Wieruma, who is also on the Bugle board, has been leading the strategic planning process.

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

Opinions expressed in the Bugle by the editor, writers and contributors do not necessarily represent the opinions of the board of directors, Park Press, Inc. Copyright 2021, Park Press, Inc. All rights reserved.

The Park Bugle is published by Park Press, Inc., a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization guided by an elected board of directors.

Currently serving on the board are:
Josh Recerra, Rosanne Cahill, Liz Danielson, Barb Hawes, Gabrielle Lawrence, Beth Magistro, Steve Parker, Mary Rendahl, Kristin Wieruma

Here are our Bugle deadlines for the next three issues. As always, we appreciate when writers and readers submit their articles. 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. Meanwhile, bulk drop-offs of the paper around town are completed in two to three days after publication.

Upcoming Bugle deadlines

Issue Copy and ad deadlines Publication
May 2021
May 12
May 25
June 2021
June 16
June 29
August 2021
July 14
July 27

What is the price of development?

As a new building project on Ter- ritorial Road in south St. An- thony Park is underway, I mourn the loss of some very old friends—three majestic and stately bar oaks. They were very resilient and survived untold odds in their surroundings over the 150 to 190 years they stood guard as build- ings and driveways and roads were built around them.

They were healthy and flour- ishing, part of a neighborhood bordered by polluting freeways and busy streets. All their lives, these oaks absorbed carbon di- oxide from the air and helped to slow global warming, filtered rain- water, cooled their surroundings and provided homes to countless birds and animals. Perhaps even more important to those of us who walked past or saw them out our windows every day, they calmed us and made us feel good.

I took these trees for granted. Now a vast, gaping hole remains, soon to be filled by steel and con- crete structure that will not hold carbon, filter water or provide a sense of well-being.

Our children and future gen- erations will not see or feel the benefits of trees like these in our community. Could the oaks have been saved, to help soften the sharp corners of the building and provide a ready-made landscape? Probably.

Would they have helped neighbors accept the reality of our more building project in a neighborhood crammed with new buildings? Certainly. When will builders and all the people in- volved in construction come to respect and value standing trees like the oaks and build carefully around them?

Val Czerny
South St. Anthony Park

Climate change

In late 2018, the Intergovernmen- tal Panel on Climate Change gave the world a stark warning: The world MUST take unprecedented aggressive action to fight climate change to have even a chance at avoiding the most severe climate change impacts.

In spite of that warning, most national governments have taken only moderate action to cut back greenhouse gas emissions. This level of national government climate inaction is unacceptable if we want a healthy future for our children and grandchildren.

During this void of national leadership on climate action, one positive trend has developed: In the United States and throughout the world, companies, towns and organizations are taking their own steps to act on climate. These localities and groups have acknowledged that we can’t wait for national leaders and have de- veloped a groundswell for climate action from the ground up. Now our national leaders and govern- ments must catch up.

I am proud to say that local ac- tion is growing within St. Paul. One specific local effort to combat climate change is being organized by the Saint Paul Federation of Educators.

In fact, February, SPEE held a virtual town hall meeting to pro- mote the effort to have Saint Paul Public Schools be a leader in de- veloping and/or using community solar. During that town hall and since, we in SPEE and through- our community have learned how SPEE solar installations can benefit our students and families in many ways (i.e. educationally, environmentally and financially). Now it’s time to turn that dream into a reality. Students within SPPS, SPEE members and St. Paul residents are organizing to reach the goal of making SPEE a climate action champion through solar. To achieve this goal, we must help the Saint Paul School Board and administration see how much support this effort has from St. Paul residents and SPEE and SSTP students and staff.

This is where you all come in. I hope you can join this effort by signing our petition for So- lar in SPPS. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIPLq1iSMWvAw0Sx8cTwppr3116Go6sk4kRy9dP207mcU0p0-96gJOQ6Q_viewform/a/spi6_f_link

As our numbers grow, we will get closer and closer to our ulti- mate goal: a clean, healthy and equitable future for our children and grandchildren. Thank you!

Tom Lucy
Como Park and SPEE member

———

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By Sarah CR Clark

Editor’s note: An earlier version of this interview was posted to our web site Oct. 29, 2020. This article has been edited and updated in response to racist attacks on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders around the country.

Jill Rode, who identifies as an Asian American queer woman, is pastor at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church. Her wife is also a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Q: Jill, how has the mass shooting in March in Georgia impacted you?

As of April 15, several hundred Asian Americans face very difficult at times to feel Asian enough to contribute to conversations about violence towards the Asian American community.

Q: What do you think about the “Stop Asian Hate” movement?

As it’s about time, the Asian American Pacific Islander community is vibrant, diverse and is largely invisible (apart from the harmful stereotypes that are too prevalent). The more visibility we can bring to traditionally silenced and forgotten voices and people, the stronger our country will be. We need to condemn acts of hate. Raising awareness is the first step.

Q: How has this time of national racial reckoning inspired you to reflect on your own racial identity?

As I’ve been doing a lot of reflection on my own racial identity since May (when George Floyd was killed while in police custody), I’ve been reminded that, as an Asian American in the Lutheran church, there isn’t a space carved out for me. I can’t easily get together with other Asian American pastors to talk about the issues we face. In a way, it really gets to the wider issue of the invisibility of Asian Americans in the U.S.

Asian Americans face very different racial issues that go under publicized, partly because of the “model minority” myth. This model minority stereotype is particularly harmful to Asian Americans because it sets up an impossible standard: that all Asian Americans are hard-working and well-educated, and therefore, self-sufficient. So, those struggling with poverty, homelessness or mental illness go unpublicized because it is assumed that all Asian Americans have it all together.

The model minority myth really serves to divide and pit different races against each other as it creates a sense of unfairness. So, it’s been really important to me, as a person of color, to try and advocate for and amplify the cries we hear from other people of color. In the words of the late, great Paul Wellstone, “We all do better when we all do better.”

I’ve been thinking about how my Asian identity hasn’t been a big part of my identity, partly because the family I was adopted into is white and partly because issues of Asian Americans are never highlighted and so I never think about them.

As I get older, there is more of a draw towards diving deeper into my identity, where I come from and who I am.

Q: How has your experience, as an Asian American queer woman, strengthened your leadership?

As I think anytime you come out of a marginalized group of people, your well of empathy is super expansive. It’s just bursting at the seams because you know that it doesn’t feel great to be “othered.” I think one of my greatest leadership strengths is my empathy, particularly for people who don’t quite fit in, because I’ve been there and continue to be there.

Q: Can you share a story of a time when you experienced injustice?

As growing up as a kid in Arizona I got teased a lot for looking Asian. Kids made mock-Chinese sounds at me, which made me in that I was somehow different.

As an adult, people sometimes ask, “Where are you from?” And I’ll say, “I’m from Arizona.” They’ll pause and say, “No. Like, where are you really from?” It’s micro-aggressions like that that indicate to me, again, I am somehow “othered.”

But the greatest example has been waiting for my current call (pastoral position) because of my sexuality. My wife is a pastor too, and we both certainly waited longer than average to receive our first calls. We were told by several churches that they wouldn’t interview us, for no other reason than that we were queer.

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Pattison pursued an odyssey of ‘Fossil Men,’ will discuss it for Library’s Tuesday Scholars

By Scott Carlson


“The skeleton captivated me because it was so complete—and thus allowed me to explore the natural history of the human body from head to toe. It also had a dramatic discovery story: a bunch of idiosyncratic scientists as compelling characters and huge controversy,” he explained. “Ardi challenged much conventional wisdom about human origins and became another chapter in a decades-long saga of battling between rival scientific camps.”

“Initially, I thought Ardi would be a minor part of the book but, as I became immersed in the topic, I decided this was a better book than the one I had set out to write. After agonizing for a while, I junked the original topic and decided to focus on this instead,” Pattison explained.

Pattison began work on the book in 2011 and landed a book contract in 2014 from William Morrow (an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers) and submitted his final manuscript in 2019. The book was released in the fall of 2020. “We actually wound up delaying publication for a few months because coronavirus hit just as the book was finishing final production,” Pattison said.

“Although ‘Fossil Men’ has yet to appear on any bestseller list, the publisher has told him his book was finishing final production,” Pattison said. “Although ‘Fossil Men’ has yet to appear on any bestseller list, the publisher has told him his book was finishing final production,” Pattison said. “Although ‘Fossil Men’ has yet to appear on any bestseller list, the publisher has told him his book was finishing final production,” Pattison said. “Although ‘Fossil Men’ has yet to appear on any bestseller list, the publisher has told him his book was finishing final production,” Pattison said.

“In my last visit to Ethiopia came shortly after the country declared a national emergency due to civil unrest and I almost didn’t get a visa. Luckily, everything worked out in the end. I owe a great deal to the Ethiopians who helped me—and the kindness of strangers.”

The final challenge was writing the damn thing,” Patterson said. “I had to make this huge saga accessible to laypeople with no background in these fields.”

He describes such non-fiction writing as learning “as much as possible about your topic,” and then deciding to leave 99 percent out of your book. The trick—and agony—is picking that small remainder that captures the essence of everything that you have learned.”

Despite the critical acclaim for “Fossil Men,” Pattison has no plans for a sequel. “After years of immersion in this strange branch of science, I am eager to work on something completely different,” he said.

Scott Carlson is managing editor of the Park Bugle.

Kermit Pattison in Ethiopia. near site of Ardi skeleton. Photo submitted by Kermit Pattison.
By Sarah CR Clark

If our walls could talk, they might recall the quieter pre-pandemic days before we painted, rearranged, knocked out or redecorated them.

During an unprecedented year with scores of people staying indoors due to coronavirus protocols, many homeowners have embarked upon do-it-yourself home projects.

In an informal Facebook survey over the past year, I found neighbors who have created garden offices, installed flooring, insulated garages, repaired and painted windows and refinished decks.

In portrait: Jason Lewis Farquhar of St. Anthony Park, who reported taking on “so many” DIY home projects.

“I’ve built three desks and two wooden boxes for storing iPads and their chargers,” he said. “I replastered our dining room table, made Julie (his wife) a stand to hold her vinyl collection, finished building our porch swing and now I’m finishing up some floating walnut shelves in our living room.”

Benjamin Olsen, a St. Anthony Park resident and architectural designer for the Minneapolis-based firm of Lance/O’Neill, said, “People are doing DIY (projects). They’re thinking really hard about their home and property: their garage, their attic, their garden because they’re just at home all the time.”

Specifically, Olsen noted one popular DIY project is retooling home space into office or work areas. However, one local family went way beyond doing just a DIY space conversion for a home office.

“We added 576 square feet above and 156 square feet below grade (to our house), moved our kitchen, added a half bathroom on the main floor, a fourth bedroom and an en suite full bath on the second floor, plus our oldest child got her own closet,” said Drew Schmidt.

Since purchasing their St. Anthony Park home (a 1925 Dutch Colonial) in 2016, Schmidt and his wife, Rachelle Hill, knew they would someday expand it.

“I really liked the small house,” Hill recalled. “And we had visions for how it could be updated to better fit our family life.” Schmidt and Hill have two young children.

Schmidt and Hill have undertaken DIY home projects together before. Schmidt explained, “This is the sixth house Rachelle and I have done major work to and it’s the third project where we’ve managed multiple subcontractors.”

Schmidt served as general contractor and also performed all mechanical work and assisted electricians while Hill took on the role of customer.

“I knew what I was looking for in the project as a whole,” said Hill, who spent months thinking about design and finishing materials. Her other role was painter. The couple also partnered with local firm Terra Firma, which provided excavation, foundation, framing and finishing carpentry work.

“While Schmidt and Hill planned their home renovation before the pandemic, all of their construction occurred during the Covid year and, with it, some challenges. For example, only one work crew at a time was on site, in order to allow for social distancing and that led to some minor project delays.

Meanwhile, some crews were more careful about wearing face masks than others. (“Terra Firma in particular was great about following public health guidelines and we appreciated that,” Hill said.)

Another challenge: The cost of building materials has risen appreciably. In response to cost increases, the couple has chosen “to delay a screen porch and finishing of our third bathroom until we save a bit more,” Schmidt said. Still, despite the challenges, Schmidt and Hill said they are loving their renovated home.

“It’s a much healthier and efficient home!” said Schmidt.

Olsen, the architectural designer, knows well the significant cost increases in building materials and components. For instance, Olsen cited an electrician who recently walked away from one home project because “he couldn’t stand by the (initial) bid he gave just three months ago.”

In December the price for a coil of electrical wire was $200, but in March the cost for that same coil was $417. For neighbors looking to begin a DIY project, beware: Costs for labor and materials, like wood, remain high.

Olsen said, “The (Minnesota governor’s) stay-at-home order (in response to the coronavirus) in the spring of 2020 created a backlog and a supply-and-demand equilibrium has yet to be reached.

“Instead of people not buying wood products, the demand for wood surged (last spring) and by the time the sawmills came back on line there was all of this pent-up demand. The surge hasn’t really slowed down,” Olsen noted.

Sarah CR Clark, who lives in St. Anthony Park, is a regular freelance writer for the Bugle.
Selling your house? Moving? It all takes planning

By Barb Swadburg

Buying a new home and selling your old one! It is a process that can send even the heartiest soul into a state of nervous indigestion. Take heart. The adage that buying a new home and selling an old one? It is a process that includes professional help is available every step of the way, from decluttering to boxing, from furniture moving to painting and decorating as well as from real estate agents to stages.

Help is out there waiting for you. No matter whether you use professional services or go it alone, please allow yourself the luxury that planning provides. Let us start with the idea that you know where you are going. Have you decided to move to Hawaii, or into the next block? Knowing where you are going can help you decide what you want to take with you.

Remember, moving is a process, and part of that process is deciding what will fit in your new space and lifestyle. The plan for decluttering and downsizing is now before you. This task will call for you to take the memories and get rid of the junk.

This might be the right time for you to call in the troops to help you with triaging. Friends, neighbors and kids might be available, or you might wisely decide to call in a professional downsizer. Oh, and do not forget, the decluttering plan extends to the attic and the basement as well as to the garage.

You know where you are going, and you have decluttered. Now let us look at the house and decide what you can do to start the process of getting it ready for sale. Your goal is to decide what needs to be done to show off your house in its best light. Here is where a professional housing stager may tell you to start:

• All minor repairs that affect the feel of the quality of your home need to be addressed. Missing doorknobs, handles and hardware need to be replaced or repaired and all leaky anything, from the roof to the basement, must stop leaking.

• Then: Clean, clean, clean! This should be at the top of your list. Part of cleaning is organizing those closets and drawers and neutralizing pet and cooking odors. No short cuts in this area, and a word to the wise: Popoutri is not your friend!

As you are organizing your closets, kitchen and bathrooms, remember that buyers are concerned with where they can store their stuff. So, your goal is to let the storage space be visible. A buyer needs to see the spaces and believe that they fit his or her living needs.

Wow, shoulders back and chest out! Now, at this point you really need to decide whether you want to do “for sale by owner” and start your search for a new home yourselves or if you will engage a real estate agent to sell your home and help you to find your next one.

With all these tasks completed, you are now well on your way to a successful selling and moving experience.

Barb Swadburg lives in St. Anthony Park and is a real estate agent for Lysden Realty.
Everyone who knows me by now, knows I love plants. I’m the go-to person if my friends and family have a plant question. Need to know why your succulent isn’t doing well? I can take a look at it for you. Need to know what a good plant for having clean air in a college dorm room is? Easy, it’s a peace lily.

In my humble opinion, plants are one of the greatest creatures on earth. There’s such a diverse range of them and each individual plant has its own character. I find plants to be very delightful, and it shocked me that people don’t appreciate them more, or bring them into the home as part of the family. Here are a few key reasons (some of which are scientific) why plants are amazing little specimens and why people should be appreciating them more than they are:

People tend to forget that plants are living things. I see this most in stores like Target, Whole Foods and Home Depot where their indoor plant selections are not being cared for like they should be. I think the reason for this forgetfulness is that plants don’t act like humans expect living things to. We expect most living things to remember to take care of themselves, just give them water once a week and light and care of a plant. It seems like a lot of work, especially when you have a “hey! I helped my parents with that!” moment as they go off to college. I hope that you come to appreciate plants a bit more, and if you do start taking a liking to plants and are worried that you’ll start hoarding plants in your home, don’t be. Out of everyone in my family I’m the only Crazy Plant Lady. So, there’s only a 0.04% chance that you will turn out like me. Did I do that math just for this essay? Yes, yes I did.

Anna Stratham is a junior at Como Park Senior High School and wrote this essay for her CMS Writing Studio class.

I’m a plant parent and you should be too!

Anna Stratham

By Anna Stratham

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Home & Garden Guide

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Pet Care Partners opens for business

By Cigale Ahlquist

Dr. Annie Seefeldt, who helped push Minnesota lawmakers to legalize animal chiropractic in the state in 2008, recently opened Pet Care Partners, a practice offering chiropractic services and acupuncture for dogs and cats.

Seefeldt opened the clinic, 1700 Hamline Ave., after buying a former cosmetology school building. That’s in Roseville, just across the municipal border from Falcon Heights.

“Animal chiropractic was not common at all, not even legal in Minnesota” before 2008, said Seefeldt, a Roseville resident. “As a chiropractic student, I was deeply involved in the legalization. It took us three years of trying.

“Only specially trained chiropractors are allowed to practice on animals in Minnesota,” she added.

Pet Care Partners is the first permanent home base for Chiropractic for EveryBody, which will continue at its earlier locations.

Our doctors who do acupuncture consultations and acupuncture. We don’t prescribe traditional medications,” she said. “We have chiropractic, and we offer cold laser therapy, PEMF (pulsed electromagnetic field) therapies — both noninvasive modalities to reduce inflammation and promote healing — supplements, dietary consultations and acupuncture.

“Sometimes people think (their pet) is just getting older,” she added. “Sometimes we adjust the animal, and we can bring back the enthusiasm, the function, because it was a chiropractic issue.”

Techniques such as fear-free handling and cooperative care are used to lower the stress level of skittish animals during treatment.

“When discussing the year of 2020,” Seefeldt said, “there were specific ailments or for maintenance care, Seefeldt said.

Pet Care Partners does not offer traditional veterinary medicine, such as administering vaccinations and heart worm tests, Seefeldt said.

In my 13 years of practice, I can think of only three or four animals that we were simply unable to calm down enough to adjust,” Seefeldt said.

Dr. Annie Seefeldt, an animal chiropractor and owner of Pet Care Partners in Roseville, with her Irish wolfhound Brando. Brando died in 2019. Submitted photo.

“Honestly, dogs have always been the center of my heart,” said Seefeldt, who became the first animal chiropractor registered by the Minnesota Board of Chiropractic Examiners. “Seeing a dog get adjusted spurred me to do this.”

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Shakespeare in St. Anthony Park takes new name

By Sam Bardwell
News and commentary

“What’s in a name?”
As an organization, Shakespeare in St. Anthony Park has found that, especially for our young participants, titles and labels are powerful. They can affirm a person’s potential and power, but they can also feel confining.

Bearing this in mind, and with the goal of sending a clear message of inclusivity, Shakespeare in St. Anthony Park has changed its name to Upstart Crow Youth Shakespeare Troupe.

Why Upstart Crow? Because early in his career Shakespeare experienced the stigma of being publicly “othered,” or being an Upstart Crow. When Shakespeare moved to London to pursue a career in theater he was as an uneducated outsider (born and raised in provincial Stratford-upon-Avon and having no university education).

Robert Greene, an established London playwright, published a tract in which he ridiculed the young Shakespeare as an “Upstart Crow.”

Fortunately, the fledgling English playwright was able to rise above this marginalizing experience. He enjoyed greater heights of expression than any other dramatist of his day.

We value Shakespeare’s scrappiness and audacity. We believe that no pedigree is required to perform for your community and to make deep and lasting connections with an audience.

More than our actors’ ages, experiences or places of residence (zip code), we believe it is their generosity and fearlessness with which they make connections that define our organization — and the spirit of Shakespeare’s plays.

In related news, Upstart Crow Youth Shakespeare Troupe also announces its summer 2021 youth workshop — “Lend Me Your Ear— Workshop.” Participants will work together to produce five podcasts using current COVID-19 safety guidelines.

The workshop is scheduled to begin June 14. For further information and registration, go to http://upstartcrow.org.

Sam Bardwell is a director of Upstart Crow Youth Shakespeare Troupe.

Typically, a theater serves as a three-sided marketplace: performers, tickets and sales and venue revenue with the concession stand making all the difference. It was a model that worked with various ups and downs for years.

“What made the Cedar thrive and survive is that people made it their own,” Mark said. “They have venue loyalty. They’d say I’m going to the place. I don’t know who the band is, but I know I’m going to have a certain experience. That’s why people still bought CDs. They had a great experience, and they want to take something tangible home.”

Mark is also concerned about the stress that programming to a virtual audience is putting on small performers.

“You don’t how people are interacting,” he said. “Pros can play to a camera. But if you’re missing the feedback loop which allows for excitement, how are they going to know?”

The community feels the broader hope and audacity. We believe that no pedigree is required to perform for your community and to make deep and lasting connections with an audience.

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The creek under your street

By Michala Zien, Mayadhin Al Abri, Allie Rykken, Pat Thompson and Ranea Hanson

This is a monthly column from Transition Town—All St. Anthony Park, the neighborhood-based group working for a local response to climate change: a smaller carbon footprint and a stronger community. Learn more about Transition Town at TransitionASAP.org.

You can explore your closest waters at a May 15 Water Companion workshop hosted by Transition Town and Winding Trail Books. The free, family-friendly, virtual session runs from 10:30 a.m. to noon. The program will include a virtual tour of neighborhood water features and a discussion on the whys and hows of protecting watersheds.

To register, visit Water Companion Workshop on Facebook or go to TransitionASAP.org.

The waters around us: Four reflections

Four neighbors begin the workshop conversation here.

Is this normal? Pat: In rural New York, where I grew up, a rusty culvert under the road held a trickle of smelly water that flowed from the hill and became a creek at the low end of our backyard. Our septic tank and drain field seeped into it. Artesian wells fed a pond beyond the creek. We pumped our drinking water out of that ground. So, sea water has intruded. Salt makes groundwater unfit for human use, so sea water has intruded. Salt makes groundwater unfit for humans or agriculture.

Wadis—riverbeds that periodically become dry—are our most sustainable option to store water and prevent flooding. But because of climate change, some wadis have permanently dried and hurricanes are too powerful for the wadis to protect us. When Hurricane Gonu hit in 2007, water filled my uncle’s house to 12 inches. As part of nature, I spent weeks at suburb, I never thought of home as part of nature. I spent weeks at camp, vacationed up north and took road trips to national parks. These experiences helped me appreciate the outdoors but gave me an overly optimistic view of nature.

Is there nature in an area with 10 times more concrete than water? My home county has six watersheds. I loved close to a small lake perfect for stargazing and a larger one that attracts kayakers. Even where I now live, the Mississippi River has green trails and a shoreline perfect for skipping rocks as the sun sets.

Water for all our relatives. Maya: When rain fell in Oman, my sisters and I would scream, “It’s raining!” We’d run in the rain until our clothes were wet. And my mom would say, “It’s time to pray.”

Population growth and consumption have pumped too much groundwater out of the water table, so sea water has intruded. Salt makes groundwater unfit for humans or agriculture.

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Giving back. Allie: Walking alongside water calms me. I drink it, canoe across it, water my garden with it. But only lately I have considered what I could do for water.

The St. Paul Library’s 2020 Read Brave books on water protectors inspired me. I became aware of my watershed. Last fall a Sunday School curriculum gave my children and me reminders about water choices. I suddenly understood rain gardens and why people sweep sidewalks. My daughter and I chose a storm drain through the Adopt-a-Drain program. Every Friday we clean it of leaves and sediment.

Volunteer with Adopt-a-Drain and you can name your own storm drain. Here, Allie and daughter clean “Rosemary’s Drain.” Photo by Allie Rykken.

My family visited Wadi Al-Abyad for barbecues and swimming. After each picnic, my dad would say, “Anadhaba mina al-‘imam”—Tidiness is required of God’s followers. My parents insisted that we gather other peoples’ soda cups, plastic plates and food trash as well as our own. If I protested, my dad would say, “Think what would happen if the trash goes into Wadi. We couldn’t swim any more. What would other animals drink?”

What is your watershed role? Whatever your skills, your watershed can benefit from them. Some roles you could fill:

• storm drain adopter
• Kasota Ponds caretaker
• a walker who picks up trash
• companion and provider for non-human watershed residents
• run-off buster
• leaky faucet fixer
• political activist for water
• artist for Bridal Veil Watershed

Explore these ideas further at the May 15 workshop.

Michala Zien, Mayadhin Al Abri, Allie Rykken, Pat Thompson and Ranea Hanson are members of Transition Town-ASAP’s Watershed team.
Chroma Zone Art & Mural Festival returns
The Creative Enterprise Zone’s annual Chroma Zone Art & Mural Festival, which was drastically curtailed last year because of the coronavirus pandemic, is returning as a summer-long event this year.

The festival’s presentation of local artists creating wall murals is set to debut with live outdoor painting activities on May 22 at Wycliff and Bradford streets, according to Angela Caudston, CEZ executive director.

Other mural events include a midsummer “happening” near Raymond and University avenues and a “closing party” in late September or early October near Vandalia and Prior avenues. Final dates and locations to come.

“The biggest thing to know is that rather than an eight-day event in the fall, we are spreading the production of 12 new murals and three community events over the summer,” Caudston said. “This will allow us to scale down some costs and provide proper social distancing measures during the pandemic. We did a trial run of this last summer so we can modify plans as things change.”

Seniors activities
The St. Anthony Park Area Seniors is planning virtual “lunch bunch” sessions from noon to 1 p.m. on May 12 and 26.

Other virtual activities planned in May include:
Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance (call office to see if space is available) 10 a.m. 3:00 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays
Guitar Concert with Dave Lee 10 a.m., Monday, May 10 (call office for connection instructions)
Piano Concert with Elizabeth Lee 10 a.m., Monday, May 3 (call office for connection instructions)

For further details on registering for the lunch sessions or any of the other activities, please call the seniors office at 651-642-9052.

Tuesday Scholars talks
The Ramsey County Library’s virtual Tuesday Scholars talks continue in May with all programs running from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Wall mural in south St. Anthony Park. File photo by Sarah CR Clark.

Join local academic and experts as they share their knowledge on a variety of topics.

To register for any or all of these online Tuesday Scholar talks, visit the Ramsey County’s Library website at http://www.rclreads.org or call 651-724-6001. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Here is the lineup of speakers:
May 4
Xenophobia in America: a Long and Painful History
Erka Lee, a Regents Professor and director of the Immigration History Center at the University of Minnesota, will discuss the roots of xenophobia and how it has been one of the most divisive forces in American political life. She is the author of the award-winning book “America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States.”

May 11
The Earliest Humans: What We Can Learn from Fossils?
Independent journalist Kermit Pattison is the local author of “Fossil Men: The Quest for the Oldest Skeleton and the Origins of Humankind.” He will discuss what we can learn from fossils and share his adventure in researching and writing. “Fossil Men.”

May 18
Three Ordinary Girls: A forgotten story of World War II
St. Paul author Tim Brady shares the true story of three fearless young women who used their wits and audacity to resist the Nazis and Dutch collaborators in Occupied Holland during World War II.

May 25
Trump to Biden: A Political Transition
David Schultz, a University of Minnesota law school professor specializing in election law, will discuss the change of power and the first 100 days of the Joe Biden administration and what we may expect from it going forward.

NewStudio Gallery show
NewStudio Gallery, 2303 Wycliff St., announces Jeralyn Victoria Mohr’s first solo gallery exhibition, “Material Language.” The Minneapolis artist introduces a new body of work using a variety of materials—including recycled silk, coffee, soil, beads and thread—to generate art that re-veals or unearths a relic-like presence of the true story of three fearless young women who used their wits and audacity to resist the Nazis and Dutch collaborators in Occupied Holland during World War II.

We’re raising funds to support our communities’ projects and staff time. Visit our website to learn more! sapcc.org/donate
Kay Blair

Kay Blair, 96, St. Anthony Park, died March 10, 2021. During and after a long career in education, she was the oldest and one of the longest-tenured volunteers at the paleontology laboratory at the Science Museum of Minnesota.

While at the U, she met Morris Blair whom she married in 1948. They had two sons, Carl and John. Morris Blair died in 1996.

Kay taught mathematics at Macalester College as she completed her Ph.D. in mathematics at the U of M. She was teaching her professional work as a home health aide for Ramsey County and in sibling care for ECFE in the Roseville school district.

Martha Everest

Martha ‘Mary’ Everest, 77, died March 2, 2021. She lived in Falcon Heights for part of her life. She was preceded in death by her parents Sidney and Dorothy (Moore) Wart and older brother Tommy. She is survived by her husband of 53 years, Gordon, C. Everest; siblings Sidney Jr., and Lynda; five children, Robert, Mary (Andres) Moreno, Sarah and Peter; and four grandchildren. Mary had a kind and generous heart. She volunteered in count- less roles, and her caring nature blazed in her professional work as a home health aide for Ramsey County and in sibling care for ECFE in the Roseville school district.

May Mercil

May Adeline Mercil, 87, died March 9, 2021, after a long battle with Alzheimer’s disease. The family takes comfort knowing that she is finally at peace.

She grew up in Deer River and after marriage, moved to Thief River Falls where she raised her family and worked many years as manager of the Soo Line Credit Union. After retirement, she and her husband lived in St Cloud, White Bear Lake and eventually St. Paul. Addie will be lovingly remembered as a kind, humble and gener- ous woman with an amazing inner strength. A special thank you to the staff at Lyngblomsten Care Center in St. Paul for their loving and compassionate care of Addie.

Addie was preceded in death by her parents Cleve and Edna Sacarias and siblings Eleanor Barrett and Rueben. She is survived by her husband of 67 years, Wendelin Mercil; children Wan- da (May) Showey, Mike (Sherry) Mercil, Tanya (Gary) Pyatt and Jim Mercil; brothers-in-law Ger- ald (Virginia) Mercil and Virgil Mercil; eight grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Private Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated March 18 at Church of the Holy Childhood.

Virginia Sack

Virginia Mae Sack, 91, died March 22, 2021. Virg grew up in the Como Park area, graduated from St. Agnes High School where she met Robert Sack, whom she married in 1950. She volunteered for many years for Children’s Hos- pital Association.

She was preceded in death by her parents George and Dorothy Walsh and husband of 65 years, Bob. She is survived by children Linda Fischbach, Jeanne Cam- pion, Roberta Sack-Parisi, Wil- liam Sack (Pamela), Lisa Malloy (Thomas); 11 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; brother William Walsh (Molly) and brother-in-law Richard Sack (Berry).

Mass of Christian burial was celebrated April 23 at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in West St. Paul. Memorial contributions are to Children’s Hospital Associa- tion, 347 Smith Ave N., Suite 501, St. Paul, MN 55102.

John Shulstad

John Shulstad was born in 1949 at Midway Hospital in St. Paul. He grew up in St. Anthony Park, attended Cunnersen and St. An- thony Park Elementary schools and graduated from Murray High School in 1967.

John was skilled with his hands. He rebuilt antique pumps and sewing machines, hand-built a redwood canoe, worked with leather and played electric guitar in a mid-60s rock band called The Milestones. He enjoyed camping and cross-country skiing.

John passed away at Maple- wood Care Center on April 10, 2021. He was preceded in death by his parents and a brother.

Memorials may be sent to the Brain and Behavior Research Foundation at https://donate.bbrf.org/

Roger Toogood

Roger W. Toogood, 87, of Rose- ville, died March 31, 2021. He was the director of Children’s Services for Catholic Charities of the Arch- diocese for seven years and exec- utive director of the Children’s Home Society of Minnesota for 27 years.

Roger dedicated his life to serving children and families in Minnesota, the U.S. and inter- nationally, earning the Order of Civil Merit Morän Medal from the Republic of Korea and many other awards.

Roger was an active, long-time Roseville citizen and St. Oddi- lia Catholic Church volunteer. His high school sweetheart and beloved wife Marlys, his parents Wayne and Grace Toogood and brothers Jack and George preceded- ed him in death. He is survived by son Mark; daughters Pamela (Eric) Hubbard and Joseph Garrett and Julie (Eric) Rethe- meier; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; siblings, Mary Williams, Robert Toogood and Sharon (Marsha Woolcott) Froehle; and brother-in-law, Da- vid (Geri) Marquardt.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated April 14 at St. Oddi- lia, with interment in St. Oddila Prayer Garden. Memorials pre- ferred to St. Odilia Endowment Fund, the Roger Toogood En- dowment Fund for Children at the Children’s Home Society of Minnesota or the St. Oddila Prayer Garden.

Russell Swanson

Russell Charles Swanson, 76, of San Martin, Calif., died March 9, 2021. Russ was born on Aug. 28, 1944, in Fargo, N.D. He grew up in St. Anthony Park, where he attended Murray High School and was an All-AU swimming champ and student-athlete at the U of M.

Later he studied aeronautics at San Jose State University. He served in the Navy, worked as a manufacturing engineer in California and drove for Knight Transportation.

Russ was preceded in death by his mother Florence Swanson, his father Raymond Swanson and brothers Raymond, Jr. and William. He is survived by his son Michael Swanson; sister-in-law Amanda McClintock; and one granddaughter of Manhattan Beach, Calif., sister Margaret (aka Briz) Cryer and brother-in-law David Cryer of Teaneck, N.J.; sister-in-law Carol Swanson of Stilwater; and sister-in-law Lyn- da Swanson of Daly City, Calif.
Classifieds

Send your ad to classifieds@parkbugle.org or P.O. Box 8126, St. Paul, MN 55108. Ads are $1 per word. Phone numbers, email addresses and websites are considered two words. Add a box or art for $10 each. Next deadlines: May 12, 2021.

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Chronicling Cougars winter sports and a peek at spring slate

By Eric Erickson, sports analysis

In a year of amended athletic schedules amid a global pandemic, winter sports at Como Park High School finished later than usual. Student athletes being able to have fun and complete their winter seasons without COVID-19 shutdowns were positive achievements in their own rights. Above and beyond those positive notes, several Cougar teams had remarkable results. Collectively, the Como Park High School athletic department notched a conference championship and qualified 10 individuals for state tournament competition. Here’s a rundown of the highlights, plus a brief preview of spring sports that began in April.

Girls Basketball
For the seventh consecutive year, Como captured the St. Paul City Conference Championship. With another undefeated record in conference play, the Cougars’ winning streak in the city reached 72 games. Junior guard Ronnie Porter was an All-State selection and one of five finalists for the East Metro Player of the Year, while also winning Player of the Year in the conference. Other Cougars earning All-Conference were juniors Kaylynn Asberry, Cloey Dmytruk, and Jada James. The team advanced to the Section 3AAA Championship game where the season ended in a heartbreaking 68-66 overtime loss to St. Croix Lutheran. The lone defeat left the team with a 12-1 overall record. Off the court, the Cougars boast a weightlifting team grade point average of 4.1 and outstanding academic work, which were featured in last month’s Bugle.

Wrestling
With less depth than previous seasons, the Como wrestling team didn’t win as many dual meets this year, finishing fifth out of seven teams in the conference standings. Still, several individuals consistently won matches in their weight classes and improved during the season, enabling them to compete with top competition in the Section 4AA Tournament. After multiple rounds of intense competition, five Cougars wrestlers qualified for the state preliminaries: junior Aaron Adekplovi in the 285 lb. division, senior Sully Lucy at 220, senior Kaelyn Sears at 195, sophomore Ye Ah Roe Shar at 132, and senior Bleah Paw at 126.

Boys Swimming
The Cougars took a significant step forward in the St. Paul City Conference this season, defeating the Highland Park/SPA team in both of their dual meets. That hadn’t happened since the 1990s, and it propelled Como to a second-place conference finish. With energy, passion and a disciplined training schedule, the Cougars prepared for the Section 4AA Meet with goals of posting personal best swim times. The team placed third out of 10 teams in the section, trailing only St. Thomas Academy and St. Anthony Village. Personal records were indeed achieved. And with those times, five Como individuals qualified for the state meet at the U of M Aquatic Center—where every Minnesota high school swimmers dream of concluding their season. State participants included senior Ethan Napierala for the 100 yard butterfly, freshman Kai Sackreiter for the 100 breaststroke, sophomore Sig Isaacson for the 500 freestyle and the 200 freestyle relay team of junior Soren Sackreiter, sophomore Gabe Napierala, along with brothers Kai and Ethan. Senior Mark Remuto was the relay team’s alternate.

Nordic Skiing
As one of three St. Paul public schools with a Nordic ski team, Como once again competed in the Twin Cities Nordic Conference. The Cougar boys finished fifth and the girls finished sixth out of 10 schools. Getting outside and skiing at Como Golf Course almost every day was a positive routine that enabled the dedicated athletes to be active with friends in a safe environment.

Junior Owen Finley earned All-Conference for the boys. Other key varsity contributors included junior Soren Berg and sophomore Liam Schwie. The girls’ team was led by junior Saylor Landrum who earned All-Conference Honorable Mention. Senior girls departing the program include Jutnie Wulf, Ruby Nosack, Rachel Levin and Morgan Nichols.

Spring Sports return after lost season of 2020
A year ago, athletics across the state were shut down at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most spring sports were in their first week of practice when the world paused, and the season never resumed.

Thus there haven’t been any spring high school athletic results since 2019. That started to change in mid-April when competition commenced. The Como Park Cougars are fielding teams in baseball, softball, badminton, track and field, golf and boys tennis. Students and coaches are excited to be back in action. Masks have become part of the normal equipment for all participants. Social distancing is still a point of emphasis. Regardless of restrictions and protocols, there is positive energy in all activities and gratitude and hope in the spring air.

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