Cleveland Avenue construction coming

By Anne Holzman

Cleveland Avenue between Como and Larpenteur avenues will be under construction for much of the next 18 months as Ramsey County updates sewer and water lines, repaves the road and adds a bike and pedestrian trail.

Construction in 2022 will focus on Cleveland Avenue between Como and Buford avenues. The remaining stretch to the north is scheduled for completion in 2023.

Cleveland will be closed from Como to Buford starting in late May and through fall. The street will be completely closed during that time, with major traffic detoured on Energy Park Drive, Highway 280 and Larpenteur Avenue.

The road will remain closed during Back to the 50s and other summer events at the Fairgrounds, but will temporarily reopen during the State Fair in late August.

The first phase of the project was completed last fall, including gas lines and telecommunications networks. Water and sewer work will be done in tandem with road reconstruction.

When construction work is completed, Cleveland Avenue will have one driving lane in each direction. The county purchased right-of-way from the University of Minnesota in order to widen the sidewalk along the east side of Cleveland for a multi-use trail.

An interactive map on the county’s project website will be updated with closures and detours.

The map and other updates can be found at ramseycounty.us/residents/roads-transportation/current-roadwork/2022-road-construction-maintenance/cleveland-avenue-reconstruction.

That is also the place to report concerns about noise and other environmental nuisances associated with construction, county staff said.

Nicklaus Fischer, Ramsey County’s coordinator of the Cleveland Avenue project, acknowledged that drivers sometimes ignore posted detours, and that speeding and other traffic violations may occur.

He said the county will work with St. Paul police to step up enforcement of traffic and parking violations.

Fischer said Cleveland Avenue will be completely closed for many weeks, with only minor temporary access allowed in special cases. A Cleveland Avenue resident who needs access for a moving truck, for example, might be accommodated, but residents and businesses should plan to use the alleys and side streets for all trips until Cleveland is reopened.

Further complicating traffic in the area for at least part of the summer, the University is also beginning work on its new Microbial Cell Production facility, the first of several new biotechnology labs planned for the St. Paul campus.

Preliminary utility work will interrupt traffic on Gortner Avenue.

U of M spokesperson Katie Ousley said, “People will have to come into campus from the north on Cleveland to get to Buford Avenue and then get to the south end of the campus on Gortner.”

Ousley said the campus circulator bus routes will be detoured while Cleveland Avenue is closed. But as of early April, those plans were not settled. Ramsey County officials have said they are working closely with the University to minimize disruptions for students and staff.

Meanwhile, Metro Transit city buses will also be affected by construction. Route 87 runs on Cleveland up to Rosedale Mall. Metro Transit official Laura Baenen said in mid-April that she had yet to receive dates for the street’s closure, but that riders should consider signing up for alerts about route changes, available on the Metro Transit website at metrottransit.org/rideralerts.

Fans of the Back to the 50s car show are encouraged to look for alternatives to their favorite lawn chair locations along Cleveland Avenue when the event occurs June 17 to 19 at the State Fairgrounds.

Anne Holzman is regular Bugle freelance contributor who covers Falcon Heights and Lauderdale governmental news.

Equity action group underway at Falcon Heights Elementary

By Sarah CR Clark

Falcon Heights Elementary School is home to a year-old grassroots action group for children and their caregivers.

Falcon Families for Equity and Justice, or FFEJ, first gathered in March 2022 when Falcon Heights Elementary School principal Beth Behnke sought her school’s community for support in doing equity and justice work.

“We’re trying to be really responsive to things in the community and give kids a chance to use their voice as things arise,” explained Cari Kokotovich, one of several parents involved in forming the action group.

Over the inaugural year, about 20 Falcon Heights Elementary caregivers have regularly participated in the action group’s committee work and planning events.

“Initially, she (Behnke) put a call out in the school’s weekly communication to see if any parents would be interested in connecting with her about doing anti-racism work,” Kokotovich, who has two children attending Falcon Heights Elementary School, said in a phone interview.

Around 150 people attended Falcon Families for Equity Justice’s Family Service Night at Falcon Heights Elementary School on April 6. Among many milestones from the evening: 250 books were collected for Minnesota Literacy and We WIN Irvine. 500 snack packs were packed for MatterBOX, and kids created their own coin banks in order to continue the spirit of giving at home. Photo by Lou Michaels.
Some 60 volunteers filled more than 100 bags of trash and debris during the annual Kasota Ponds cleanup. Pictured is Lizzy Logas-Lindstrom from the SAPCC Environment Committee. Photo by Kerry Morgan.

Kasota Ponds Cleanup results
The St. Anthony Park community gathered on April 9 for the annual Kasota Ponds CleanUp events. The events were canceled the past two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but were back and strong this year on a beautiful sunny Saturday. More than 60 community members collected 2,200 pounds of trash and recycling, filling more than 600 bags during the four-hour event.

Back again by popular demand, local entomologist Margot Munson shared insights about the insect population living in and around the ponds.

Land Use Committee update
The District 12 Land Use Committee recently welcomed two new co-chairs, Regan Golden and Nick Studinski.

Both have been regular members of the Land Use Committee and are looking forward to the unique challenges and opportunities ahead. This committee is seeking community members who want a voice in how the community governance (such as the Luther Seminary development) to smaller accessory dwelling units. Its goal is to ensure that citizens are aware of such projects and know how they can provide input on them.

The Land Use Committee meets the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. via Zoom. To learn more about how to get involved, please email jessica@sapcc.org or get the meeting link.

SAPCC May meetings
St. Anthony Park Community Council committees discuss a variety of issues at their monthly meetings. Visit the council’s website at sapcc.org to learn more.

• Board meeting: 7 p.m., Thursday, May 12
• Environment Committee: 7 p.m., Wednesday, May 25
• Equity Committee: 5:30 p.m., Monday, May 30
• Transportation Committee: 7 p.m., Tuesday, May 31
• Land Use Committee: 7 p.m., Thursday, May 5 and June 2

All meetings are hosted via Zoom. Meeting times are subject to change. If you want to attend a meeting or have questions about joining a committee, please email Kathryn at kathryn@sapcc.org for the link.

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Comto licensing notes
• Gabes By The Park, 591 Lexington Parkway: Liquor, entertainment and gambling licenses are up for renewal May 5. Anyone with input should email the Como Community Council or contact the office of Ward 4 Council Member Mitra Jalali: ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us.
• The Essence Event Center, 1217 Bandana Blvd.: Liquor and entertainment licenses are up for renewal May 6. Anyone with input should email the Como Community Council or contact the office of Ward 4 Council Member Mitra Jalali: ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

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

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

• Neighborhood Relations Committee: Tuesday, May 3
• Land Use Committee: Wednesday, May 4
• Environment Committee: Tuesday, May 10

Submitted by Shevek McKee, District 10 Como Community Council executive director.
‘Coyotes’ sighted at U’s Ag Experiment Station

By Sarah CR Clark

In the fall of 2021 two undeniably creatures suddenly appeared in the fields of the University of Minnesota’s Agricultural Experiment Station.

Reminiscent of “The Princess Bride” film’s infamous Rodents Of Unusual Size, the specimens can be found in the fields northeast of Cleveland and Larpenteur avenues in Falcon Heights. According to Andy Scobbie, U farm manager for the research field plots, the creepy looking creatures are actually coyote decoys, posed mid-pounce.

The decoys are used to keep flocks of Canada geese away from the winter grains planted in that field plot. Winter grains are sewn in the fall, the same season when hundreds of hungry, migrating geese gather in the U of M’s St. Paul campus fields.

Scobbie noted, “The pouncing coyotes work OK for a while.” He speculated their efficacy could be maximized if they were moved around the field more frequently. “The field plots the decoys guard are full of winter barley, ‘a winter hardy crop we’re trying to develop in Minnesota,” Scobbie said.

While explaining winter barley and coyote decoys to this Park Bugle writer, Scobbie was gracious and thorough.

A pouncing coyote decoy at Minnesota’s Agricultural Experiment Station guards a field plot of winter barley. Photo by Sarah CR Clark.

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A pouncing coyote decoy at Minnesota’s Agricultural Experiment Station guards a field plot of winter barley. Photo by Sarah CR Clark.
By Scott Carlson

A local man’s Ukrainian relief effort

As scores of people around the world donate to various charities to support the citizens of war-torn Ukraine, a local man has come up with a unique way to help in the disaster relief efforts.

Enter Tom Betz, 81, from the Como neighborhood and a stamp collector for close to 70 years. He has issued a semi-postal stamp with sales proceeds earmarked for Ukrainian disaster relief.

The limited edition, specially designed local stamp says “Support Ukraine,” “Como Park Post” and “3 cents local postage + $1 Ukrainian relief.” The extra charge will go to support Ukrainian disaster relief, Betz said.

People interested in buying one or more of the Ukraine local stamps should send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with a minimum $1 donation to Thomas D. Betz, 1337 Avon St. N. St. Paul, MN 55117. You will receive a copy of the stamp on that envelope canceled with his own local post: “Como Park Post.”

Betz said that a semi-postal stamp is not real postage but more like a collectable label that stamp collectors trade among themselves and usually use as a fundraiser for worthy causes.

With the help of Scott Abbott, editor of the Local Post Collectors Society, Betz plans to have printed at least 200 of the Support Ukraine semi-postal stamps.

Asked why he has created the local stamp, Betz said, “I just don’t want to sit on my hands. I have to do something to help the Ukrainian people.”

Betz explained locally issued stamps are usually affixed to the bottom left-hand corner of envelopes, diagonally from the upper right corner, which is reserved for official postage.

And now for more poems

In the April edition, the Bugle announced the three winners for its 12th annual poetry contest and published their winning poems in conjunction with National Poetry Month. Contestants were asked to write poems that drew inspiration from the words “resilience, flexibility and perseverance.” This month, we are featuring a sample of the other poetry entries that, while not placing in the top three places are worthy of publication.

“When winter is over...” by Elizabeth (Libby) Bauer

When winter is over, we’ll pull our weary bodies into alickr world.

We’ll string lights in the lime green canopry, and lay watching them away from the perfumed pink carpet below.

Inside the gray rooms we leave behind, the breeze will ripple the curtains, airing out the longest, loneliest season.

When our color returns, we’ll exchange our blues for juicy reds — and we won’t think of returning until after the sunflowers find rest for their heavy heads.

“Looking West” by Judith Munson

It’s good I waited

Until I was 80

And dying

To knock out

The west wall

Of the back porch

Build a small Cedar deck

Open up the backyard

To shadows

And paint the house

Pink with lilac trim

Looking west

This is

As good as it gets

“Just in Spring” by Betty Lottermann

Just in Spring the pale green shoots spring out of the ground.

Unfurling themselves to reveal

Tiny, fragrant white bells hanging from a delicate arch.

What hymn are they singing?

Just in Spring a pointed nose springs out of its small round hole in the ground.

Is it a mouse? Or a vole? Or a chipmunk?

Just in Spring the kite springs from my outstretched arms

as the gusts whirl

the unspooling string in my hand.

Will the string be strong enough?

And I, just in Spring, I spring down the sidewalk

in my new tennis shoes

on the first day I leave my heavy, clunking boots behind.

Will you skip down the sidewalk with me?

Upcoming Bugle deadlines

You’ve just received the May Bugle. But the Bugle staff is already busy planning for June and beyond.

Here are our Bugle deadlines for the next three issues. As always, we appreciate when writers and readers submit their articles early.

Please note our publication dates represent when the newspapers go out for delivery. Mail distribution of the paper may take up to several business days. Meanwhile, bulk drops of the paper around town are usually completed two to three days after publication.

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Dealing with da feet!

By Dave Healy

“I cried because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet.”

That statement, or a variation, has been variously attributed to Shakespeare, Gandhi and Helen Keller, among others.

The sentiment—there’s always someone worse off than you—is irrefutable. Whether that also means no one has the right to complain about anything seems less certain.

I have feet, but I want to complain about them. For one thing, they’re ugly.

My paternal grandmother once said of her husband, “If I’d seen that man’s feet before I married him, I never would have tied the knot.”

Apparently, ugly feet run in the family.

But unattractive feet are easily hidden. More consequential are the various maladies they’re subject to: blisters, calluses, corns, bunions, hammer toes, claw toes, heel spurs, plantar warts, plantar fasciitis, Morton’s neuroma, sesamoiditis, neuropathy, athlete’s foot, toenail fungus and ingrown toenails. It’s hard to think of another body part so susceptible to ailments.

There’s a line of thinking that lays the blame for most foot problems at the feet, so to speak, of shoes. For most of our history, humans wore no shoes, and they’re still uncommon in some cultures. In a 2010 “Nature” article, anthropologist Dan Lieberman argued that shoeless running is more efficient and generates less stress on the foot than does running in shoes. But I live in Minnesota, where going barefoot is an option for at best, half the year. And in the interests of civic responsibility, I really don’t want to subject others to the sight of my unadorned feet.

So, I wear shoes. Because I have high arches, my shoes are fitted with orthotics—inserts designed to take some stress off the balls of my feet. Because I’m susceptible to athlete’s foot, I use foot powder. These interventions set me apart from many people.

But there’s one foot fact that affects everyone. Feet have toes, which have toenails, which grow. So, no matter who you are or where you live or what you wear, periodicaly your toenails have to be cut.

Until recently, I managed that task myself. But it grew, so to speak, increasingly difficult. My bulky back makes getting a foot into proper position problematic. Toenails get thicker as one ages, so they’re harder to cut.

There is such a thing as a nail salon, where someone will trim your toenails. But although I consider myself a reasonably liberated male, I’m not quite ready to be the only man in a nail salon.

What to do?

Enter St. Anthony Park Area Seniors, one of whose purposes is to help seniors thrive while continuing to live in their homes. And one service the organization provides is foot care. SAPAS connected me with Nicole Hendrickson, an RN who specializes in foot care. Now I’m one of her regular clients.

Nicole comes to my house. She starts by soaking my feet in warm water with a bit of soap. After drying them, she goes to work. She trims my toenails and cuticles. She sands down my calluses. She finishes by applying some lotion. She does all this efficiently, painlessly—and professionally.

But the thing I really love about Nicole is that she doesn’t laugh at me feet.

Dave Healy lives in St. Anthony Park and is a former editor of the Park Bugle.

C O M M E N T A R Y

Equity Action Group from p. 1

According to Kokotovich, the Roseville Area School District has set large equity goals for its school communities, prompting Behnke’s earlier call to parents and caregivers for help.

The group’s mission statement is “FFEJ is a group of caregivers working towards creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students and families at Falcon Heights Elementary School. We are committed to building a brave and safe space for all caregivers, staff, teachers and students to learn more about anti-racism and equity. Recently they have hosted a podcast group, inviting caregivers to listen to and then discuss the New Yorker Times and Serial Productions podcast, “Nice White Parents.”

The last two committees, Pol icy and Community Action are responsible, respectively, for examining equity and racism data in the school and district, and for sponsoring and publicizing community events about equity and anti-racism issues. For example, that included the Feb. 12 solidarity march in response to the killing of Amir Locke in Minneapolis.

When asked about FFEJ’s upcoming events, Kokotovich responded, “This is our first full year of trying to figure out where we are as a group, and certainly we have a lot of growth. We’re hoping to use the rest of the spring to really re-flect on this year and begin creating a solid plan heading into next year.” Visit FFEJ’s website falconfami liesforequityandjustice.wordpress.com for more information.

Sarah CR Clark is a regular contributor to the Park Bugle.

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Como Park High School News

By Eric Erickson

“High School Musical” hits the stage

After a two-year hiatus caused by the global pandemic, Como students finally had the chance to shine on stage with three performances of Walt Disney’s “High School Musical.”

The March 18 evening debut drew a large audience that gave a standing ovation to the hard-worked cast and crew. It was a joyful night with a nostalgic vibe as the students revived well-known songs and characters from their childhoods.

A matinee performance on Saturday, March 19, followed by an evening show resulted in a peak experience for both veteran and first-time theater participants. Music director and producer Siri Keller said she appreciated the dedication of her performers and the community support for the play.

“I could tell from week one of rehearsals this was a special group of kids,” Keller said. “They really all loved each other and were there to put their best foot forward during the entirety of the process. All the stress and late nights were worth it seeing so many people turn out to support us.”

Prominent roles included junior Emerson Spencer who played Troy Bolton, and junior Ellen Chinema as Sharpay Evans. Senior PaNra Lee starred as Gabriella Montez. Lee is a talented singer in the Comochoir, but this was her first opportunity to be part of a musical.

“I feel like I really wanted to explode with energy,” Lee said. “With everything canceled and postponed during the pandemic, the chance to be on stage was a way for me and all of us to bring about some positivity.”


Crew members included Bean Bougie, Pariz Batte, Vl Eckler, Freddy Gray and M’Taleni Nashandi.

French field trip

Como students enrolled in French 2 and CIS French (College in the Schools co-enrollment course through the University of Minnesota) participated in a cultural immersion experience at Alliance Francaise de Minneapolis/St. Paul last month.

Workshops were led by instructors from France, Guadeloupe and Tunisia, followed by an authentic French lunch and a recreational game of French Scattergories.

The field trip was fully funded by the Nancy Solo-Taylor Scholarship Fund. Madame Solo-Taylor was a beloved French teacher at Como for over 30 years.

Eric Erickson is a social studies teacher at Como Park Senior High School and a regular contributor to the Bugle.
Rethinking I-94 into a human-scale boulevard

By Pat Thompson

When it comes to the climate crisis, we can spend our days mired in awful versions of what is. So, it’s startling when someone shows up with a picture and asks, “What if?”

That’s the question asked in the Twin Cities Boulevard vision—a response to the Minnesota Department of Transportation’s “Rethinking I-94” process. This plan can be found at talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94.

What if?

• What if there wasn’t a 7-mile swath of sunken freeway between St. Paul and Minneapolis?

• What if it was a grade-level boulevard from Marion Street to Hiawatha Avenue, with dedicated bus rapid transit lanes, sidewalks and bikeways, knitting neighborhood back together?

• What if the reclaimed land was held in a land trust, so the 60-year harms done to neighboring communities like Rondo could be redressed?

• What if the people who live nearby could cross the former trench the way they can other areas of the city, instead of treating it like an ugly river (or a car sewer, as some call it)?

• What if we started shaping our future bravely, guided by actual realities predicted by climate scientists, instead of bowing to a present political “reality”?

• What if we acted as if, in a climate crisis, spending money to rebuild a freeway that would last 50 years was irresponsible?

We all need help imagining something different from the status quo. That’s what the Twin Cities Boulevard and its website help us do.

Is a boulevard conversion possible?

Several other cities have already removed all or parts of their freeway segments, and plans are approved in others. Famous examples are the Embarcadero along the San Francisco waterfront, now a boulevard, and the Cheonggye Expressway in Seoul, which daylighted a creek and created a linear park.

In both cases, general traffic in the areas decreased greatly, because traffic is not a natural phenomenon like water. It’s induced by the infrastructure that’s built for it.

Michigan’s Department of Transportation announced in March that I-375 will be removed in Detroit. A section of I-81 will be removed in Syracuse, New York. The Inner Loop of I-470 in Rochester, New York and the Park East Freeway in Milwaukee have been scrapped. And people in Duluth are advocating removing the north-most part of I-35, which separates their downtown from the waterfront.

Another reason: Health impacts

Transportation emissions are a big driver of climate change, enabled by highways. But noise and air pollution have health hazards, too, especially for neighborhoods nearest those roadways.

A local example: In I-94’s adjacent south St. Anthony Park, asthma hospitalization rates are twice that of Ramsey County as a whole—and its Minnesota Pollution Control Agency pollution score is among the 10% worst in the state for fine inhalable particles.

Maps of the Twin Cities show that unacceptable pollution levels closely follow the highway corridors. And life expectancy maps, not surprisingly, often fit neatly along those pollution corridors: That means lower life expectancy rates.

The health effects of noise pollution are less well-documented but should not be discounted. Recent research has found that people living in high traffic areas for more than a decade had a greater risk of dementia in general and a 27% increase in risk for Alzheimer’s disease, even when controlling for other factors.

These health risks become even more unfair when you realize that 28% of the people who live along the Rethinking I-94 corridor don’t own cars. So they’re harmed by the highway without getting any of the benefits it was built for. MCPA has identified more than 90% of the Rethinking I-94 corridor as an area of concern for environmental justice.

Supporting the boulevard as an option

Transition Town—All St. Anthony Park has signed onto a letter to MnDOT, the federal government, and local elected officials supporting inclusion of the Twin Cities Boulevard vision as one of the options that MnDOT should explore in its Rethinking I-94 process, joining organizations like Our Streets Minneapolis, MN350, Move Minnesota, and Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate.

At its March 29 meeting, the District 12 Transportation Committee heard a presentation on the Boulevard vision and then passed a motion encouraging the full council to also sign onto that letter. The vote recognized that the Boulevard vision is in keeping with SAPCC’s 10-year plan and its goals addressing the climate crisis, and that St. Paul itself has declared a climate emergency.

The District 12 Land Use Committee will hear a presentation on the Boulevard and consider the motion at its next meeting. Final passage requires action by the District 12 Board at its May 12 meeting.

Visit TwinCitiesBoulevard.org to find photos of other freeway-to-boulevard conversions, an info-rich FAQ and an easy way to let MnDOT and elected officials know you support the vision through a petition or email portal.

Pat Thompson is a member of Transition Town—All St. Anthony Park who spends her time thinking about and working on transportation, gardening and community ownership.
By Christie Vogt

When the pandemic shutdowns began in March 2020, Marty Ruddy wasn’t sure how long his business, Terra Firma Building and Remodeling, could survive without work. As time passed, outdoor projects and other work that allowed for social distancing helped jump-start the business.

“Then, it really became clear after a year of quarantine that people were like, ‘I want to work on my house.’ That’s when it got real, said Ruddy. Terra Firma’s president. “People wanted to invest in their house because of all the time they were spending in there.”

People wanted to invest in their house. “That’s when it got real,” said Ruddy. Terra Firma’s president. “People wanted to invest in their house because of all the time they were spending in there.”

Architects function as Terra Firma’s bellwether, Ruddy said, if they’re busy, then we see what’s happening, could survive without work. When it comes to the labor challenges that many companies have faced, Ruddy said the 30-person team at Terra Firma has “weathered that a little better than most.” He said being an employee-owned company helps with both attracting and retaining staff. Some smaller home service operators, like Brushstrokes Painting, have seen fewer disruptions in the past two years. Tom Marron, the one person team at Brushstrokes, has been “sporadic over the last few years.” Besides painting, his company offers wall, trim and ceiling repair and basement restoration. The pandemic has made some customers hesitant to have strangers in their homes, Nelson said, but there have also been periods when he’s so busy that it’s a challenge to keep up. Like Marron, Nelson said clients rarely have to wait more than two to three weeks for work to begin.

For larger projects, Ruddy of Terra Firma urges homeowners to “plan out well in advance.” It could be a year or more before the project starts, he said, and in the meantime, the building company can start putting plans to paper, mobilizing a team and ordering materials.

The pandemic has made some customers hesitant to have strangers in their homes, Nelson said, but there have also been periods when he’s so busy that it’s a challenge to keep up. Like Marron, Nelson said clients rarely have to wait more than two to three weeks for work to begin.

In addition to supply chain issues, Ruddy predicts there might be a point when high inflation compels customers to delay their projects.

“Most of the studies show that prices are probably not going to go down much,” Ruddy said. “Generally speaking for construction, once prices are at a certain point, it’s not like we’re going back to where they were five years ago. I think that ship has sailed.”

Christie Vogt is a Twin Cities-based freelance writer and a regular contributor to the Bugle.
Lending a helping hand: Minnesota Tool Library

By Janet Wight

The Minnesota Tool Library, with two locations in the Twin Cities, is one of the largest tool-lending libraries in the world.

Bugle readers may be surprised to learn that this resource is located conveniently near the south St. Anthony Park neighborhood.

This local nonprofit was founded in 2015 in northeast Minneapolis, followed in 2017 with the opening of its St. Paul facility.

Tucked away in the basement of the historic Prior Works building at 755 Prior Ave., the 1,500-square-foot locale in St. Paul is check full of nearly every tool imaginable.

“If you can think of a project, we likely have the tools to do it,” said Kate Hersey, Tool Library executive director and a graduate of Central High School. The store has four part-time branch managers, an active board of directors and a volunteer leadership team.

More than 7,000 lendable items are contained in the Tool Library’s online catalog, Hersey said. These include standard hand and power tools along with an extensive assortment of tools for home improvement, woodworking, electrical, plumbing and lawn and garden projects, she added. Ninety percent of its available tools are donated, and after being refurbished or repaired they are added to the curated collection.

The tool library’s primary goals are to reduce waste, create equitable communities and empower people to reinvest in their homes, Hersey said. The Tool Library is a $120,000 annual operation funded by membership dues, class fees, late charges, donations and grants.

The Tool Library also offers a well-appointed “makerspace,” which is a common area where members of all skill levels can work on their own projects. A drum sander, a lathe, a thickness planer and the multipurpose Saw-Stop table saw are just a few of the sizable tools available at the St. Paul branch.

On-site support is available from shop mentors during the weekend hours when the MTL is open. Additionally, classes are offered for novices, expert craftspersons and everyone in between. Hersey said that its non-judgmental, low-key environment is welcoming to all community members even if they are inexperienced with tools.

The Tool Library was the brainchild of Thomas Ebert and Zach Wefel. After meeting in Minneapolis in 2014 they discussed the concept of a tool library. Slowly, they began to garner community support, culminating with the establishment of the MTL the following year.

Currently, there are over 1,000 active tool library members, with nearly 50 residing in the 55108 St. Anthony Park ZIP Code area. The Tool Library’s Minneapolis location is in the Thorp Building, 1620 N.E. Central Ave.

More than 20,000 loans were made in 2021, and many of those were for multiple tools, Hersey said. Premium, standard and basic membership levels are available along with scholarships.

Gift memberships are a terrific idea even for individuals with plenty of tools, Hersey noted, since there will undoubtedly be a time when a different tool is required. Borrowing instead of buying tools is an environmentally conscious option, and another way to benefit the community, she added.

Hersey said many volunteer opportunities are available at the Tool Library including tool librarian and maintenance, fundraising as well as writing online instructions, social media content or grant applications. Volunteers may work at either tool library location or from home.

If you would like to develop or broaden your skills and expertise, reclaim control of your garage or basement or simply be enticed by the MTL’s prodigious treasure trove, you may want to stop in for a tour and consider membership.

Or, perhaps consider lending your time and talent to help expand the reach and offerings of this nonprofit.

Janet Wight, a resident of Como Park where she lives with her husband and daughters, is a new, contributing freelance writer to the Bugle.

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Springing into local farmers markets

By Jenni Wolf

One of my favorite things about the transition into spring and warmer weather is the return of farmers markets and easier access to local produce. Some markets run all year round, but many ramp back up with more offerings and return to outdoor settings in early April or May. While markets typically hit peak peak spring veggies—this green, stalky vegetable is easy to find at markets in Minnesota. Try regular green or purple asparagus for something different. I love tossing fresh, tender stalks and then roasting them in the oven or throwing them on the grill.

Asparagus

Probably one of the most popular spring veggies—this green, stalky vegetable is easy to find at markets in Minnesota. Try regular green varieties or check out purple asparagus for something different. I love tossing fresh, tender stalks and then roasting them in the oven or throwing them on the grill.

Radish

It's hard to stroll through a spring market without catching your eye on a bunch of radishes, with their fresh-looking green tops and bright, vibrant red color. Radishes can often be polarizing—one of those “you either love ‘em or you hate ‘em” type of foods. However, I highly recommend giving them a try. Perhaps prepare them in a way you haven’t before—different seasonings and preparation techniques can enhance the flavor and tame the “bite” some might find displeasing. Throw them into a vinegar bath for a quick pickle to add to sandwiches, wraps and bowls. Toss halved radishes in olive oil and roast in the oven until the edges begin to brown and the center is tender (my favorite). Or dip halved radishes in seasoned butter for a fun, fresh snack idea—don’t knock it until you try it!

Spring greens

Spinach and mixed lettuces are bountiful this time of year. Rinse and dry them well after bringing them home from the market and store loosely wrapped in a paper towel in the fridge to help keep moisture off their delicate leaves.

My favorite way to use them is in a light and refreshing spring salad—think sliced strawberries, a simple vinaigrette, a few toasted pecans and a sprinkle of feta. Adding a handful to a lunchtime sandwich or wrap, or your egg scramble in the morning, is an easy way to use up any extra and get a daily dose of greens.

Rhubarb

These ruby stalks are some of the first things to hit spring market tables and are a for sure sign of warm, spring weather. While rhubarb is extremely tart, it doesn’t mean it’s not tasty—you should definitely pick up a bundle or two! Because of its tart and bitter natural taste, it is best used in sweet recipes with a substantial source of sweetener to bring out its flavor and counterbalance the tartness. Make a quick batch of easy strawberry-rhubarb refrigerator jam. Cook up a savory-sweet rhubarb chutney or sauce to serve with chicken or pork. Or go for a classic strawberry rhubarb pie.

My favorite way to use it! Baked into a batch of soft and fluffy rhubarb muffins.

Looking for a local market? Visit stpaulfarmersmarket.com for the most current list of market locations for spring market openings and hours. Also, be sure to check out your corner store or food co-op for local spring produce as well if you can’t make it to a market!

Jenni Wolf, who lives in the Como neighborhood, is a practicing registered dietitian. She is passionate about helping others nourish a positive and balanced relationship with food.

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PARK BUGLE • MAY 2022

Home & Garden Guide

Roasted Radishes

10-12 medium radishes, with tops trimmed, halved

Olive oil for drizzling

Salt and pepper to taste

Lemon juice, optional

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line a sheet tray with foil.
Place halved radishes in a bowl and drizzle with a few tablespoons of olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Toss to evenly coat.

Spread radishes, cut-side down, on lined sheet tray and roast for 15-20 minutes, tossing halfway through.

Remove from oven. Spritz with fresh lemon juice, if desired. Enjoy!
From Russia with love

By John Horchner

The course of life is often deter-
ded by moments.

For me, this was November of 1997. Despite being warned by mother and well-meaning friends about the dangers of attempting to do business in Russia, I booked a plane bound to St. Peters-
burg at dusk.

By the time the plane descend-
ed, I'd worked myself into a state of fear. I wondered if the trip would be fruitful and if I really needed to be there for eight days. Looking out the window at the landing strip below, I saw broken war planes and everything seemed to be in black and white as opposed to the color-
ful country I'd left.

The Russian airport lounge was crowded with people wearing heavy jackets and fur hats, and they were surrounded by cigarette smoke and shrink-wrapped lug-
gage, which I learned is often used to keep sticky fingers away.

I went to find a driver among the many who were standing around the exit.

"Pribaltyskaja," I lobbed out to see if anyone knew of my hotel. "Pribaltyskaja," I repeated, slight-
ly panicked. Two drivers looked at each other not sure what to make of me. Finally, one stepped forward and said he recognized the name of the hotel.

The driver took me down a high-
way filled with factories, a massive statue of Lenin and some gigantic and gloomy apartment buildings clad in grey.

Later, in honor of its 300th birthday in 2003, St. Petersburg would polish up its most visible parts, but back then, the drive out of the airport looked to me to be dark and dreary. The cab driver didn't speak English, and I spoke only a few words of Russian.

Before long, we entered down-
town St. Petersburg. At last, I thought, I can get out, but instead, the driver made a quick turn and headed out of town at a high speed.

"Pribaltyskaja," I said, "Pribaltyskaja."

"Pribaltyskaja," he said and be-
gan talking to me rapidly in Russian. After a few minutes, we went deeper into an industrial area and there were no street lights and things just seemed to get darker and darker. I decided then and there if he wanted my bags, all my cash, passport, visa, everything, that could be replaced... if only he would spare the man's life. I con-
tinued thinking in this vein when in the distance, straight in front of us were neon letters rising high up towards the sky. He pointed and said, "Pribaltyskaja."

That next morning, I was still on heightened alert. I got out of the cab on Nevsky Prospect—the main thoroughfare—armed with a map of establishments that took the American Express card.

Old bakuushkas lined the streets and subway entrances selling flow-
ers, they were harmless of course, but no one seemed to be smiling. To the extent that we see what we are looking for, at lunch I noticed a gun hanging from the inside of the sport coat of a young man I was attempting to have a conversation with and a few nights later, I heard a gunshot across Nevsky Prospect after I left a restaurant at 11 p.m.

When I decided to write this ar-
ticle in March, I thought it would be nice to compare notes with oth-
er Americans who were in Russia during the time I was there (1997-2004).

First, I asked James von Geld-
ern, chairman of Russian studies at Macalester College in St. Paul, what he might have seen when he was there.

In an email, von Geldern re-
sponded: "Back in 1996-1998, when I spent my summers working in St. Petersburg and on the southern tip of Crimea, what I noticed was the vise grip of the Mafia on economic life—although it wasn't very visible on the streets. I didn't hear nearly as much about the Communist Party as I did about the need of a strong ruling hand to re-establish order."

Another day, I looked up Todd Lefko who is chair of the Rus-

ian-American Business and Cul-
ture Council, a group that focuses on citizen diplomacy, with an office in Elk River, MN. We decided to sit down in my home for a chat.

In addition to working with the association, Lefko is the pres-
ident of International Business Development Company, Inc., an import-export firm. For the past 33 years, he has dealt with water purification equipment, art, linen, kilns and new technologies coming out of Russia such as pellets that are dropped from helicopters to put out fires. He has homes in both Moscow and Minnesota and once lived in St. Anthony Park.

I told him how I'd arrived in St. Petersburg for business in 1997 and that after a tour of a former school turned programmers' workplace, I was excited. However, when I'd pushed for a contract, I was quickly dismissed.

Todd said I might have been going about business the wrong way. He suggested that instead of going down to a contract, it would have been better to discuss anything else.

"Take three hours, if necessary," he said. "Russians think differently, they ask questions in a different way... it took me a year to figure that out."

He said during that initial period of openness or glasnost, "So many Americans wanted to make a quick dollar. Unfortunately, it was not al-
ways our best people... over there."

We discussed the 2003 comedic movie about Boris Yeltsin's 1996 comeback election campaign called "Spinning Boris." According to the movie, Yeltsin was propped to the movie, Yeltsin was propped.

to the movie, Yeltsin was propped up by PR handlers from America when he was drunk.

Several years of incidents like this, according to Lefko, made the Russians feel that "...they were the last defenders of morals in the world," instead of looking at the Americans as savages.

Lefko said that we had a chance to show Russians our better side, and there was maybe even a chance for capitalism to work if we helped them introduce it with something like the Marshall Plan. It was a missed opportunity I think we can all regret.

For my part, I returned home from my 1997 Russian trip with no new business contacts and have never done business with any Rus-
sians since. However, on another front, something happened that changed my life.

On the third day of that trip, I was standing on a corner of Nevsky Prospect, a half-block from the State Russian Museum, donning a fake Russian beaver hat when I not-
iced a particularly attractive wom-

an and asked her for directions to the museum. She smiled and an-
swered in very good English.

After some chitchat, she agreed to coffee and during that trip, I had other occasions to meet with this lady. I booked another three-
week trip soon after that, where I marched in a Communist parade to show off to her, raised my hand for us to be serenaded by a Lenin look-alike at a fancy restaurant and spent nights at the theater all in an effort to impress her.

Besides my continuous shenan-
gigans, we had deep conversations. She was not like me, or anyone else I knew, but she was always re-
spectful. She was unbending in her views and that made me think she had her feet firmly on the ground.

When I told Todd Lefko that it was on my first trip to Russia when I' d met my wife Nadezhda, who now goes by Nadine in the US, he seemed thrilled. His wife is from Russia too.

John Horchner is a writing and pub-
lishing professional who lives in St. Anthony Park.
In addressing climate change, students have been making biodiesel fuel from vegetable oil, sunflower seed oil and canola oil. They will compare their viability in class using a calorimeter.

History Day! McKenzie also reported, "Murray’s social studies department has been working hard to support our students as they prepared their work for high levels of competition at History Day 2022!"

McKenzie had 58 student projects advance to Regional History Day and 21 student projects advanced to State History Day. All regional- and state-level contests were held virtually this spring.

Regional contests were held in March and state-level contests occurred in April, with an awards ceremony scheduled to stream live on May 1 via Facebook.

St. Anthony Park Elementary School Celebrating the science fair
St. Anthony Park Elementary School’s annual science fair returned on March 28 after a pandemic-forced hiatus.

All fourth and fifth grade students were expected to present an experiment while third grade students were invited to participate in the school’s science fair.

"We had 220 students complete science fair projects,” said science teacher James Schranz. Younger students and volunteer evaluators visited the fair during the school day and about 500 people visited in the evening.

In-person events returning May is scheduled to be chock full of fun events at SAP Elementary School. Returning again will be the St. Anthony Park School Association’s annual plant sale with pre-sale pickup on May 10 and the tent sale set for May 11 and 12. Also coming back is the beloved Spring Carnival with book fair (May 13) and an in-person kindergarten orientation (date TBD).

Second grade (and some lucky first grade) SAP Elementary students spent the last week of March learning about Ghana and trying West African dance and music with artist-in-resident Christian Adeti. (The day this photo was taken was also Pajama Day for all students. Photo courtesy of Karen Duke.)

SAP students are also able again to see and meet artists-in-residency including: Christian Adeti (West African musician and dancer), T. Mychael Rambo (actor and poet) and Bart Buch (puppet designer).

"It brings us much joy to see the building hopping again with the excitement of visitors, performances and partnership between school and community," Principal Karen Duke said. "We have missed many of the things that make students’ time at our school special and memorable, and that makes them even more special this spring."

Sarah CR Clark is a resident of St. Anthony Park and a regular contributing writer to the Bugle.

By Sarah CR Clark

Murray Middle School
Murray Pilots at the Middle School All-Star Basketball Game! Nine Murray students (5 girls and 4 boys) participated in a Saint Paul Middle School Basketball All-Star Game on March 25 at Washington Technology Magnet School. Students were selected by coach recommendations and performance.

Murray science and inquiry class Students in Murray’s Environmental Inquiry and Immersion class have been making biodiesel fuel while studying its potential impact in addressing climate change. According to Principal Jamin McKenzie, students have been creating different biodiesel mixtures from vegetable oil, sunflower seed oil and canola oil. They will compare their viability in class using a calorimeter.

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Sarah CR Clark is a resident of St. Anthony Park and a regular contributing writer to the Bugle.
The Good Acre, a Falcon Heights-based food hub, has hired Theresa McCormick as its new executive director.

McCormick succeeds Rhys Williams, who was the first executive director of the nonprofit and retired at the end of 2021.

Before joining The Good Acre, McCormick spent nearly a decade working at Second Harvest Heartland, most recently as its director of development.

The Good Acre League and is a former president of Junior League of Minneapolis.

boreal May art show

The works of Minneapolis brush artist Bob Schmitt will be on display in May at the boreal art loft, 2276 Como Ave. You can view Schmitt’s art during store hours from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and on Saturdays, from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Fridays; and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays.

Besides showing his art, Schmitt will also offer several special events:

- Opening reception, 2 to 5 p.m., May 5
- Brush painting demonstrations, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., May 15
- Artist talk about Gold Leaf, 1 to 3 p.m., May 15.

Tuesday with a Scholar Series continues

The Ramsey County Library’s free Tuesday with a Scholar virtual series continues with programs slated for 12:30 p.m. May 17 and 24. The third session will be held in person May 31 at 12:30 p.m.

On May 17, Rachel Moran, an associate professor and founder of the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program at the University of St. Thomas School of Law, will talk about “Kim Potter, Daunte Wright & Minnesota Justice.” Her writing has appeared in the New York Times and The Atlantic, among many publications, where her research focuses on policing accountability.

On May 24, Macalester College history professor Amy Sullivan will discuss “Reckoning with Opioids in ‘The Land of 10,000 Rehabs.’” Her courses and research focus on the history of women, childhood, medicine and drugs/alcohol. Her most recent book is “Opioid Reckoning: Love, Loss and Redemption in the Rehab State” (University of Minnesota Press, 2021).

On May 31, St. Catherine University history and women’s studies professor Jane Lamm Carroll will discuss her book “Daybreak Woman: An Anglo-Dakota Life.”

break Woman, also known as Jane Anderson Robertson, was born at a trading post on the Minnesota River in 1830 and lived for 92 years in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Canada and South Dakota, witnessing and experiencing seismic changes in Minnesota society over several decades.

Registration is required for this in-person event at the Roseville Library. All other programs are offered virtually. To register go to the library’s website or call 651-724-600.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinars.

Djembe Joy at Women’s Drum Center

The nonprofit Women’s Drum Center, 2242 University Ave., is offering a beginning hand-drum class on Djembe Joy from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 11. Cost is $10 per person and no experience is necessary. Drums will be provided. Register online at womensdrumcenter.org.

Litroary Bridges Reading series

The Literary Bridges Reading series continues at 2 p.m. on May 1 at Next Chapter Bookstores, 38 Snelling Ave. S., St. Paul. This session of the Literary Bridges series will feature a mix of local poets and writers. The roster includes Abele Treasure, Peou Tuy, Tu the Judge, Eric Tuy, Michael Walsh and Lee Knutson.

Seniors activities listed

The St. Anthony Park Area Seniors is planning a blood pressure clinic at Seal Hill, 825 Selk St., from 3 to 3:45 p.m. on Tuesday, May 17.

Meanwhile, a paper collage art class will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays in May (May 17, 10, 24, 31) in the fellowship hall at the seniors office, 2200 Hillside Ave. Registration is required. SAPAS has also scheduled virtual lunch bunch sessions from noon to 1 p.m. on May 11 and 25.

Contact the seniors office at 651-642-9052 for more information.
The month we remember a St. Anthony Park native and resi- dent who died at age 60, as well as a sport-loving couple in their mid-80s with Como Park roots, who both died in March.

**Donald Fredrikson**
Donald Fredrikson, formerly of Lauderdale, died March 19, 2022. Donald was a Vietnam War veteran who served honorably in the Army, Specialist E4.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John and Alice. He is survived by Sandra (Webinger), his wife of 55 years, children, Aaron (Brianne) and Alicia Olmann (Andrew), and sister, Donna.

Don’s family is celebrating his memory privately.

**Mary Gotz**
Mary E. Gotz, formerly of St. An- thony Park, was born Aug. 6, 1930, and died Feb. 28, 2022. She had been a teacher.

**Rosemary Jagoe**
Rose Jagoe, 85, of Little Canada, was born July 13, 1936, in St. Paul. She died March 4, 2022.

She was preceded in death by her father, Herman Gaisbauer, mother Helen (Hauer) and brother Richard Gaisbauer. Rosemary was survived by her loving husband Lawrence Jagoe until March 27, 2022, when he went to join “his Rosie,” their children Patricia Jagoe (Jim), Diana Hartmann (Larry), Jeffrey Jagoe (Mendy) and John Jagoe (Susan); 15 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren; brother Herman Gais- bauer and sister Diane Dryden. 

Early on, Rose worked as a bookkeeper for West Publishing until she married the love of her life, Larry. She focused on raising their children and was always the nurturer and caregiver to her enti- re family.

A strong and independent woman, Rose was active in her community and church including Holy Childhood Church’s Club and many other church functions.

She also enjoyed playing tennis and golf and was a member of the Como Barsed by Golf League.

Mass of Christian Burial was scheduled April 22 at Holy Child- hood Church in St. Paul.

**Lawrence Jagoe**
Lawrence Jagoe, 86, of Little Can- ada, was born Feb. 7, 1936, in St. Paul. He died March 27, 2022, preceded in death by his loving wife Rosemary (Gaisbauer) Jagoe; par- ents Olive and Lawrence J. Jagoe, sister Laura Jagoe and brother Richard Jagoe. He is survived by his children Patricia Jagoe (Jim), Diana Hartmann (Larry), Jeffrey Jagoe (Mendy) and John Jagoe (Susan), 15 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

Lawrence attended Washington High School and the University of Minnesota. He started his career in broadcasting and advertising.

After starting his career as an an- nouncer at KCUE in Red Wing, he was a sportscaster for WCCO Radio in 1959 as sports producer, where he helped set up the original Min- nesota Twins and Minnesota Vi- kings regional radio networks in 10 years.

He was also responsible for shaping the University of Min- nesota sports network. In 1967, he became the first color commentator for the Minnesota North Stars broadcasts on WCCO Radio.

In 1971, he entered the advertising business and was with Bolin Ad- vertising. He served as president of the company and ended his career as vice chairman in 1991.

During his “retirement” he worked as a driver at the Minne- sota State Fair. He was involved in forming the Northwest Compassom Athletic Associa- tion, formed the Holy Childhood Choir Fund, was president of the Holy Childhood school board, and served in many capacities with the St. Paul Minnesota. He also had a love for public speaking and was master of ceremonies for many events, including the original Mr. Hockey banquet and hosted many of the Princess Kay of the Milk contest’s celebrations at the Minnesota State Fair.

Lawrence was an avid golfer and belonged to the St. Paul Town and Country Club and most recently the Como Golf Club, playing in many tournaments including King of the Hill.

Mass of Christian Burial was planned for April 22 at Holy Child- hood Church in St. Paul.

**John Moynagh**
John Moynagh, 84, of Remer, Min- nesota, died March 31, 2022.

John, called “jack” or “Coach,” grew up in St. Paul, graduating from St. Thomas Academy and St. Thomas College. He played football, baseball and basketball growing up, and continued to play football at St. Thomas College. He graduated with a bachelor’s degree and later earned his master’s degree in education.

After coaching at other high schools, he spent time at John- son-Murray and Como Park high schools, where he taught history and coached football, basketball and baseball. He also spent a few years coaching the Marshall High School basketball team.

Jack’s retirement years were spent living at the family cabin, built in the 1970s, on Lake Wash- burn, Minnesota. He loved the fishing there and he also routinely visited the various restaurants in the area for the fine food, bingo and meat raffles.

**Alfred Nelson**
Alfred L. Nelson, Jr., 91, of Falcon Heights, died March 23, 2022. He was preceded in death by his par- ents and two sisters. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, children (Barbara (Scott) Pike, Stephen (Gwen) Nelson, and Ruth (Brian)) Montag, many grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

A memorial service was held at Rose Hill Alliance Church in Rose- ville April 6. Memorials preferred to Vine Church in Minneapolis.

**St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church**
2323 E. Como Ave West, 651-645-0371
Handicap-accessible
Pastor Jill Rode and Pastor Daniel Ruen
Web, Facebook & Instagram: SAPC
Sunday Worship: 9:30 am
• Masks required for all in person worship
• Sign up in advance, or just sign in when you arrive

Sunday School, Family Music and Adult Forum: following Sunday worship
• Live Stream and Reservation links on church website: https://www.sapl.org/Church-At-Home

**St. Cecilia’s Catholic Church**
2357 Bayless Place, 651-644-4902
info@stceciliaas.org, www.stceciliaas.org
Handicap-accessible
Pastor John M. Hofsted
Saturday: 4:30 pm; Sunday: 8:15 and 10:00 am
Weekend Mass online (on our website)

**St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church**
2136 Lerner Ave. (at Chelmsford), 651-645-3068
www.stmatthewsomn.org, Facebook: stmatthewsomm
Sunday Worship: 10:30 am by RSVP on website
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Kristin Marie (Nolte) Sperry, St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church April 9. Memorials in Kristin Nolte Sperry’s name can be made to Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota (c/o Children and Family Services), the American Cancer Society Minnesota or Heartland Animal Rescue Team or H.A.R.T. in Brainerd.

She was a member of St. Anthony Park Order of the Eastern Star, Daughters of the Nile and volunteered for many years at the University of Minnesota Masonic Cancer Hospital.

Ruth was preceded in death by her husband John, parents and brother George. She is survived by her daughter Cheryl (David) Johnsdemacher, son Steven (Kimberly), four grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, two sisters, and a brother-in-law. Private family interment at Roselawn Cemetery, Roseville.
Saylor Landrum wins Athena Award

By Eric Erickson
Sports analysis

Como Park High School senior Saylor Landrum has excelled in cross country running, Nordic skiing and track and field, serving as a team captain for all three sports while accumulating all-conference honors and a total of 17 varsity letters.

As if that weren’t enough, Saylor also competes in the biathlon—a sport that combines Nordic skiing and target shooting with a rifle. Biathlon is actually Saylor’s favorite and best sport. She is ranked third in the nation for her age group.

“You read that correctly—third in the nation,” said Sasha Van Voorhis, Como’s head coach for Nordic skiing and target shooting.

Saylor’s athletic resume, coupled with her No. 6 class rank and weighted grade point average of 4.59, made her a clear choice for this year’s Athena Award.

The St. Paul Area Athena Awards recognize one female high school senior from each East Metro high school. Saylor and the other school senior from each East Metro school were honored at the Athena Awards Banquet scheduled April 20.

Marcus Landrum and Tara Lundborg raised Saylor in the Como Park area and home-schooled her up until her freshman year. But athletics at the neighborhood high school were available for the talented youngster beginning in seventh grade.

By the time Saylor was enrolled in classes at Como, she knew many upperclassmen as teammates and already earned six varsity letters. During high school, she continued to improve as an athlete, shine as a student and emerge as a respected leader and role model in the school community. Accomplishing so much wasn’t easy. Saylor put in the work. And that’s what inspired those fortunate enough to teach and coach her.

Como’s head coach for Nordic skiing, Sasha Van Voorhis, discussed how Saylor’s determination and work ethic made it possible for Saylor to reach her goals. Her senior season goals included qualifying for the state meet, which she did.

“Saylor’s strength throughout my coaching career has been the ability to remain positive and persevere through adversity,” Van Voorhis said. “Whether she was injured, sick or having a difficult race, she always did her best to remain outwardly positive and do the best she possibly could.

“While Saylor’s standout accomplishment on paper was qualifying for the state meet this season, I would say her consistent results over the last six years are just as much of an accomplishment. Saylor came to Como as a promising skier and showed talent, but marked improvement each year through her own hard work.”

Tim Kersey, who coached Saylor in cross country and track and field, expressed similar sentiments and shared ideas about her competitive influence on a team.

“Saylor is a great communicator and captain,” Kersey said. “She builds teammates up and is reliable. In the relay events, Saylor thrives in the anchor position. She’s so fit and fast she can run down people, which is fun to watch because she’s worked hard to become a great athlete.”

Above and beyond the schedule of a busy and successful high school student-athlete, Saylor found the time to pursue a series of biathlon clinics during her freshman year.

Most people succeeding in three different and challenging school sports are content. But Saylor’s initial biathlon clinics led to a passionate interest and devotion of time to the “hardest sport” she’s ever done.

Skiing miles of terrain that takes your breath away, then steadying your rifle to accurately shoot targets on a range before you can continue skiing is “demanding, physically and mentally taxing and highly technical” according to Saylor.

“Struggling and disappointment are huge parts of the sport because it teaches you how to keep your head up and work through any setback.

“The first mental rule you’re taught is that ‘biathletes are emotionless on the range. When you come in the range, until you leave it, you are a machine.’ This is because everyone—youths, nationally ranked athletes, Olympians, coaches, anyone—can miss all the targets.”

Once a novice herself, Saylor placed third in the U.S. Youth Category (ages 16-18) at Lake Placid, New York, this past March. Hundreds of technical training hours paid off to bring her satisfaction, joy and opportunities for continued success.

Saylor plans to study psychology and criminology at Paul Smith’s College in upstate New York. In addition to the stellar academic program, the school has a biathlon team and a Nordic ski team. Saylor will be part of both.

The Athena Award probably won’t be the last honor bestowed upon Saylor Landrum. But it’s a fitting tribute to a remarkable student-athlete who achieved excellence at Como, and is graduating with gratitude.

“Sports at Como have been a huge part of my life,” Saylor said. “I’ve learned leadership skills, teamwork, team building and time management from them and I will use those skills for the rest of my life.”

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