Development vision emerges for Luther Seminary parcel

By Scott Carlson

Upwards of 600 to 800 housing units could be built on a 15.5-acre parcel on the western end of the Luther Seminary campus that the educational institution has for sale.

That’s the broad vision that Wayzata-based Inland Development Partners unveiled for the site at a neighborhood open house on Aug. 10 at the Seminary’s Olson Campus Center. With that being the first in a series of open house meetings to solicit public input, the preliminary plan is likely to be controversial.

Although specific, detailed plans are months away, Inland officials envision their firm serving as the master developer coordinating the installation of utilities and other infrastructure to serve a mix of senior co-op housing and market-rate and affordable apartments for families, seniors and other adults.

Preliminary plans also include preserving much of the 6.4-acre parcel known as the Breck Woods, a natural area that scores of residents have insisted previously should be protected.

Steve Schwanke, a partner at Inland, said in a separate interview that the seminary site is a desirable location for a mix of new housing in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood at a time when there is a dearth of prime redevelopment opportunities.

“The Luther Seminary site is in a great neighborhood” with attractive amenities including its retail downtown area off of Como Avenue, said Schwanke, whose company specializes in redeveloping properties. “It would allow us to bring to the neighborhood an additional diversity of housing.”

Under the preliminary plan, the overall residential project might include: up to 400 units of market-rate multifamily apartments spread over two buildings; up to 100 units of affordable housing.

Currently, Luther Seminary is in a 90-day exploratory period with IDP.

Based on IDP’s findings, the Luther Seminary Board will decide in October whether to pursue a full contract with IDP to do the infrastructure required to sell the property, the Seminary said in a statement.

Meanwhile, the Seminary has sought steadily for the past three years to sell the 15.5-acre section of its campus.

Seminary President Robin Steinke stated, “We strongly feel the lower campus is a historic opportunity in the heart of the metropolitan area for additional mixed-use housing, including affordable housing, and are working with IDP as we pursue the sale of the lower campus.”

Although the latest Luther Seminary property development proposal is at least several months from getting firmed up, and is slated to undergo extensive community review, the specter of a large-scale project has garnered at least some residents’ disapproval.

“The cumulative projects of 600-800 units is disrespectful to this neighborhood,” Cynthia Steinke stated.

Community groups envision life post-Covid

By Sarah CR Clark

Despite the sweltering 93-degree afternoon, Transition Town’s Emergence Festival on July 24 at Como Lake drew lots of visitors.

Spaced around the shores of Lake Como and surrounded by chilled water bottles, personalized fans and an occasional frozen treat, representatives of 24 local organizations informally discussed with attendees the possibilities of post-Covid life.

“We’ve heard from several of the groups that they made good connections with people walking around the lake and with other groups, which is exactly what we hoped for,” said event organizer Tracy Kugler. “I’m excited to see what collaborations might come from these connections in the coming months.”

The local organizations presented information under their event tents and ranged from climate action groups, faith communities and education groups to racial and environmental justice organizations.

“We’re imagining how we can build a community after this year of massive change,” Kugler said. “Life is heading back to normal, but ‘normal’ wasn’t always so great.”

Attendees at the festival learned (among many more things) about local nonviolence action groups;...
District 12 Community Council

St. Anthony Park Community Council committees discuss a variety of issues at their monthly meetings. Below are updates on some recent topics and events.

Supporting local chimney swifts
The District 12 Environment Committee is looking to support an overlooked migratory bird in our neighborhood, chimney swifts.

Chimney swifts fly rapidly overhead in small groups, chattering as they fly. They look somewhat like a cigar with boomerang wings. They consume large amounts of mosquitoes, gnats and other insects.

Chimney swifts build their nests in hollow trees and readily nest in chimneys. However, their numbers have declined due to a lack of large old trees, especially in south St. Anthony Park and other densely developed urban areas.

Chimney swifts have been designated as “species in greatest conservation need” by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Chimney swifts are categorized as a “species of concern” by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Chimney swifts are impacted where chimneys are densely developed urban areas. These birds’ habitat is also impacted where chimneys are capped. They have been designated as a “species of greatest conservation need” by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Chimney swifts will nest in artificial chimneys and structures. How can you help?

Contact the environment committee if you find a chimney occupied by chimney swifts so that we can better monitor their habitat. The committee is planning to construct some towers for the 2022 breeding season, as the chimney swifts return from their long winter journey to Peru. Contact the environment committee if you are interested in this project.

To learn more about chimney swifts, and to hear recordings of their calls, check out bit.ly/AudubonSwifts and bit.ly/MNSwifts.

Equity Events: Voter registration and more!
The SAPCC Equity Committee discussed events and activities coming in our community this fall.

The committee plans to, among other things, participate in a voter registration training session at its next meeting in order to plan voter outreach events. More information will be forthcoming.

SAPCC coming to your door!
Normally each fall the St. Anthony Park Community Council hosts a fun community event and fundraiser that helps support our group’s work.

This year, District 12 folks instead will be coming to you (safely and at a distance, of course). We will be masking up and reaching out to our community not only for financial support, but to find out what issues are important to you.

We will be knocking on doors to let you know more about what we do and upcoming initiatives, inviting you to join in on that work.

If you’re interested in getting involved or giving to SAPCC, visit the District 12 website at www.sapcc.org.

District 10 Community Council

Food scrap recycling update
Como food scraps and organics recyclers rejoice! The new 1115 Beulah Lane organics recycling site enclosure is now completed. The new site is just 250 feet down the road from the old site.

Want to become a food scraps recycler? The District 10 office has food scraps recycling starter kits to help you. Email district10@district10comopark.org to arrange to pick one up at the Historic Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Parkway N.

New Como Park Steward Program
The Como Park Steward Program began in July, providing an opportunity for individuals, families, schools, churches, clubs and others to volunteer and help keep our regional treasure welcoming for all.

You can choose an area on the Como steward program map to adopt and care for. Pick your favorite area to walk, run or bike or that you have a special connection to, even in memory of someone special.

Stewards help keep their park areas clean and work with city departments to report tree and natural damage, graffiti, safety and other concerns.

Volunteers are asked to make a minimum one year commitment to the program, visiting their chosen sites twice a month. (Some parcels may be allowed more than one steward, depending on commitment levels.)

The District 10 Environment Committee is conducting the Como Park steward program with St. Paul Parks and Recreation. Check the District 10 website (www.district10comopark.org) for more information about how to sign up.

District 10 election update
A special election to fill two District 10 board vacancies was held in July. Como community members elected sitting Sub-District 4 board member Benjamin Kowalsky-Grabek to the vice chairman seat and elected new board member Alex McLean to the Sub-District 1 seat.

Both seats will be on the ballot again at next year’s District 10 annual meeting.

An August special election was scheduled to fill Kowalsky-Grabek’s former Sub-District 4 seat. Results were too late for this issue of the Bugle.

Citywide drop-off event returns
The District 10 Community Council is again partnering with the City of St. Paul to organize a citywide drop-off event from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sept. 18, at the State Fairgrounds for residents to properly dispose of large refuse items and recyclable materials not collected via the regular residential recycling program.

For further information, contact District 10 at district10@district10comopark.org or call 651-644-3889.

Upcoming District 10 meetings:
Renters, homeowners and other community members are always welcome to participate in District 10’s board and committee meetings. You can join either by video conference or by phone.

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

• Land Use: Wednesday, Sept. 1
• Neighborhood Relations: Tuesday, Sept. 7
• Environment: Tuesday, Sept. 14
• Board meeting: Tuesday, Sept. 21

All meetings begin at 7 p.m. When ever possible, agendas and other relevant documents are posted in advance in the “Board News” section of District 10’s website: www.district10comopark.org.

Submitted by Shevek McKee, District 10 Community Council executive director.
MnDOT updates Lauderdale council on Highway 280 plans

By Anne Holzman

At their July 27 meeting, Lauderdale City Council members heard from Minnesota Department of Transportation officials about ongoing speed studies and plans to remove the signal and left turn lane from northbound Highway 280 onto Broadway Avenue.

MnDOT earlier raised the traffic light removal and road repaving on Highway 280 for 2025. But at the meeting, the council learned the department has now pushed that work back to 2026 for that stretch of the highway from I-94 to Como Avenue, and to 2027 for that stretch of the highway from Como Avenue to Highway 36.

Concerns raised by council members and the public at the meeting included vehicle speeds, street racing, the loss of a favorable route via Broadway up to the Quarry retail shopping center and surrounding businesses; and access for bikes and pedestrians approaching and crossing Highway 280 at Larpenteur Avenue.

MnDOT’s Tony Wotzka presented a slide show demonstrating crash rates at the left turn signal and projected effects on traffic if the left turn is eliminated. He said traffic could still leave and enter Highway 280 southbound, but a barrier would prevent any turns from the northbound lanes at Broadway.

Responding to the turn removal, council member Duane Pullford said he uses the turn often and that the proposal to remove it “makes me wonder if I might go to the Quarry and other businesses a little bit less.” Wotzka also said that a speed limit study already in progress had been delayed until the signal is removed. The possibility of raising the speed limit has been under discussion for years.

Council member Jeffrey Dains reiterated a commonly heard position on the subject, telling Wotzka and his MnDOT colleague Melissa Barnes, “I’m adamantly opposed to raising the speed limit on 280.” Council member Andi Moffatt said she supports the turn removal and left turn is eliminated. She said he uses the turn often and that the proposed changes. She told MnDOT officials, “We have been hearing quite a bit of concern about the proposed changes. She brought up the issue of street racing, which is a perennial noise and safety issue on that highway.

How does getting rid of that light affect racing?” Moffatt asked. Lauderdale resident Paula Biever called in to talk about the street racing issue, saying she feared removing the traffic light would make that activity “more exciting.”

Biever later expanded her remarks in an email to the Bugle. “If a stoplight is no longer at the intersection, it is more likely that racers will start speeding earlier as they approach Highway 280 since they won’t have any reason to stop there. I understand that perhaps racers don’t stop for red lights anyway, but at least it is one more thing that they could be pulled over for.”

Resident Chris Bower called in to say that he supported removing the signal but was concerned that the state would miss an opportunity to improve bike and pedestrian approaches and crossings, particularly at the Larpenteur-Hennepin intersection.

“I am asking for MnDOT to add this into their project,” Bower said. Dains requested that MnDOT send a representative to a future council meeting to follow up on the question of bike and pedestrian safety.

MnDOT posts updates on a Construction Projects website. But neither the interactive map nor the construction list showed current information for this project as of mid-August.

Anne Holzman is a Bugle freelance writer who covers Falcon Heights and Lauderdale government news.
From the Desk of the Editor

By Scott Carlson

New beginnings

One of my pieces recently noted on Facebook that this fall she is starting her 14th year as a high school teacher. My first reaction was, “No. That can’t be possible. That much time hasn’t passed, has it?”

But indeed, the years do keep flying by. My niece’s post also reminded me of how much I love September and the start of a new school year for millions of students across the country.

If I had my druthers, I’d start the New Year sometime in September when there is a real change in seasons and millions of people are embarking on new endeavors, whether educational or otherwise. In this issue of the Bugle, we capture a bit of these passages of time and transitions. Freelancer Sarah CR Clark shares a delightful story on what it’s like for two women to be judges at the Minnesota State Fair and Katrina Sweet talks about her experiences in an “I’ve been in Your Neighborhood” feature.

Meanwhile, Sarah also gives us a back-to-school news update and Eric Erickson interviews two Kirk Morris, principal of Como Park Senior High School, on what he’s anticipating for the new academic year.

And don’t forget those high school sports. Eric preview what is ahead for fall athletics at Como.

Meanwhile, on another note, Catherine Reid Day discusses in the latest Transition Town column how resilience is a part of the Creative Enterprise Zone in south St. Anthony Park.

Also look for, among other things, in this issue of the Bugle: A new Voices column, an update on what’s happening with the Luther Seminary lower campus development site, and David Hely’s story on Mary Hayes retiring from St. Anthony Park Area Seniors.

Each of these and more may contain losses for what was, even while embracing the now altered story. Remind yourself, this process will be easier for some; a major challenge for others. Pause, look back, grieve losses and engage with tender curiosity; what the new you will be like, a picture you can author and share with others.

Coping with Covid, a reflection

By Ted Bowman

From the moment of our birth until this very moment, we have been placing pictures of our lives inside ourselves.

Over time, some pictures take on a template quality that morph into an assumed world. We expect the next day to resemble the previous days.

When disruptive changes occur, re-storying our lives is required. Over the next few weeks, we will look at the previous days and those in their circle of care.

Early in my career as a grief and family educator, I was taught by wise grievers that when an assumed world is shattered, one must grieve that shattered dream as a necessary step toward re-authoring your life. In late February 2020, the assumed worlds of most of us were disrupted by news of a spreading virus. We were asked and chose to alter routine practices, long embedded into daily life.

Now, 18 months later, many years on a return to the normalcy of their known worlds.

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Ted Bowman, who lives in St. Anthony Park, is an independent grief and family educator.

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Letters to p. 15

Plan ahead for Bugle deadlines

Given that the Bugle is a monthly newspaper, our news and ad deadlines for the next month’s edition can sneak up fast.

So, you may need to do a little extra planning to get your news and advertising in the Bugle in a timely fashion.

Letters to p. 15

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Letters to p. 15
By Christie Vogt

Born on the Japanese island of Kyushu and raised near Tokyo, Daisuke Inadome has made Minnesota his home over the past two years. Besides working at a homeless shelter in St. Paul, Inadome, 31, is studying liberal arts at St. Paul College with an emphasis in criminology. He is considering a career as a social worker or in the corrections field.

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself and what brought you to Minnesota?
A: I was living in Tokyo working as a house manager of an international guest house, so I had to use and learn some English for my work. My generation, we learned English in junior high school, but it was very basic and not very conversational, so I had to learn by myself. I would go out to local bars and restaurants in Tokyo to practice speaking with foreigners.

After three years in Tokyo, I met my wife on the Internet. She is from here, Minnesota. After corresponding for a year, she came to Japan, and we worked as an English teacher. We lived together in Tokyo and Osaka before deciding to move to America.

Q: What was your impression of the United States before moving here?
A: In Japan, some of the stereotypes we have about America are related to food. We think about hamburgers, steaks, greasy food. Also, everything is huge. Everyone has big lawns and big single family homes, instead of apartment buildings. We get those images of the U.S. from films and TV. There are also military bases in Japan, so we have some interaction with Americans that way.

Generally, I would say that Japanese people admire the American lifestyle and American people. They think it’s very cool, wonderful, amazing. However, some people are very concerned about gun violence and crime in America, and they are worried that mass shootings won’t end.

Luther Seminary from p. 1

Ahlgren, a St. Anthony Park resident and member of the group Friends of Breck Wood, said in an email to the Bugle.

“I do not want to see us treated by developers the way that Dinkytown and Uptown and even downtown Prospect Park are being treated. Their authentic character is being swallowed up.

“St. Anthony Park is a warm and socially responsible community,” Ahlgren continued. “We have welcomed residential treatment centers, group homes, smaller scale multifamily residential construction and emergency housing for the homeless.

“But when the consensus is that we would like to see greater density, or senior housing, or affordable housing built on the seminary campus, how many intend that to mean? Housing built on the seminary campus, or senior housing, or affordable housing, instead of apartment buildings. There are also military bases in Japan, so we have some interaction with Americans that way.

Generally, I would say that Japanese people admire the American lifestyle and American people. They think it’s very cool, wonderful, amazing. However, some people are very concerned about gun violence and crime in America, and they are worried that mass shootings won’t end.

Q: Now that you’ve been living in Minnesota for two years, what has your experience been like?
A: It’s been very good. Minnesota is very generous to immigrants, to basically any people. I’ve never been discriminated against or racially profiled. I’ve been feeling very comfortable here. Because of COVID-19, maybe there have been fewer opportunities to interact with people, but they are always good to me.

But some stories on the news, it’s devastating that there are still people who discriminate. I wish they would stop to think, to look within themselves.

Q: You started working in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood last year. Could you tell us about your job?
A: I work at a local shelter for people experiencing homelessness. I monitor the floors (where residents live), check on residents’ wellness, distribute food, sort donated items and help with new resident intake. Another big part of my job is encouragement, to keep encouraging residents to reach their goal of permanent housing.

As an immigrant, initially, I was scared to talk to Americans because of my English skills, and sometimes I still have a hard time understanding. What’s good about this job is I can interact with many kinds of people and practice my English. I feel like I’ve become more extroverted. I can hear residents’ stories, and I come to understand how they’ve lost their jobs or homes. Let me just say one thing. I’ve been feeling very lucky that I could come to the U.S. and that I’ve been treated like this. I never imagined that I could have done this. Of course, personally, I think I tried my best, but I feel like I shouldn’t forget about appreciating the people and environment that helped me.

I can see how unhouse people are struggling with mental health and traumatic experiences while also trying to get a job or a house. So, I’m feeling lucky, lucky—I’m trying to not forget about appreciating every day.

Christie Vogt is a Twin Cities freelance writer. This is her debut story for the Park Bugle.
Back-to-school news roundup

By Sarah CR Clark

Regardless of whether face masks get packed among students’ shiny new notebooks and folders, the start of the 2021-2022 school year feels much more normal than last year. All the schools in the Bugle area are planning for students to begin the year full time, in person. Minnesota public schools are scheduled to start Sept. 8. Here is an update from some of our local schools.

Falcon Heights Elementary School (Roseville Area School District)

From Principal Beth Behnke: “We invite our community to ‘Come Soar with Us’ as we learn and grow together. Our Meet the Teacher event will be Wednesday, Sept. 1, from 7:30-9:30 a.m. and kindergarten orientation will be Thursday, Sept. 2 at 9 a.m.”

St. Anthony Park Elementary School (SPPS)

SAP students will begin the new school year with a beefed-up schedule of teaching specialists. Thanks to a $700,000 two-year appropriation from the U.S. Department of Education’s Federal Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund, SAP Elementary School has added a full-time art teacher and a full-time technology teacher to its weekly rotation of specialists that also includes physical education and music.

All students will also have science twice a week, which is an increase for SAP’s oldest students. New SAP Elementary School hires also include two reading teachers for grades K-2, small group reading, a full-time math intervention teacher for all grades, a full-time social-emotional-behavior intervention teacher for all grades and a half-time English language teacher.

From Principal Karen Duke: “Enrolled families, mark your calendar for Back-To-School Night at the school, Sept. 2 from 5 to 6 p.m. More information will be coming about specifics related to COVID safety—masks, visitor policy and guidelines for school events. “Thanks to the SAP School community and SAPSA (St. Anthony Park School Association) for all of your support through the Covid pandemic. It’s not over yet, but we know that we can keep our kids engaged and learning going no matter what.”

Murray Middle School (SPPS)

From Principal Jamin McKenzie: “Murray staff are very excited to begin a new year. We are preparing to welcome many new students and families to our community and at the same time are planning for how we will support the fact that two thirds of our students will not have participated in traditional school at the middle school level due to the restrictions over the past year and a half. “Our Murray team is the best in the business and we will be ready to open our doors with open arms, bright smiles and countless opportunities! Go Pilots!”

Como Principal Morris prepares for new school year

By Eric Erickson

With the 2021-2022 academic year set to begin in September, Como Park Senior High School Principal Kirk Morris is planning for what he hopes is a more “normal” school experience. As the Bugle went to press, the COVID delta variant was increasing and the St. Paul School Board was voting on a mask mandate suggested by the superintendent.

Principal Morris said he is prepared to adjust Como’s protocols and procedures, as prescribed by district and state guidelines issued, with evolving public health concerns during the pandemic.

There was plenty of practice for adaptability during the 2020-2021 school year, which was the first for Morris at Como.

“Being a first-year, high school principal in a pandemic was challenging,” Morris said. “Despite the challenges of transitioning from distance learning to on-site support and then to in-person learning, it was a great first year. My most memorable day of the school year was April 14 (the first day of in-person learning).”

Morris has spent over two decades in education as a teacher, coach and administrator. The 2021-2022 school year will be his eighth as a principal. He anticipates his second year at Como will allow him more opportunity to see in-person, classroom learning as opposed to virtual classes.

“I look forward to spending time in classrooms with students and staff. Witnessing students learning in their classrooms has always been a highlight of my job as a principal.”

As for academic offerings and programs, Morris is excited for the students.

“We continue to have one of the strongest AP (Advanced Placement) programs in our district,” he said. “In addition, we continue to have high level CJS (College in the Schools) courses. This school year we have added a CIS Spanish course. Other new academic offerings are: Medical Careers Exploration, Sustainable Foods, Critical Ethnic Studies and Intro to Urban Education.”

Morris was familiar with Como’s strengths when he started as principal a year ago. But he said he has developed more appreciation for Como’s attributes during the past year.

“Como is a very diverse school that is not too large and is not too small. Our students are hardworking and kind to each other. Our teachers and support staff are collaborative and growth oriented. There are many opportunities for students to get involved in extracurricular activities. “Every student at Como is able to find their niche in our academic programming as well as our extracurricular activities. We have something for everyone!”

Kirk Morris, a social studies teacher at Como Park Senior High, is a regular freelance writer for the Bugle.

Twin Cities German Immersion School

TCGIS will welcome 610 students on its first day of school, August 30. Rich Ives, school spokesman, said, “Teachers, staff and students are all excited to finally be in the new building (completed Aug. 8, 2020) for every class, every day.”

Spaces for new students are available in the middle and upper grades.

Sarah CR Clark, who lives in St. Anthony Park, is a regular freelance writer for the Bugle.
William Kent Krueger continues Cork O’Connor saga

By Scott Carlson

After writing 18 books in the Cork O’Connor series, mystery novelist William Kent Krueger vows he’s nowhere near finished with his marquise fictional character. Just fresh from the release of “Lightning Strike” in late August, St. Paul’s Como Park author said he had plenty of material for this Cork O’Connor prequel and is under contract to write at least three more books in the mystery, crime detective series.

“I wrote the prequel at the suggestion of my book agent,” said Krueger, who has been a full-time novelist since 1998. “I loved working on this story. It came fairly easy to me. I found a lot of rich territory to mine with events and people.”

Krueger’s website says he “writes a mystery series set in the north woods of Minnesota. His protagonist is Cork O’Connor, the former sheriff of Tamarack County and of Manistake Heritage—part Irish and part Ojibwe.”

Throughout the O’Connor series, Krueger noted, there are many similarities between his past and that of the fictional Cork, a former sheriff who is Irish and Ojibwe. Among other things. Both were, as boys, newspaper carriers. Both were Boy Scouts. Krueger will offer more thoughts about writing the 370-page “Lightning Strike” when he does a reading and book signing at 6 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 20, for Winding Trail Books, to be held next door in the party room of Nico’s Tacos, 2260 Como Ave.

Preregistration for the event is required and the purchase of a ticket is the prepayment of Krueger’s book, “Lightning Strike.” (For further information, contact Winding Trail Books at 651-414-9431 or stop by the store, 2230 Carter Ave.)

On balance, the Covid pandemic has had a varied impact on Krueger’s writing career. On the downside, the early pandemic-related shutdowns in 2020 forced the cancellation of his book tour for “This Tender Land,” which critics have hailed as a modern day Huckleberry Finn adventure.

But the upside from the pandemic fallout is it enabled Krueger to devote more uninterrupted time to his writing. “I was just able to focus on the writing,” he said. Also, in place of the planned road tour, Krueger was able to hold virtual appearances with more than 300 book clubs across the country, he said.

“That allowed me to reach a broader audience.”

Now, at least for the moment, Krueger is promoting “Lightning Strike” with an in-person book tour. During this road trip, which was scheduled to begin in late August, Krueger plans to visit about 40 bookstores and festivals, with most of them in the Upper Midwest and a few stops in Arizona, Texas and Colorado.

Krueger’s books regularly make the New York Times’ bestseller list and he has won several writing awards, including the Minnesota Book Award, the Left-McKnight Fiction Award, the Anthony Award, the Barry Award, the Dilys Award and the Friends of American Writers Award.

Fall into new books in September

By David Enyeart of Next Chapter Booksellers

There’s nothing we like more than talking about books and new releases for you to discover here at Next Chapter Booksellers.

September is full of great new books. Mary Roach is back with “Fuzz: When Nature Breaks the Law,” a funny and thought-provoking look at javawalking moose, trespassing squirrels and murderous tree. Sarah Kieffer follows up her hit cookbook 100 Cookies with “Baking for the Holidays.” And acclaimed poet Joy Harjo turns to “Baking for the Holidays.”

Meanwhile, here are a few other recent book releases you might like:

Mary Trump’s first book “Too Much and Never Enough” was a bombshell. A trained psychologist, she profiled the personality of Donald Trump, her famous uncle, and its impact on her family. Now in “The Reckoning,” she looks at the repercussions for the country as a whole and how we can recover and even heal.

We loved Peter Heller’s novel “The River,” a white-knuckle story of wilderness survival set along the Madawaska River in northern Canada. Heller is back with “The Guide,” another heart-pounding story of shocking menace amid the natural beauty, this time in Colorado.

Lemony Snicket returns with his first book in six years. “Poison for Breakfast” is the story of a single, fateful day in the life of Lemony Snicket. A puzzling note appears under his door. It reads, “You had poison for breakfast.”

Snicket spends the rest of the novel following a winding trail of clues to solve the mystery of his own demise.

And we couldn’t be more delighted that “Adulthood Rites,” a novel from Octavia Butler which was long-unavailable, is on our shelves again. This sci-fi classic is full of Butler’s trademark gorgeous prose and keen social commentary.

New books also are available now in two long-running mystery series. Louise Penny brings back Chief Inspector Armand in “The Reckoning,” Louise Penny brings back Chief Inspector Armand in “The Reckoning,” and David Baldacci continues the Camel Club prequel in the John Grisham series. And Paula Hawkins, the author of “Girl on a Train,” is back with a twisty standalone thriller, “A Slow Fire Burning.”

Of course, we can’t help but suggest a few offbeat staff favorites. Silvia Moreno-Garcia, author of the delightfully creepy “Mexican Gothic,” takes readers to Mexico City, right into the middle of the political turmoil of the 1970s in “Velvet Was the Night.” It blends intrigue and romance in a frothy, atmospheric thrill ride of a novel. And history podcaster extraordinaire Mike Duncan has written a biography of the Marquis de Lafayette, “Hero of Two Worlds.” It is a vivid portrait of a fascinating man living in even more exciting times.

David Enyeart has worked in the book industry for more than 25 years and is currently the manager at Next Chapter Booksellers in St. Paul.

LSS Companion Services are in need of Volunteers 55+

Volunteer Opportunities

- Make a difference from home via phone or in-person visits while social distancing by providing companionship to older adults in your community.

- Support kids in school—no person or virtually as a foster grandparent.

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Resilience in the Creative Enterprise Zone

By Catherine Reid Day

“If it ever rains again,” my husband said recently as we discussed adding some water storage next to our garage. We want our home to become a resilience hub with solar, a heat pump, a charging panel for our electric car and a larger vegetable garden.

That pull to resilience also shows up in our civic life, where I’m energized by what happens when we combine the magic of people, place and purpose. The St. Anthony Park community includes a deep pool of talented people who often contribute amazing skills to our community.

Two major projects are underway this summer through the Creative Enterprise Zone—which is both a place (south St. Anthony community) and purpose. The St. Anthony Park community includes a deep pool of talented people who often contribute amazing skills to our community.

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Sky Group Bargains is a retail liquidator

By Cigale Ahlquist

Inside a nondescript 70,000-square-foot warehouse just west of High- way 280 in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood lies Sky Group Inc’s network of businesses that specialize in buying and selling closeout and liquidation merchandise, including life’s daily necessities.

Like many businesses, Sky Group Bargains suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It was bad, but we got through it,” co-founder Tim Keehn said. “It wasn’t like friends in the restaurant and entertainment business. They couldn’t do anything.

“People weren’t buying on the wholesale end, but retail was good—the necessities. People would say, ‘I haven’t worked for two months, but I still need to brush my teeth and go to the bathroom.’”

The parent company—primarily a wholesale operation buying from the likes of Costco, Best Buy and other retailers, distributors and manufacturers—was started 25 years ago by Minneapolis native Matt McConville and Keehn, who grew up in Rochester.

In its infancy, the company operated out of the basement of McConville’s south Minneapolis home and after several relocations moved into the warehouse at 2365 Kasota Ave. five years ago. Its retail outlet store, Sky Group Bargains, opened there about 1½ years ago and employs 15 workers on average.

Interestingly, the Kasota Avenue warehouse is owned by the Golden Valley-based Animal Humane Society, and Sky Group Bargains donates a portion of its sales to the organization, Keehn said.

Keehn is seeking another “universal” community organization, such as a school, in the St. Anthony Park area to help. If interested, contact him at 612-882-9559.

Before venturing off on their own 25 years ago, the two men worked together—Keehn as a buyer and McConville in sales—at Irwin Jacobs’ Jacobs Trading.

“Typically, we sell general merchandise: things you would find at Target, Best Buy—the big box stores—and Walgreens or CVS,” said Keehn, 51, who has a degree in business management and communications from St. Cloud State University.

“The best sellers are the necessities—food and sundries such as cleaning supplies, what everyone uses every day.

“We’re the only ones in town that are cheaper than Costco, Target or Walmart,” Keehn asserted.

Merchandise is typically new or customer returns, Keehn said.

“We have a processing area in the back of the warehouse where we test the goods, so what is in the store ‘should work’,” he said. “What doesn’t work we sell wholesale to people who can fix it, or we recycle it.

“We don’t throw anything away—including the tarps,” Keehn said, alluding to Sky Group’s Billboards.com, which buys and reprocesses the new and used material (often vinyl) used on highway billboards. “If we can’t sell it, we donate it.”

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

CEZ muralists hail midsummer with colorful art

By Sarah CR Clark

On July 24, the Chroma Zone Murals & Art Festival’s second summer event of 2021 filled a barren neighborhood with color, dance and life.

The Midsummer Happening celebrated and debuted three new murals from this year’s festival with Angela Caselton, executive director of the Creative Enterprise Zone, coordinating the event.

“We are very proud of the work of our Chroma Zone murals and love any opportunity to showcase their talents and share the stories behind them,” Casselton said.

The Midsummer Happening featured artists Thomasina Topbear, Kao Lee Thao and Holly “Miskito” Henning Garcia.

“Each has a unique style and narrative,” Casselton said. Live painting demonstrations and performances by CAAAM Chinese Dance Theater dancers and Smiling Drum Studio drummers took place throughout the event.

Besides finding local food and drink and art vendors and festival partners, attendees also had the opportunity to tour Chroma Zone murals on bike or by walking, either solo or as part of a guided experience.

Among those people attending the Midsummer Happening was St. Paul City Councilwoman Mitra Jalali Nelson, who called the event a “joy-filled celebration of public art in our neighborhoods.”

She added, “Our shared work continues lifting up the people and artists that make our community special.

A third and final festival event will close this Chroma Zone season later in the fall.

The Chroma Zone Mural & Art Festival began in 2019 as Minnesota’s first and largest mural festival. Currently, it is in its third season.

The 2021 festival celebrates 20 local artists and their work. All Chroma Zone murals exist within the Creative Enterprise Zone whose boundaries are Prior Avenue on the east, the railroad tracks near Energy Park Drive on the north, Interstate 94 on the south and the Minneapolis city border on the west where more than 300 studios and creative businesses are located.

Sarah CR Clark lives in St. Anthony Park and is a regular freelance writer for the Bugle.

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SEPTEMBER 2021 • PARK BUGLE
Nordgren, veteran journalist, dies at 66

By Kristal Leebrock

Veteran Twin Cities journalist and St. Anthony Park resident Nancy B. Nordgren, 66, died July 12, 2021, unexpectedly of complications from ovarian cancer.

“Nancy was an active, full life. Nancy’s parting words of advice for all of us were: “Life is short. Take the trip. Buy the shoes. Eat the cake.”

Nancy was born Oct. 30, 1954, in Olivia, to William and Marcella (Nelson) Nordgren. The family moved to St. James in 1963, after her dad accepted a job at the St. James Plaindealer. Nancy fol-

owed in law school, entered the nursing profession, and spent time at the State Fair. As a youth he enjoyed playing baseball, and spending time at the State Fair. Nordin took a buyout in 2007 and worked as a freelance writer until she retired to the Star Tribune in 2013, bringing her cheerfulness, compassion and encyclopedic knowledge of almost all things to the newsroom and editorial pages. Colleagues described her as a “crackjackery editor,” “a true professional,” “funny, kind and brilliant.” She retired in 1999.

Nancy loved music, sports, travel, the North Shore and most of all her two sons, Will and Ted. Olen, who were born in 1987 and 1991, respectively, the two years that her favorite baseball team, the Minnesota Twins, won the World Series.

Nordgren was moved to Washington state in 1981 to work as assistant news editor at the Everett Her-

dal. She returned to Minnesota in 1989 to work for the Minneapolis Star Tribune and had two stints there: first, from 1989 to 2007, serving as assistant city editor, copy editor and layout editor.

Other lives lived

A former bank executive, WWII vice researcher are among those area deaths to Mary Mergenthal at mary.mergenthal@gmail.com or call 612-670-8510.

Elvera Baran

Elvera Baran died July 17, 2021. She was preceded in death by husband Martin and infant son Daniel. She is survived by her sons Randy, Anthony, James and Patrick and their families.

Her funeral service was held July 24 at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Como Park.

Barbara Billstein

Barbara J. Billstein, 85, died July 25, 2021, after a brief illness. She married Jerome Billstein on Aug. 19, 1944. Barbara loved her flower gardens and creating jewelry, but her most cherished moments were her time spent with her family.

Barbara was preceded in death by her parents, Charles and Inez Calverley, husband Je-

rome Newman on the “Lou Grant” show, and Inez Calverley, husband Je-


Other lives lived

A former bank executive, WWII vice researcher are among those

people we remember this month in “Lives Lived.”

Elvera Baran

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Her funeral service was held July 24 at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Como Park.

Bill loved to play bridge, squash, handball and golf. He was also an avid runner into his 70s, af-

ter which he took up swimming and yoga. William was preceded in death by his wife Frances, sis-

ter Marjorie (Peter) Czajkowski and brother Wilbur James. He is survived by his daughters Sharyn and Barbara (Larry) Helms-Rot and two grandchildren. Inter-

ment was at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. Memorials preferred to Union Gospel Mission or St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

Clifford Hill

Clifford M. Hill, 94, died July 22, 2021. He proudly served in World War II and the Korean Conflict. He was stationed at JI Tower Air Base, doing trial work. After his time in the Marines, he met Fran-

cises Hill, whom he married in Lake Mills, Iowa, in 1947.

Bill then earned his juris doc-

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Mary Hayes assuming new volunteer role

By Dave Healy

Mary Hayes has worn several hats during her 20 years working for St. Anthony Park Area Seniors. This month she’ll start wearing a new one: volunteer.

As the retired volunteer coordinator, recruiting herself was the easiest job she’d ever had. Hayes started at SAPAS back in May when the organization was called the St. Anthony Park Block Nurse Program. She had been living in Seattle, working for the Red Cross and trying to coordinate care for mother, who lived in the Como Park neighborhood. Someone suggested that she call the Como Park Block Nurse Program, which proved to be a helpful referral.

Hayes decided to move back to the same house she grew up in to care for her widowed mother. In continuing to communicate with the local Block Nurse Program, she learned of an opening for a service coordinator at their sister organization in St. Anthony Park. She was hired, and her new employer allowed her to work from home for three years, until her mother passed away.

“I wanted my mom to be at home, and she wanted to be at home,” said Hayes, “so I knew first-hand how important it is to have services that make such arrangements possible.”

That’s SAPAS’s mission: providing at-home living assistance, wellness activities, nursing care and caregiver support through a network of paid professionals and volunteers. As a participant in the organization’s caregiver support group, Hayes could speak from personal experience, having cared for her mother.

After several years as service coordinator, Hayes assumed general oversight of SAPAS as its program coordinator. She finished her career as the organization’s half-time volunteer coordinator.

Although members of the three-person office have different job titles, Hayes stressed that they share information, expertise, experience and contacts. She is known by her colleagues for her encyclopedic knowledge of St. Anthony Park geography and who lives where. She drew upon that knowledge when matching volunteers with people wanting assistance.

“I used to think that everybody in St. Anthony Park knows each other. But that’s not true. People don’t always know their near neighbors. Sometimes SAPAS can help bring people together.”

Hayes graduated from Murray High School and went on to the University of Minnesota, majoring in international relations. Later she went to Northern Arizona University for an M.A. in teaching English as a Second Language, which led to 15 years teaching ESL in Oregon, before she moved to Seattle.

Mary said, “At the Red Cross, I had a list of over 1,000 people qualified to volunteer in the areas for which I was recruiting. I got a lot of nos.

“Oh my first day in St. Anthony Park, I had a lot of 10 people, and everyone said yes. This is a great neighborhood for volunteering.”

When she finishes her 20-year stint as a SAPAS employee in September, Hayes wants to do some traveling—something more than the short trips she was able to do while working.

But she didn’t want a retirement party because “I’m not leaving; I’m transitioning. They haven’t seen the last of me.”

Dave Healy, who lives in St. Anthony Park, is a former editor of the Bugle and long-time volunteer for St. Anthony Park Area Seniors.

Navy, worked at Pillsbury until retirement, enjoyed singing barbershop music and was a longtime member of Como Park Lutheran Church.

He was predeceased by his parents, Clifford St. Gertrude Hill, and his wife of 67 years, Violet. He is survived by his sister LaVona Sullivan, children Paul (Sue) and Janis, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

A memorial gathering was held at Roshdawn Cemetery Chapel Aug. 6, followed by a graveside service.

Kenneth Klecker

Kenneth Roy Klecker, 90, died July 18, 2021, in Mankato. Kenneth was a Korean conflict army veteran who served overseas for five years. He enjoyed spending time with family and traveling.

He was preceded in death by his wife Audrey. He is survived by children Rick, Sandy (Mike Foreliti), and Jennifer (James) Schultz; two grandchildren, and Rick, Sandy (Mike Foreliti), and Debbie Connolly; two grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held Aug. 7 at St. Cecilia’s Catholic Church in St. Anthony Park.

Gary Merwin


Merwin was preceded in death by his wife Audrey. He is survived by children, two grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held July in Hamline Church. Memorials can be sent to the Arbor Day Foundation for their Emergency Forest Replanting Fund—ArborDay.org/represent or Arbor Day Foundation, 211 N. 12th Street Lincoln, NE 68508.

Anna Van Voorhis

Anna Lageson Van Voorhis, 33, died unexpectedly on Aug. 5, 2021. She suffered a catastrophic bleed in her brain.

Anna attended St. Anthony Park, Murray and Central Schools. She graduated from UW-La Crosse with a bachelor’s degree.

Anna is survived by her husband James and their daughter, Marita; her parents, Robb and Jan Lageson and Sage Van Voorhis; brother Roddy Lageson, sister-in-law Laura Kuzny; Anna was pre-deceased by her grandparents, Bob and Avis Lageson and Joe and Ada Dunnwald.

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Inside the judging at the State Fair

By Sarah CR Clark

The return of the Minnesota State Fair this summer is being celebrated not just by grandstand ticket holders and fans of deep-fried foods on a stick. Take Mary Duncomb and Kate Eelkema. They couldn’t be happier they can resume serving as judges at the State Fair.

Duncomb has been a judge and coordinator of judges for baked product entries at the Fair since 2012. Duncomb was once a 4-Her in the Mississippian Club of Dakota County. She said she’s always been interested in baking and started baking at a young age.

Her interest in baking continued when she started baking in 4-H. She said root beer float cake was her favorite creation, and she was able to win several ribbons with her recipes.

Duncomb was impressed by the variety of baked goods entering the State Fair and the quality of the entries.

Eelkema joined 4-H as a kindergartner in western Minnesota—and two older siblings, Medora and Russell.

In 2007, Eelkema was accepted into the Minnesota State Fair’s quilt competition and has exhibited quilts at the Fair ever since. She said the competition has been a great opportunity for her.

Eelkema said she is excited to be on the cutting edge of what’s going on in the world of quilting and to help others learn about this art form.

Judging at the State Fair is a fun and rewarding experience for Duncomb and Eelkema.

Duncomb said she enjoys seeing the diversity of bakers each year and appreciates the cultural diversity of bakers, noting, for example, that a Hmong baker might use a spice in a way that is new to her.

Eelkema said she appreciates the cultural diversity of bakers as well. She said it is important to be open-minded and to appreciate the quality and care that people put into their craft.

The State Fair judging to p. 13
Deadline for SAP Community Foundation grant program

The St. Anthony Park Community Foundation is accepting applications through Sept. 15 for its 2021 Community Grants program. The foundation is seeking proposals from nonprofit organizations, neighborhood and community groups, and educational institutions (pre-K thru 12) that address and create a positive impact in at least one of the following themes: resilience, sustainability, and diversity.

The foundation continues to encourage applications that can demonstrate community impact related to recent needs including COVID-19 relief, environmental education and social justice.

Individual applicants may request up to $3,500 from the Foundation’s pool of $35,000 for this grantmaking year.

For more information and grant criteria details, please go to https://www.sapfoundation.org/2021grants. If you have questions, please email sapcommunityfoundation@gmail.com.

Grant awards will be announced in early November 2021.

Celebrating at Holy Childhood Catholic Church

The Church of the Holy Childhood, 1455 Midway Parkway, will be celebrating 75 years of parish life with a series of special activities in September and October. The schedule includes:

- Sept. 26: Ice cream social, 3 to 4:30 p.m.
- Oct. 1: Oktoberfest, 6 to 9 p.m., ages 21 and over.
- Oct. 7 and 8: Rummage sale.
- Oct. 9: Food trucks.
- Oct. 13: Eucharistic Holy Hour, 5 to 6 p.m., potluck dinner to follow.
- Oct. 7: The Holy Childhood Choir will sing at the 9:15 a.m. Sunday Mass. Brunch to follow.

For more information, please contact the parish office at 651-644-7495 or go to www.holychildhoodparish.org.

AARP Challenge award

The St. Anthony Park Community Foundation Council announced it has been selected to receive a 2021 AARP Community Challenge Grant. It is one of only 244 grantees selected from across the nation.

With this “quick-action” grant, the council’s Transportation Committee will select local sculptors to design and build two ADA-compatible benches along Territorial Road, work with an artist and nearby residents to design street paintings in the area, and coordinate with the Creative Enterprise Zone to place a wall mural along Territorial near Carleton Street.

“We are incredibly proud to be selected by AARP to receive this grant,” said Kathy Murray, SAPCC executive director. “AARP is a national leader in making neighborhoods, towns, and cities more livable for all residents and we are honored that they see the tangible value this project will bring to our community.”

Women’s Drum Center

The Women’s Drum Center, 2242 University Ave., will offer a co-ed Middle Eastern drum class taught by Tim O’Keefe, consisting of darabuka, daf, frame drums of varying sizes, riqq and tabil baladi.

Cost is $12.50 per session with the first class is scheduled for Sept. 22. To register, go to womensdrumcenter.org.

Seniors activities

The St. Anthony Park Area Seniors is planning virtual “lunch bunch” sessions from noon to 1 p.m. on Sept. 1, 15 and 29.

In addition, the Caregiver and Bereavement support groups continue to meet the first Thursday of the month from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on Zoom.

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 with a Scholar Series back

The Ramsey County Library’s free “Tuesday with a Scholar” series returns this fall with programs slated for Sept. 21 and 28 at 12:30 p.m.

On Sept. 21, Metropolitan State University criminal justice professor and author James Denly will discuss “The Violence Project: How to Stop a Mass Shooting Epidemic.”

Denly will look at violence prevention and innovative ways to stop the social contagion of mass shootings in the United States.

On Sept. 28, Ronald W. Greene, an University of Minnesota communications professor, will discuss “Free Speech: A Contested Symbol of Democracy.”

To participate in these programs, register in advance for the event on our website or call the library at 651-724-6001. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Book reading series come together

Two St. Paul book reading series are coming together, “Bridges” and “Literary Lights.”

“I suppose you could call it a wedding, but then we’ve been like twins over the years,” says Stan Kusunoki, talking about the merging of his reading series, Bridges, with Literary Lights hosted by fellow Twin Cities writer, Donna Isaac.

Literary Bridges will celebrate its inaugural session at 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 12, at Next Chapter Bookstores, which is located at the corner of Snelling and Grand avenues.

Featured readers include: David Mura, Isadora Gruye, Mary Jo Thompson, Jenna Knittel, Michael Kleber-Diggs, Jeanette Lute, Margaret Haase, Carolyn Holbrook, Lia Rivamonte, Michael Dean, Rosie Peters, Carol Masters, Hawona Sullivan Janzen, Anthony Ceballos, and Ardie Medina.

For more information, go to info@nextchapterbookstores.com.

Neighbors report compiled by Bugle editor Scott Carlson.

Support our Bugle Photo Gallery. Send your pics to editor@parkbugle.org. Put "Photo Gallery" in the subject line.

State Fair judging from p. 12

has also judged quilts at fairs and shows in North Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Wisconsin, Arizona, North Carolina and Georgia.

Minnesota’s State Fair has 25 separate quilting categories that range from large bed quilts to separate quilting categories that specialize in painter’s sticks. This year’s quilt offerings range from large bed quilts to quilts on a stick, which are small “quilts on a stick,” which are named for their appearance on painter’s sticks. This year’s quilt entries range from large bed quilts to quilts on a stick, which are small “quilts on a stick,” which are named for their appearance on painter’s sticks.

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Minnesota’s State Fair has 25 separate quilting categories that range from large bed quilts to small “quilts on a stick,” which are 8 inches by 9 inches and displayed on painter’s sticks. This year’s quilt entries range from large bed quilts to quilts on a stick, which are small “quilts on a stick,” which are named for their appearance on painter’s sticks.

When evaluating competing quilts, Eelkema explained she “looks at all the decisions the entrant made to construct the quilt, such as design, colors, fabrics, patterning, the actual quilting stitches, the finishing details and, even, the backing.”

Complexity, cohesiveness and construction all matter to Eelkema when she awards ribbons.

“I always look forward to being part of the judging of the creative activities competitions,” Eelkema said. “There is a great deal of negativity in many areas of the world today.”

“But every August I think there is still something very right with the world when I see how many people have taken the time to make quilts and other textiles, wood or glass creations, preserves, baked goods and more to enter into the Minnesota State Fair.”

Sarah CR Clark lives in St. Anthony Park and is a regular freelance writer for the Bugle.

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Girls soccer

The Cougars are coming off a season in which they produced a winning record of 6-4-2. The team will be led by first-year head coach Gaby Diaz. Team captains will be seniors Isa Sanchez-Esparza, Mariatu Kanu and Le- nia Lopez.

The varsity schedule includes several challenging nonconference games in addition to the six-game St. Paul City Conference compe- tition. Coach Diaz says the team expects to outwork their opponents in every game and to “play with character and pride.”

Boys soccer

In the 2020 season, the Como boys produced a 6-6-1 record. This year’s 16-game schedule will feature many more noncon- fERENCE matches, including an early test versus perennial state power Austin and tough contests against Section 4AA opponents Mahn- medi and Hill-Murray.

Como alum Sunday Htoo will coach the varsity team on the field while co-coach Jonah Fields handles program administration. Senior captain Soren Berg is the team’s only returning starter.

“He’s an exceptional center back who embraces leadership responsibilities,” Fields said.

The coaches are eager to see se- niors Gordon Van Sant, Ethan Lee and Victoire Mwakana assume larger roles.

Cross Country Running

Coach Tim Kersey will lead the Cougar boys and girls teams, assisted by Paula Caballero, an avid runner and ultra-marathoner. Captains se- lected for the season include Soren Sackett, Charlie Power-Thenen, Sig Isacsson, Anna Lovat, Laila Diaz and Jennifer Rosas.

Team bonding and Saturday morning breakfast runs are highly anticipated, as is the return to a full schedule that includes big meets like the Roy Griak Invitational. Top Como runners are aiming for peak performances at the Section 4AA meet and a chance to qualify for state.

Football

The Cougars made the most of their four games in 2020, win- ning them all to earn the St. Paul City Conference Championship. Twelve returning seniors will lead the effort to keep the momentum going.

Senior captains M’Ta Nazandi and Justus DeLoach are four-year lettermen who play both offensive and defen- sive line. Quarterback Jude Breen ran the offense at a high level last year and will be expected to do so again, complimented by Santos Aguire who should give the Cou- gars a solid rushing attack.

Fujiuan Bennett, Dekerdick Johnson, Caleb DaPual, John Oo, Michael Corneica, Thomas Corn- icea, Devin Schuna and Mohamed Sufi are also key seniors who are anticipated to lead younger players and fill essential roles.

Coach Kirby Scull noted the 2021 schedule will return to the state’s district and sub-district play over eight games. But fortunately each of the St. Paul City teams are part of that schedule.

“Our challenge will be to find a few receiving threats and replace our top four line backers,” Scull said. “If we can fill those key posi- tions and stay healthy it should be an exciting season.”

Girls swimming

Senior captain M’Ta Nazandi leads a younger group of swimmers including sophomores Sophie Warner and Mia Trifilette-Si- mons. Coach Steve Conery is looking forward to combining his returners with a few new swim- mers who should help build ex- citement for a successful season.

“M’Ta is a strong backstroker and sprint specialist,” Conery said. “So- phie is an all-around good swimmer and excels in the individual medley and distance free events. Mia is a sprint specialist who keeps adding news skills and events each year.”

Girls tennis

Senior captain Eva Larson and sophomore Ashley Hartwich will be key players at the top of the Cougars lineup this season. Both of them played in the highest division of St. Paul Urban Tennis through the summer. Como finished 2-8 last year and will work to improve on that record as they play a full schedule including nonconference opponents in 2021.

Volleyball

The Cougars varsity finished the shortened 2020 season with a re- cord of 6-4.

“...This year’s team is looking for- ward to the full conference sched- ule of 12 games plus nonconference matches and two Saturday multi- team tournaments. Team captains are senior Tess Freberg and sopho- more Ellery Tennon.”

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

By Eric Erickson
Sports analysis

The sights and sounds of high school sports returned to campus- es across the state on Aug. 16 with the first day of practice for the new fall season.

At Como Park High School, that meant student athletes in girls and boys soccer, boys and girls cross country running, football, girls vol- leyball, girls swimming and girls tennis were back in action. The three weeks of sports before the first day of school are filled with team tryouts followed by daily practices, bond- ing activities and competition commen- cing Aug. 26 for most activities.

The following is a preview of each Cougars varsity team for Bugle readers. Complete schedules for all Como and St. Paul City Confer- ence teams can be found at saint paulsports.org.
Letters from p. 4

hopefully resulting in cleaner energy for all. But there also is a problem. While these are good steps, they are not enough. They especially are not enough when we factor in that we continue to build new fossil fuel infrastructure.

The most obvious current example is the Line 3 Tar Sands pipeline owned by the Canadian company Enbridge. This is especially a problem when we factor in that with the new oil Line 3 will carry, we will be releasing more greenhouse emissions into the atmosphere than what the entire state of Minnesota does currently. In other words, we have taken two steps forward followed by four steps back.

The new IPCC report makes one thing clear: We do not have time to be taking steps back on climate. We need to be moving forward on reducing emissions and do so at a much faster rate than currently.

This type of transformative change can only happen when the people demand it to happen. We need leaders from the governor down to your local school board to hear from the people (that’s you!) that now is the time to act because nothing is more important than our children’s future. I hope you will join this effort.

Tom Lucy, Como Park

Community Groups from p. 1

land recovery and reparative justice on Dakota land; the possibility of solar energy and St. Paul Schools; neighborhood faith groups; local food pledges; and St. Paul’s plan to begin collecting household organic waste.

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