By Christie Vogt

In August, as the Taliban seized control and U.S. troops withdrew from Afghanistan, at least 18,000 U.S.-affiliated Afghans and their families were thrust into a high state of emergency.

These Afghan special immigrant visa applicants had assisted the U.S. government as translators, interpreters and in other capacities. The SIV program allows Afghans whose lives are in danger due to their service to apply for resettlement in the U.S. But at the Bugle’s press deadline, thousands were still awaiting approval.

The International Institute of Minnesota in St. Paul welcomed 13 SIV evacuees in August, one family of nine and one of four members. “You’re leaving your country, your home, in the middle of a massive transition and extreme unrest,” explained Mahmoud Ahmed, a case manager at the International Institute of Minnesota. “There’s violence, there are targeted attacks. One of my clients had his colleague and friend killed by the Taliban not a week before he left.”

Although separate from the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, SIV holders are eligible for the same benefits and services as refugees, and they also undergo thorough security vetting and health screenings. Upon arrival, institute staff greets SIV and refugee families at the airport and transports them to a furnished home with groceries and a warm, culturally appropriate meal. When housing is not immediately available, clients are temporarily placed in a hotel or with a friend or relative, according to Institute staff.

According to Minnesota Compass, about 500 people in the state have Afghan ancestry. The two families who recently arrived in the U.S. chose Minnesota as their destination because they have friends who are residents, said Zahra Halboon, an Institute staff resettlement member.

In the days and weeks after arrival, resettlement staff works with clients on many tasks to support their transition. This includes helping clients apply for Social Security, health insurance and public assistance and enrolling families in programs and support services, including English classes, employment training and public school, according to Institute resettlement staff.

Of the initial preparation tasks, “the toughest part is finding housing,” said Halboon, who assisted with the Afghan families resettlement.

Besides a housing shortage in Minnesota—especially for units with three or more bedrooms—Halboon explained that many properties require a rental history and an income that is two and a half times the monthly rent. For refugees who have just fled their homes due to war, persecution or natural disasters, meeting these requirements normally is unattainable.

Halboon and Ahmed said the institute is grateful to have housing partners who understand the unique situations of refugees and adjust their requirements accordingly. Additionally, clients’ friends or relatives have served as co-signers, and donations from community members have been critical.

Ahmed said the institute aims to build “a more robust network” of partners so that families can quickly move into homes that meet their needs. “We are looking for more and more ways to engage the real estate community,” Ahmed.

The institute’s clients have found safety, but the path ahead remains challenging. “They’re worried about what’s going on with their families back in Afghanistan,” Halboon said.

“They’re dealing with shifting their entire lives and coming to a new country while dealing with that constant uncertainty,” Ahmed added.

While waiting for news, they are pushing forward. Two members of one family have already found jobs. “You must come to our house to celebrate! We’ll have a party,” Ahmed reported they urged after sharing the news with him.

Although the situation is in flux, the Minnesota Department of Human Services reports that up to 65 Afghan SIVs and at least 580 additional evacuees may be placed in the state through September. As of Sept. 7, 35 SIVs have arrived.

If community members would like to offer support, the institute is encouraging contributions to its SIV Refugee Family Fund at iimn.org/afghanistan. In-kind donations cannot be accepted while construction continues at the non-profit’s 6394 Como Ave. location.

In addition to financial support, Ahmed encourages neighbors to foster a welcoming community spirit for immigrants. “Have an open heart, open arms and open your home to these new Americans.”

The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, the institute’s national affiliate, reported that more than 80,000 American-affiliated Afghans and their families remained in Afghanistan as of Aug. 17, and hundreds of thousands of others also need evacuation.

Christie Vogt is a Twin Cities freelance writer for the Bugle, which formerly worked for the International Institute of Minnesota.

Five vie for two seats on Falcon Heights City Council

By Anne Holzman

Voters in Falcon Heights will fill two seats on the City Council from among five candidates running in the Nov. 2 election.

Incumbent Melanie Leehy is running for a second term. Mark Miagakos’ term also expires at the end of this year, and his name is not on the ballot.

All city council seats are at-large, meaning they represent all of Falcon Heights.

Here are the candidates:

Michael Arcand

Michael Arcand has been self-employed for 25 years and “lived the challenges of running a business and starting in business.”

Arcand, of Falcon Plumbing LLC, said he has learned that “communication is the key to a successful relationship between all parties. Many residents I have spoken with would like to see better communication with our elected officials. I will strive to make that happen.”

Arcand listed his priorities as transparency, communication and fiscal responsibility.

“I see the need to raise awareness of our citizens to be involved in the choices our local government makes,” he said. “I would strive to promote our streets/neighborhoods as a safe place of inclusivity to voice your opinion and fight the apathy that sometimes creeps into our lives.”

“This is our community and if we lose what makes us a strong and diverse neighborhood, we lose what makes this city special.”

Falcon Heights City Council to p. 7
District 10
Community Council

Sholom Home complex renamed

The former Sholom Home, 1554 Midway Parkway, has a new name: Holden House.

Work is progressing at the site across from the State Fair main entrance. Roofing work has been completed, new windows, HVAC, walls and plumbing are all under-way. The developer, Midway Community Group LLC, is renovating the former nursing home to create 148 rental apartments.

Midway Community Group said it expects to complete construction and begin the first move in of residents as early as next April. For further information, go to the Holden House website at https://www.holdenhouse.life.

New website

Navigating around the work of the District 10 council has just gotten easier.

The new website, still at http://www.district10como.org, has a new look and greatly increased mobile functionality. The district’s goal is to provide more information on regular council initiatives and events and ways to promote community interests.

Saint Paul bike plan update

City staff are set to begin updating the Saint Paul bicycle plan. Over the next several months, staff will be working with the community to identify gaps in the planned bike network, future priorities to make biking more accessible and comfortable and ascertain where and how the city should plan for separate bike lanes and shared use paths.

A city representative is scheduled to attend the Oct. 6 Land Use Committee meeting to present information and answer questions. See more info and take a survey at stpaul.gov/bikeplan.

New board member

A special election to fill a District 10 board vacancy was held in August with Como community members electing Matt Kehiler to Sub-District 4 seat.

Kehiler replaces Ben Kowalski-Grayhèk, who was recently elevated to board vice chairman.

Kehiler and his wife have lived in the Como neighborhood since October 2018. Matt, who is manager of an independent bookstore in downtown St. Paul, hopes to learn from community members about the areas issues and needs.

Upcoming 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 by email to district10@district10como.org or call 651-644-3889.

• Neighborhood Relations: Tuesday, Oct. 5
• Land Use Committee: Wednesday, Oct. 6
• Environment Committee: Tuesday Oct. 12
• Board meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 19

All meetings begin at 7 p.m. When possible, agendas and other relevant documents are posted in advance on District 10’s website: www.district10como.org.

Submitted by Shevek McKee, District 10 Como Community Council executive director.

District 12
Community Council

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

Visit the council’s website at sapcc.org to learn more. For further information and meeting links, email jessica@sapcc.org.

Homelessness seminar

In partnership with the St. Anthony Park Community Foundation, the St. Anthony Park Community Council is planning a public educational meeting on homelessness and housing insecurity. The session, for SAP area residents, is scheduled for Oct. 28 from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

This virtual event is intended to focus public attention on the growing issues of homelessness and housing insecurity, as well as better equip all with resources to assist citizens in times of need.

The council has invited Twin Cities speakers to share their expertise on the issue and offer insights on how the average community member can advocate for not only systemic changes, but also engage and advocate for their neighbors who might be experiencing these problems.

The program will provide time for formal comments from speakers, responses to questions from the host and a community Q&A. To find out who will be speaking and register for this event, go to sapcc.org/housinginsecurityseminar.

Voter registration at Seal Hi-Rise

The council’s Equity Committee will be working on providing voter registration at the Seal Hi-Rise before this November’s election.

The event, which will take place in conjunction with a food distribution, will focus on voter registration and education about the importance of voter turnout among renters. Translated documents will be available in Hmong, Somali and Spanish.

At press time, a specific date had yet to be set.

Sample ballots will also be available along with a handout specifically for Seal residents on their polling location, public transportation available on Election Day and other ways to vote (early or by mail). This community education comes before an important vote on a proposed rent stabilization ordinance amidst a growing conversation about renters’ rights in the Twin Cities.

If you would like to be involved in this or future voter registration events, please join the next Equity Committee meeting, or email jessica@sapcc.org for more information.

Changes abound around Territorial Road

Have you noticed the new sidewalk on the north side of Territorial Road between Seal and Carleton Streets?

Thanks to money raised by the District 12 Transportation Committee, this and many more changes are coming.

In early October, the council was scheduled to host a community painting event on Seal Street near Territorial Road to create an artistic accompaniment to the new sidewalk. Place-making through painted streets has been found to have traffic calming effects.

Future work in that area includes working with an artist to paint a crosswalk at Territorial Road and Carleton Street and installing two artist-created benches on Territorial. Grants from AARP
Como students glad to resume in-class school

By Eric Erickson

After more than a year of distance learning, optional in-person attendance last spring and a long summer break, Como Park High School students returned to live, in-school instruction on Sept. 9.

Despite the St. Paul School District’s late cancellation of bus transportation for Como students due to a driver shortage, schoolwide attendance figures averaged around 88 percent for the first week.

Students found ways to attend classes at Como despite the challenges and frustrations that faced some families as they navigated new transportation routines including improved traffic flow for parent drop-offs and using Metro Transit bus routes.

The return to in-person classes (even while students are required to wear masks) has been welcomed by students and teachers alike. The positive energy and human interaction of a full classroom had been missing from our lives more than many of us realized.

“Having everyone together back in person feels good and the classes are way more involved,” senior Peter Wenger said. “School on a screen was really hard.”

Seniors Damian Perryman and Garret Wiersma echoed that sentiment too, expressing gratitude for socializing and structure.

“Seeing all your friends, being able to say ‘hi’ to people in the halls and being able to think and work together in class is great,” Perryman said.

“It makes you feel like you have something to wake up for. It’s nice to have the structure,” Wiersma said.

Top honors for JROTC student

Cadet Major Aliser Paw received the Legion of Valor Bronze Cross, the most prestigious award a cadet of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps can earn. Only six cadets across the world in more than 241 Marine Corps JROTC programs are selected.

Prerequisites for the Bronze Cross include consistent demonstration of military scholarship, community service, extra-curricular activities, discipline, courtesy, outstanding character, academic grades and class rank (Paw’s weighted GPA is 4.3).

There will be a formal ceremony in the Como auditorium for Paw later this school year.

State Fair sanitation crew

Cadets from Como’s JROTC volunteered for seven days at the Minnesota State Fair to help keep the grounds clean and orderly. Approximately 35 cadets worked each day, putting in 12-hour shifts by emptying trash cans and hauling out carts of garbage. Their labor served as a fundraiser for the program and continued a 20-year relationship with the fair.

Eric Erickson is a social studies teacher at Como Park Senior High School and a regular freelance contributor to the Bugle.

Cadets from Como Park’s JROTC raised funds for their program by helping the State Fair Sanitation Department. Photo by Sgt. Major James Kirkland.
Help support mission of Park Bugle!

From the Desk of the Editor

By Scott Carlson

Photo standards for the Bugle

One of my goals this fiscal year, which began July 1, is to upgrade our newspaper’s photography. The old adage is, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” And well-composed, high resolution photos are worth their added weight in gold.

With that in mind, I asked our Bugle page designer to come up with some standards for people submitting photos for the newspaper.

• We prefer photos to be in jpeg or tiff format. However, if all that is available is a png or PDF, we can work with that.

• Photo size: Photos should be 300 ppi at least large enough in size so that it has an effective ppi of at least 300. For example, if “Photo A” is provided at 3” wide with a ppi of 72, this will end up at a size of 4.6” wide x 6” high when the resolution is changed to 300. Photo “B” will be too small for even a 1 column placement without running the risk of looking pixelated and/or blurry.

• Basically, the larger the photo, the better!

• Often we need to crop photos, either in the width, depth or both.

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 readership 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 PIF (profit nonprofit organization) guided by an elected board of directors.

Currently serving on the board are: Josie Recerra, Beth Brandel, Rosanna Calhoun, Barb Flowers, Beth Magistad, Steve Plagens, Michael Smith, Helen Warren, Kristin Wiersma.

Editor’s note: As we move into fall, the Bugle will be conducting our annual fund appeal. Here are some thoughts from our volunteer board of directors.

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• 108 People honored through Lives Lived articles.
• 97 Activities of the community shared and promoted.
• 50 Community organizations’ messages amplified.

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From Mayor Randy Gustafson:

I enthusiastically endorse Melanie Leehy for Falcon Heights City Council. As a former Falcon Heights mayor and council member, I had the privilege of working with Melanie as she served the city on the City Engagement Commission, Inclusion and Policing Task Force and City Council. Melanie has demonstrated her leadership with strength and grace over 15 years and has earned our vote to continue on the council.

I greatly appreciated Melanie’s service during the most difficult time in our city’s history after the tragic death of Philando Castile. When approached, Melanie accepted leadership on the Inclusion and Policing Task Force. Her contributions were invaluable as she helped bring healing to our city.

Melanie has served on the council with wisdom and insight as the city has navigated budgets, infrastructure and public safety.

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Why I support the St. Paul rent stabilization ballot measure

By Dan Krivit

St. Paul has the opportunity to be the “Most Livable City.” We are a welcoming community that is working hard together to get through these challenging times. Now, the rent stabilization ballot measure is one real opportunity near at hand to take us all to the next level of helping to protect renters from unfair price hikes. I’ve been a renter and a landlord. But now our family enjoys the privileges of owning our own home in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood. Each day I try to better understand these privileges and use them to help our neighbors who do not yet have the opportunity to own their own homes. The rent stabilization ballot measure is one such step we can all take.

I encourage all my neighbors to read the ballot language (link to the Minnesota Secretary of State’s web site for your sample ballot) and the full ordinance amendment language. Don’t let the well-funded opponents interpret the proposed ordinance for you; the actual language details are very important and you can judge for yourself if it is reasonable.

Details of the full text of the proposed ordinance are very important. It clearly states the intent is to both protect renters from unreasonable and unfair rent increases while at the same time providing for landlords to make a fair return on investment.

My point is that we can have both with this proposal. As a former landlord myself, I understand the many risks of renting property. But a three percent annual cap on rental price increases is a small factor in the larger picture of managing income property. Other variables, such as retaining good tenants, can be much more important. I also understand this St. Paul rent stabilization initiative is only one piece of a larger puzzle to help address housing insecurity in our city.

We need to continue to look at all other alternatives as complimentary options including programs and services offered both by the city and county (Check housing links on the city and county websites). The housing crisis is serious enough that we need to employ “all of the above” strategies.

Rent stabilization alone is not the answer but it is a part of grassroots efforts to address the problem. It provides all citizens of St. Paul the opportunity to vote “YES” on one part of a comprehensive solution package while encouraging our elected officials to continue to strengthen the other strategies.

We all have a role in helping to approve and support the rent stabilization proposal. We must say “YES” to moving St. Paul into the next generation of housing strategies to help address past inequities that present clear and present dangers to our neighbors who rent, especially people of color and other marginalized groups. We should welcome this opportunity to try new, bold initiatives. The status quo and doing nothing are no longer options.

Dan Krivit is a 20-year resident of the St. Anthony Park and a volunteer who helped gather signatures for the Housing Equity Now Saint Paul organization.
The value of the Amber Union housing project

By Yakasah Wehyee

Access to quality, affordable housing is key in Minnesota and rectifying that situation is an imperative stepping stone to closing disparities within communities of color.

Since 2000, rent prices across the state have increased by 14 percent while wages have remained relatively stagnant. (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_FWcyuxs_i4v4aQyYFTbunghxM1fip4A/view) Meanwhile, construction of new housing units took a major hit (https://www.minnpost.com/national/2021/05/housing-hit) in recent years, the groundbreaking and Larpenteur avenues in Falcon Heights, the groundbreaking Aug. 16, at the corner of Snelling and Larpenteur Aves. of the Median Income level

and 930 square feet of commercial retail space. Of these new residential units, 40 will have three bedrooms—the type of housing desperately needed by bigger families that is often too expensive.

The Amber Union project was made possible by a collaboration of various government agencies including the Metropolitan Council and with financial assistance from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. The city of Falcon Heights also is providing support through historic tax credits, tax-exempt bonds and tax-increment financing.

Buhl Investors, who is developing the property, anticipates completing the project in the fall of 2022.

When looking to tackle the housing crisis, quality affordable housing is key in order to relieve tenants of the burden of exorbitantly high rent prices. Being able to spend 30 percent or less of your monthly income on housing provides renters the opportunity to create financial stability with the longer-term goal of future home ownership, which currently is inaccessible to many Black, Indigenous and People of Color community members.

Meanwhile, when considering affordable housing, there is often a lack of emphasis on quality. People need more than just four walls to thrive. A home must be a place that people can take pride in. Having a place to call home is the foundation to living a stable life and having healthy communities and a thriving state.

Funding is often a key barrier to developing new affordable housing complexes. But government collaboration can eliminate those barriers by tapping into innovative funds. For example, the Metropolitan Council accessed funding for the Amber Union project from the Metropolitan Livable Communities Fund, which aims to create more housing choices, support living wage job creation, and connect jobs, housing and regional amenities to create a more equitable region.

Collaboration among government agencies with community at the forefront is the only way to achieve an affordable housing system that works for all of Minnesota’s residents. While much work is left to be done in order to solve the housing crisis, starting by providing quality, affordable housing—like the Amber Union project—is an essential first step. ■

Yakasah Wehyee is a member of the Falcon Heights City Council.

Amber Union construction begins

By Anne Holzman

Construction has begun on the Amber Union housing project, formerly known as the TIES building, on the southeast corner of Snelling and Larpenteur avenues.

More than two years after the Falcon Heights City Council approved the project, crews are completing asbestos abatement and soil testing and will begin framing up interior spaces in the coming weeks.

The main building at 1667 W. Larpenteur Ave. will contain 125 apartments, all at “affordable” rates pegged to income levels at 50 percent of the Area Median Income level. Space for a coffee shop or other similar business will be created on the ground floor.

City Administrator Sack Thongvanh said he expects the renovations to be completed in the fall of 2022.

Delays in obtaining state financing had slowed the project. Thongvanh said in order to finance the renovations at affordable rents, the city created a tax-increment finance (TIF) district for the project, but only for the 13 of the 26 years that a TIF district can exist.

“We need to be able to capture the tax base as soon as possible,” he said.

The building has been added to the National Register of Historic Places and will be renovated to comply with those standards. Developer Buhl Investors has not said what will be done with the second building on the site, a parking garage.

Buhl renamed the site Amber Union with a nod to its original purpose as national headquarters of the Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association.

In recent years, the building has been referred to by the name of the TIES education technology consortium that occupied it in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The city acquired the property after TIES moved and sold it to Buhl in 2018. ■

Anne Holzman is a freelance writer covering Falcon Heights and Lauderdale government news for the Bugle.

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

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CONTACT US:
Anne Holzman is a freelance writer covering Falcon Heights and Lauderdale government news for the Bugle.
Melanie Leehy

Melanie Leehy’s past roles include chairing the city’s Community Engagement Commission and co-chairing the Task Force for Community Policing and Inclusion.

As a council member, Leehy has been involved with Parks and Recreation, the Planning Commission and the Ramsey County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. She has helped to organize environmental events.

Leehy has worked in the non-profit, education and corporate sectors and said her background in banking has helped to guide city budget deliberations.

“My ability to genuinely listen, bring unity with diverse groups, initiate creative ideas and solutions are key traits,” she added.

Leehy said her priorities include fiscal responsibility, safety, honoring residents and guests of all ages and backgrounds, maintaining excellent environmental stewardship and “care for our infrastructure and amenities including our present need of a new park building.”

She said she hopes to “find joy in seeing our community connect- edness blossom.”

Sue Majerus

Sue Majerus retired in 2016 from a series of roles with Ramsey County and now is on the county’s Charter Commission. She also represents Falcon Heights on the Nine North Cable Commission. She works with the Como Park Fal - con Heights Living at Home Block Nurse Program assisting seniors and “care for our infrastructure and amenities including our present need of a new park building.”

Majerus said she would “address the disparity of police ser - vices by race and/or ethnicity” and would create a citizen adviso - ry board to improve transparency in policing. She expressed concern about investing in Community Park, which sits on land owned by the University of Minnesota, and proposed that council “think out of the box” about options to improve the city’s parks.

Eric Meyer

Eric Meyer has worked as an or - ganizer with TakeAction MN and the Minnesota Nurses Association. He is the founder and director of Generation Atomic, which advocates for nuclear energy as a solu - tion to climate change. Meyer said he would bring “some fresh ideas on how to make our community feel more connect - ed”, with a focus on connecting communities of different back - grounds. While in graduate school, Meyer said he developed “a system for community members to share knowledge and resources, for ex - ample, connecting a person with a love of woodworking or gardening to others who would like to learn those skills or borrow tools in or - der to do them.”

While campaigning, Meyer said, he has heard about “many small but important changes” from constituents, “such as de - creasing residential speed limits.” He promised “forward-thinking, responsible and responsive city government.”

Nicole Porter

Nicole Porter said she is running for city council “because I’ve gotten the feeling that no one who ever held the office before really has any understanding of what life looks like on the other side.”

She said she has experience as an entrepreneur and in residing in affordable housing.

“I’ve been priced out of neighbor - hoods due to gentrification and I’ve also been a beneficiary of af - fordable housing,” Porter said. “I know what works and what really doesn’t.”

Porter also praised Minnesota’s commitment to the arts and sup- port for entrepreneurship. “I think that’s what is going to be required for the future of Falcon Heights,” she said.

Porter said the city’s most pressing issue “is real estate de - velopment without investing in community. I’m so excited to see that our community is growing, but I would like to see growth with green spaces and community out- reach programs.”

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By Scott Carlson

Twenty months since the onset of Covid-19 and local food businesses are still feeling the effects of the pandemic with their owners fervently hoping the virus is dissipating.

With the arrival of fall, October is a month of pumpkin pancakes, new beers and wines and other seasonal delights and at the busiest time of the year for many retailers. But this year these also remain uncertain times for them, too.

“This pandemic has not gone away,” said Pam Johnson, owner of The Little Wine Shoppe in St. Anthony’s Park Milton Square.

“We all need to band together, with distancing and masking and being fully vaccinated, in efforts to protect our neighbors and friends.” The Little Wine Shoppe sells wine, beer and spirits, which were classified as part of an essential business, early on in the pandemic, and that enabled her shop to remain open, Johnson said.

“In our business, our sales went up.”

Still, Johnson added, “This pandemic has been brutal for many businesses, and for that my heart aches. And it was bittersweet for me. I couldn’t see my mom in assisted living, I couldn’t see my children or granddaughter.”

To adapt to the pandemic crisis, Johnson implemented several protocols at her store including frequent employee hand washing, putting out hand sanitizer for customers and giving away free masks. “We began offering curbside pickup, which we will continue during this new variant stage, and probably forever,” Johnson said.

She said some relief came this past summer when the federal Centers for Disease Control said fully vaccinated people didn’t need to wear masks in retail stores.

“Within that window we had our one and only wine tasting outside in July to help celebrate the second anniversary of Wind ing Trail, our new neighborhood bookstore,” Johnson said.

“And then the window closed for future wine tastings. We’re now offering a wine of the week at a deep discount so customers can at least taste our new wines, with the discount.”

At the Colossal Café, owner Elizabeth Tinucci reports her restaurant had steady business in the summer and is looking forward to a busy fall.

“The café will continue offering weekly menus for its take-and-bake, house-made soups and entrees. In October, the café will have pumpkin pancakes with whipped maple butter on the menu, a food highlight of the year for many customers, Tinucci said.

Tinucci said Colossal Café had made a huge comeback considering that the pandemic last year forced her to temporarily close the café and lay off her staff.

“We quickly adapted our business to a take and bake and take out model, which was a steep learning curve for us and our guests. We are grateful for the grace our communities have shown us over the last 20 or so months. Slowly we added staff back.”

Meanwhile, Tinucci remains concerned about the health and safety of her staff, “as we continue to navigate through times that are unknown. The vaccine brought a lot of peace of mind to those working closely with others and the public. We do hope that vaccine rates continue to rise.”

At Tim & Tom’s Speedy Market, owner Tom Spreigl said his grocery store has stayed very busy despite shortened hours.

“When Covid hit, we were busier than any point in store history,” Spreigl said. “While there was panic buying, we also saw many people buying food to donate to people who had lost their jobs due to lockdowns.

“We started working with Keystone Community Services to donate groceries to those in the Midway area. We still offer online shopping and curbside pickup.” At Urban Growler, co-owner...
Five ways to use pumpkin beyond PSL

By Jenni Wolf

October is a time for fall and pumpkins. But pumpkin flavored food items have made an earlier appearance, hitting grocery store shelves, popping up in coffee shops and gracing restaurant menus since mid-August.

What about in your home? Have you bought your first can of pumpkin yet? I have to admit I cracked my first can on Labor Day weekend!

While I have nothing against a classic pumpkin spice latte, there are so many other fun and tasty ways to incorporate one of fall’s favorite flavors into your meals and snacks at home.

Pumpkin is part of the squash family and packs a punch of fiber, potassium, vitamin C and other antioxidants such as beta-carotene (thanks to its vibrant orange color). Read on below for five of my favorite ways to use pumpkin that go beyond the basic pumpkin spice latte.

Note: You’ll need a can of plain pumpkin puree to try out these ideas, which can be found at most grocery stores in the baking or canned fruit and vegetable aisle.

1. Add a pumpkin punch to your breakfast.
   Swirl a few spoonfuls of pumpkin puree into a warm bowl of oats or a creamy cup of yogurt. Sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar.

2. Make a smoothie snack.
   Blend together 1 cup pumpkin puree, 1 frozen banana, 1/2 cup vanilla Greek yogurt, 1/2 cup milk, 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice or cinnamon and honey to enhance taste.

3. Add it to your favorite game-day chili recipe.
   Sounds weird, tastes great—trust me. Don’t worry, the pumpkin flavor isn’t strong but adds a wonderful creaminess to your chili and is great to add body and texture to a vegetarian version. If you’d like to highlight the pumpkin more, try adding a dash of cinnamon.

4. Give some fall flavor to your favorite pasta dish.
   Stir 1 to 2 cups of pumpkin puree into your favorite homemade or jarred marinara or alfredo sauce. Heat until warm and blended, stir in parmesan cheese and serve with pasta.

5. Get your bake on—pumpkin muffins make for a tasty fall treat. Photo by Jenni Wolf.

Favorite Pumpkin Muffins

Ingredients:
1.5 cups whole wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 eggs
1 cup pumpkin puree
½ cup maple syrup or honey
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
¾ cup canola or light olive oil
¾ cup chocolate chips, dried cranberries, nuts, etc.

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In large bowl mix together eggs, pumpkin, maple syrup, vanilla and oil. Stir until blended well.
3. To the liquid mixture, add dry ingredients: flour, soda, powder, etc.

OCTOBER 2021 – PARK BUGLE
Chroma Zone artists exhibition
An exhibition of Chroma Zone artists’ work is being held now through Oct. 31 at Vandalia Tower, 500 Vandalia St.

NewStudio Gallery, in partnership with the university’s Enterprise Zone and Baum Revision, is sponsoring the exhibition that features the work of Chroma Zone mural artists and alumni on the first level of Vandalia Tower, a former King Koil Mattress factory under renovation by NewStudio Architecture. The exhibition features screen prints, paintings, clothing and baskets available for purchase.

For further information call Gallery director Camille LeFevre at 651-285-2287.

Upstart Crow podcasts
Upstart Crow Youth Shakespeare Troupe, formerly known as Shakespeare in St. Anthony Park, has Upstart Crow Youth Shakespeare podcasts.

By Sarah CR Clark
It’s a new day at St. Anthony Park Lutheran.

On Sept. 26, a top local Lutheran bishop was scheduled to install Jill Rode and Daniel Ruen as co-pastors of the church. Their installation heralds a newer leadership model.

Strong congregations are able to try out new models for leadership that yoke the talents of pastors and able lay leaders in fresh ways,” said ELCA Saint Paul Area Synod Bishop Patricia Lull. “SAP Lutheran is such a congregation.”

Usually, when a senior pastor of a Lutheran congregation retires, as SAP Lutheran’s Pastor Glenn Berg Mogby did in June 2020, that congregation then begins searching for a new senior pastor to fill the vacant top position.

“We determined we wanted Jill Rode to continue her ministry with us but in a new and expanded role,” Rode was associate pastor at SAP Lutheran Church’s pastoral call committee.

“We were looking to call (hire) two pastors who were to be equal in stature, rather than a tradition-al hierarchical structure,” said Blaine Thrasher, chairman of SAP Lutheran Church’s pastoral call committee.

While SAP Lutheran isn’t the first church to adopt the co-pastor model, it is currently the only ELCA church in St. Paul to have it. Rode and Ruen said co-pastoring is appealing. Both pastors equally share preaching and pastoral care, taking turns answering midnight emergencies and studying for writing sermons.

Ruen jokingly confessed to feeling relieved to be “on a solo-pastor vacation”… which can feel isolating and exhausting.

Rode contended this new model invites a more supportive, collaborative leadership.

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Baltics and Beyond Travel expands its service

By Scott Carlson

Baltics and Beyond, a St. Anthony Park-based travel agency, is deepening its niche travel business. Company owner Cindy Bielke recently announced that beginning in 2022 St. Anthony Park resident Peter Kalnin will lead the agency in developing and conducting new European travel itineraries and tours in the Baltics.

“Our travelers will benefit from the deep knowledge and on-the-ground connections that Peter will bring to every Baltics and Beyond tour,” Bielke said. “As a former language teacher and student of European history, Peter also is well experienced in making foreign travel and new cultures come alive in engaging and interesting ways.”

“In terms of shape tours that highlight facets of European history, crystallized in real living places, that can still be experienced in meaningful ways today,” Bielke adds.

Kalnin, a fluent Latvian and German speaker with a master’s degree in European history from the University of Chicago, will lead Baltics and Beyond tours in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia and other European countries next year. He recently relocated to Riga, Latvia, and is doing translation and other projects for the Museum of Occupation of Latvia besides his work with Baltics and Beyond.

Navigating the global pandemic has been challenging for Baltics and Beyond.

“We offer a guarantee that travel deposits will be returned in full if a Baltics and Beyond traveler needs to cancel due to a Covid infection,” Bielke said. “We also provide travel insurance, just in case.”

The three Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are located across the Baltic Sea from Sweden, bordering Russia, Belarus and Poland on the northern European lowlands.

According to a press statement, Kalnin was born in Minneapolis and raised in Oregon. His parents were immigrants from the Republic of Latvia and spoke their native language at home. For the past 20 years Kalnin has been a teacher, mostly of high school German in Minnesota, but also English as a Second Language and primary grade German at an international school near Berlin, Germany. He has been active in the Minnesota-Taiwan community, singing in Lithuanian choirs and ensembles, as well as teaching the language to children and adult learners.

Meanwhile, Bielke has had a longstanding interest in the Baltics. Her father was a native Latvian forced to leave the country as a war refugee during WWII. And about 10 years ago, she began regularly visiting the Baltics.

“I decided to start Baltics and Beyond Travel to share this delightful, mysterious part of the world with other Americans,” said Bielke, a former marketing and event management professional. “Our tours are designed to give people a sense of that history and context, while also providing unique, fun and relatively affordable travel experiences.”

For further information on Baltics and Beyond and upcoming tours, visit its website at www.balticsandbeyond.net. For early bird specials and other information, email Bielke at bielke.cindy@gmail.com.
or can be made to the Franciscan
his 17 great-nieces and great-nephews.

Willard Bell. He is survived by five
Marcella (née Kuhlmann) Bell and
of his career employed with the Ar-
“Freddie Parks,” he spent the bulk
Reserve. Affectionately known as
Ramsey High School and attended
Elementary School and Alexander
graduated from Holy Childhood
St. Rose of Lima Catholic School,
Arizona and Alaska, Fred was a
He grew up in a large family in Fal-
 died at his Vadnais Heights home.
Frederick Bell
ber this month in Lives Lived.
Two WWII vets and a 100-year-
old Como Park resident are among those people we mem-
ber this month in Lives Lived.
Frederick Bell
Frederick-Charles Bell, 76, recently
death at his Vadnais Heights home. He grew up in a large family in Fal-
Except for brief residences in Arizona and Alaska, Fred was a
lifelong Minnesotan who attended St. Rose of Lima Catholic School,
graduated from Holy Childhood Elementary School and Alexander
Ramsey High School and attended St. John’s University.
Fred enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and attended
basic training at Parris Island, S.C. He subsequently served for
more than five years with the Army Reserve. Affectionately known as
“Freddie Parks,” he spent the bulk of his career employed with the Ar-

He was preceded in death by his
father Thomas and mother Anna
Park, died Aug. 16, 2021.

He was preceded in death by his
parents and siblings.

He was preceded in death by his
siblings. He was a graduate of Der-

two great-grandchildren, 10 grand-

Floria was a graduate of Der-

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Drive electric! And charge up curbside

By Pat Thompson

There’s exciting news about electric vehicle-charging and car-sharing in Saint Paul. The city of Saint Paul has been working with many partners to make EVs more accessible through car-sharing and an on-street charging network.

Evie is a new fully electric car-sharing program run by the nonprofit HourCar in parts of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, including St. Anthony Park. As an Evie member, when you’re finished with a trip, you can drop the car anywhere in the “home area,” which includes all of South SAP and almost all of North SAP (it excludes west of highway 280 and east of Cleveland . . . see the full map and lots more info at eviecarshare.com).

Within the home area, street parking is free at meters with limits of 2 hours or more, and is allowed in any parking permit area. The cars come with a ChargePoint card for out-of-town trips if you need to recharge. All charging and insurance are included in the price of using a car.

The EV Spot charging network (evspot.org) will have at least four charging spots in each location, two dedicated to Evie cars and two available for other EV users. Rates for non-Evie drivers will be published soon. Most of the EV Spots are right on the street. Construction of the network of charger spots is starting now and it will be fully built by June 2022.

Pat Thompson is co-chair of the St. Anthony Park Community Council’s Transportation Committee and active in Transition Town – All St. Anthony Park.

Map notes
- The map illustration is not to scale and excludes many streets.
- Evie map data was current as of Aug. 15. Check eviecarshare.com or evspot.org for the most up-to-date info.
- Existing chargers AC generally require phone-based apps to access them, such as ChargePoint—even the free ones. Get the free PlugShare app for details on each charger location.
Mayor’s Cup soccer matches coming to Allianz Field

Allianz Field, the home stadium of the Minnesota United Football Club in the Midway neighborhood of St. Paul, opened in 2019. It has hosted dozens of Major League Soccer matches, plus U.S. National Team matches and international friendlies.

On Friday, Oct. 8, Allianz Field will host the first high school matches ever played on the professional pitch—the annual Mayor’s Cup trophy games between the Como Park and Humboldt varsity boys and girls teams.

“It’s a dream,” Como boys co-coach Sunday Htoo said. “For all these players who support Minnesota United and see the stadium in our home city—to get inside and play on the best field—a really exciting.”

Most of the players from Como and Humboldt have seen United Football Club games on television. A few have been inside to see a match. But for most of the participants in the Mayor’s Cup girls and boys doubleheader, it will be their first time in the stadium. To be playing for their school teams on the state’s premier pitch is indeed a dream.

“It will be a whole new experience,” Como junior Gay Ler Htoo said. “I heard it’s so nice and that it’s huge.”

“It will be so good to represent our school there,” Como senior Ethan Lee said.

For those wondering why Como and Humboldt are the first high school teams to play in the professional stadium, it’s the history of the Mayor’s Cup matches that creates the bridge.

As the Como boys head coach in 2016, Jonah Fields (now co-coach) implemented an idea that he coordinated with then Humboldt boys head coach Matt Osborne (now Humboldt’s athletic director). Growing up together and playing soccer in St. Paul, Fields and Osborne shared an appreciation for the passionate rivalry between the schools they then coached as adults. Fields advanced the initiative by creating trophies (one cup for the boys’ game and one cup for the girls’ game) with dedications inscribed to then Mayor Chris Coleman, who secured the partnership and site for the United Football Club to build in St. Paul.

When the Como-Humboldt boys and girls doubleheader date was set on the 2018 schedule, Fields promised the game as the “Mayor’s Cup” and then reached out to the Mayor’s Office with an invitation for Coleman to present the trophies to the winning teams. A new tradition was born.

In the conclusion of the boys’ match.
emonies immediately following the games.

“On the girls’ side, Como has kept the cup since the beginning. But the timing of this year’s match at Allianz is excellent because Humboldt and Como appear to be evenly matched, which should produce a competitive contest.”

On the boys’ side, the cup has spent time at both schools, but is currently on display at Humboldt. The Hawks, now coached by John Pucci, are certainly working to possess it for another year.

“The players always take this game as seriously as a section play-off game. Do or die. They want that cup,” Osborne said. “The extra dignitaries that show up mean a lot to the players as well.”

City Council Member Chris Tolbert, City Council President Amy Brendmoen and Mayor Melvin Carter have also presented the cup over the years.

For the United Football Club to partner with the schools and elevate the venue to Allianz Field is significant for many reasons.

“It shows their commitment to local city soccer and giving back to the community,” Osborne said. “Not all the Humboldt and Como players can afford to navigate club soccer. For them to get this opportunity—it’s amazing. Just thinking about what the field will look like with our players on it.”

United Football Club Public Relations Director Eric Durkee, a Como graduate from the class of 2004, said the club’s values are based on growing the sport and uniting the community around the game.

“From the outset of building and designing Allianz Field we wanted to create a space for soccer to succeed at all levels,” Durkee said. “We felt this was a fun way to provide a moment for high school soccer players to create memories that will hopefully last a lifetime.”

Fields is confident the experience will be unforgettable for all those involved.

“It will be so much fun to see the student athletes have a really special experience and have their families and school communities there to play in a world class stadium,” Fields said. “It’s that excitement and recognition for our girls and boys players from the neighborhoods of St. Paul to have this amazing privilege that they’ll remember for the rest of their lives.”

The community is encouraged to attend on Friday, Oct. 8. Admission is free on a first come, first served basis with an attendance cap of 1,500. The girls kickoff at 5:30, the boys at 7:30, with both cup ceremonies immediately following the conclusion of the boys’ match.

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
Crisis like a way to give back to the local community, “Bertrand continued. “We have dreams of hosting beer gardens and small summer concert series in the summer of 2022.”

“Covid really put a damper on things for the first year, “ she said. “It was hard to close our doors and not have the opportunity to engage with the community as closely as we typically like to. “

“We pivoted to focusing on the advantages we had through that hardship and began producing hand sanitizer out of our pilot facility as a way to give back to the local community,” Bertrand continued. “We wanted to go crawlers and powered through 2020 and then finally fully reopened our taproom doors in May 2021. “

“We are still working to get back to the momentum we had after first opening our doors but have great hope and big plans for the future,” Bertrand said. “We have dreams of hosting beer gardens and small summer concert series in the summer of 2022.”

Scott Carlson is managing editor of the Bugle.
Blue Cross centers are open

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota centers are located throughout Minnesota in Duluth, Edina and Roseville — and at our newest location in St. Cloud. Blue Cross advisors are expertly trained in many different health plan options and specialize in all Blue Cross plans. And, because they work closely with customers, they are able to provide direct input on plan development. Health plan advisors are ready to help you find the plan that best fits your needs, face to face.

Schedule a virtual appointment at bluecrossmn.com/centers

Schedule an in-person appointment by calling any of our locations.

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Edina center
Yorkdale Shoppes
6807 York Avenue South
Edina, MN 55435
(952) 967-2750/TTY 711

Roseville center
Crossroads of Roseville
1647B County Road B2 West
Roseville, MN 55113
(651) 726-1100/TTY 711

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125 33rd Avenue South
St. Cloud, MN 56301
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