



Bugle MNA honors

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Your award-winning, nonprofit community resource

Park Bugle

St. Anthony Park / Como Park
Falcon Heights / Lauderdale

parkbugle.org
March 2026



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SAP resident weighs in on ICE legal battle

By Scott Carlson

Brian D. Clark of St. Anthony Park took on the mantle of practicing law more than 15 years ago.

A graduate of the University of Minnesota Law School, Clark first pursued environmental law, then shifted to handling antitrust business litigation, including helping victims of corporate price fixing.

“My practice was focused on filing class action lawsuits for victims of price-fixing conspiracies in industries from chicken to PVC pipes to local TV advertising,” said Clark, a partner at Minneapolis-based Lockridge Grindal Nauen. “We have recovered well over a billion dollars for victims of price fixing in the past decade.”

But in the last several weeks, Clark’s caseload has taken a sharp turn, handling a flurry of habeas corpus filings in Minnesota. It’s pro bono (or free) legal work that has given Clark the opportunity “to refamiliarize myself with Minnesota’s federal judges and court.”

In mid-February, the Bugle interviewed Clark on his new brush with immigration law. The Q and A has been edited for clarity and brevity.

Bugle: How did you get involved in handling immigration law?

Clark: When I heard in early January that neighbors, including the aunt of a staff member at my law firm, were being asked to show “identity papers” based on the color of their skin or their accent, I

could not sit on the sidelines without using my legal skills to help.

Such identity paper checks struck me personally as strikingly reminiscent of what happened in 1930s Germany. So after that red line was crossed, both I and my firm, Lockridge Grindal Nauen, have been all-in for helping our wrongfully detained neighbors get out of ICE detention.

We have won every case we have filed, as these detentions are unlawful and unconstitutional. Most clients have no criminal records and the law gives the government no authority to detain these neighbors.

We have represented a number of high-profile victims of ICE’s actions, including two women who were detained after ICE shot into their home through a closed door, and a family of four from Hopkins detained after ICE detained the mother on the way to work and used her to lure her husband, first

grader and seventh grader out of the safety of their home.

My law firm is also supporting a large collaborative effort among the many immigration nonprofits, the University of Minnesota Law School and private law firms to provide habeas counsel to any neighbor who needs it free of charge.

Bugle: What is habeas corpus litigation?

Clark: Habeas corpus is an ancient doctrine written into the Constitution. It allows anyone in the United States to ask a federal judge to force the government to explain why a person is detained.

We have filed over a dozen such cases to date for over 20 people, with more filed each day.

We typically file the case within hours of obtaining the key facts we need about the client (always from family members or friends, as the client is not available to talk to us).



Attorney Brian D. Clark, of St. Anthony Park, has been serving pro bono on ICE/immigration cases. Submitted photo.

Then the courts usually issue what’s called an “order to show cause” to the government, requiring the government to explain the legal basis for detaining the client.

We seek to file our response typically within a few hours, and the courts rule very quickly to release our clients from detention and return them to Minnesota if they have been flown out to Texas or New Mexico. One such order from the court recently was issued at 11 p.m. on a Saturday night.

Clark interview to p. 2

Purrfect ending for cat rescue saga

By Janet Wight

Last fall, about a dozen St. Anthony Park residents joined forces with a rescue organization and a foster family to save a mother cat and three of her kittens.

The tale begins when a neighbor noticed six kittens living in her window well.

However, before she could round them up, the mother cat had already moved the kittens. Several neighbors, upon learning about the feline family, were able to locate and feed the mother, but no one could find the kittens.

A few weeks later, three of the kittens were found by the groundskeeper at Milton Square. (Of the remaining three kittens, a fourth one was found dead and two others were never located.)

Lucas Robinson and Ana Pooley, owners of Tax Cat Consulting in Milton Square, found out about the tiny kittens and brought them into their office. They put the kittens in a box with a blanket and then made a trip to PetSmart for additional supplies.

Afterward, Lucas and Ana took the kittens to a veterinarian for medical care, including treatment for eye diseases and stomach worms. They then transported the



SAP residents recently rescued these kittens. Photo submitted by Tax Cat Consulting.

trio to Pet Haven, a nearby rescue organization.

“Thankfully we had availability... to help these kittens get out of the cold, receive medical attention and find rescue placement with Pet Haven,” Pooley said. “The desire and ability to help never really goes away, and I am thankful we were in the right place at the right time.”



A rescued kitten getting bottle fed. Photo submitted by Tax Cat Consulting.

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: EdgeTec

Small business tapes up big boxes

By Anne Holzman

It's possible the boxes you just recycled, which came from a warehouse in Alabama filled with something manufactured in Mexico using parts from China, had been taped up by a machine that was built in your neighborhood.

EdgeTec, a four-person operation at 2171 Energy Park Drive, offers a local example of just how global our consumption has become.

Anyone who has had the experience of trying to stuff a toy back into a box for storage knows that the box is built precisely to contain that toy. The shower stall kit

that you dragged home from a retailer probably has many pieces, each in its own taped-up cardboard wrapper.

EdgeTec owner Scott Hudson explained that all this boxing and taping has often been done by hand, with people on a conveyor line tucking in the last folds and taping each box. It's slow, and tape gets wasted.

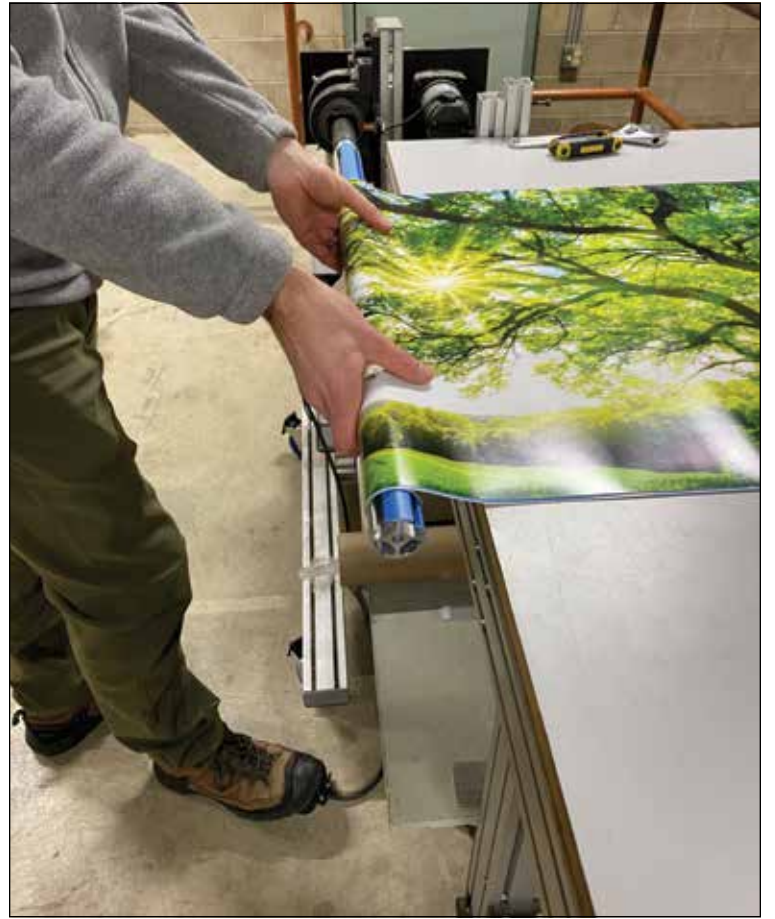
Going for efficiency

EdgeTec's business is to automate that process, making it faster and more efficient.

Hudson said the company, previously called Production Resources,



A lathe in the EdgeTec shop. Photo by Anne Holzman.



EdgeTec owner Scott Hudson shows how a rolling machine protects the edges of a poster for packaging. Photo by Anne Holzman.

has been around for about 20 years. He worked there and then purchased it from the previous owner, who retired.

Hudson bought the building on Energy Park about seven years ago, renovated part of it for EdgeTec and moved the company from Maplewood to St. Paul.

He wanted a larger building, and the central location was attractive for employees. He had a setback in the volatile economy last year and dropped his staff from six to four.

Hudson is worried about the trend in property taxes; the county's tax records show the amount due on his building has roughly doubled in the past five years.

Currently, Hudson has another tenant in the building and is weighing investment and expansion, envisioning that EdgeTec will

eventually be large enough to occupy the entire space.

EdgeTec originally specialized in supplying and repairing conveyor belts, Hudson said. But he has shifted to manufacturing equipment for packaging. The pandemic led to opportunities as people dramatically increased their online purchases.

More recently, an economic cool-down has caused purchases to drop off, but the company has more customers needing replacement parts and maintenance.

Hudson, whose background is in communications, can also troubleshoot programming issues as machines age and need updating.

While much of EdgeTec's client base is national, Hudson said the company also has a network of local suppliers. One of their lead

products, the L-Clip machine that smacks a perfectly sized piece of tape in exactly the right spot on the edge of a box, is built right there in the shop using a sheet-metal cover from another local manufacturer.

Another product, a roller that packages posters, might go to a crafter sending a few dozen fine-art prints to small gift shops. "We kind of own the market on this," Hudson said.

He said the company can put a whole conveyor line together using a combination of its own machines and those from other sources.

"If we don't have the capability, we'll reach out to companies who do," Hudson said. ■

Anne Holzman is a Twin Cities freelance writer and regular contributor to the Bugle.

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Clark interview from p. 1

Bugle: What is rewarding about handling these cases?

Clark: These are all pro bono (no charge) legal services. Helping a neighbor who is wrongfully detained obtain their freedom is the most important thing I have done with my law degree.

Attorneys take an oath to uphold the Constitution when they are sworn into the Bar. When the rule of law is repeatedly violated as it has been with these mass detentions in Minnesota, it is our obligation to step up and defend our neighbors using our legal skills. It's my privilege to apply the privileges a law degree affords me to help.

Bugle: What impact are these immigration cases having on our local community?

Clark: Everyone in SAP, and Minnesota, has their own way, own skills, and own lane to help our neighbors in these dark times — whether its bringing those who can't leave their house groceries, driving someone to work, providing safe shelter for someone, or even just smiling at a stranger to tell them you see them in these dark times.

I'm glad to live in a neighborhood where there is such love turned into action on behalf of our neighbors. While it is a dark time for the rule of law that deeply concerns me, the actions each of us take are important points of light to see through the dark to a better time." ■

Scott Carlson is managing editor of the Park Bugle.

CITY FILES

Como and St. Anthony Park community councils news

District 10 Community Council

Como Park cleanup coming

D10 Como Community Council will be partnering with the city of St. Paul and the Capitol Region Watershed District in a spring cleanup of Como Park.

There will be a check-in at Como's Lakeside Pavilion from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 18. Cleanup supplies will be available to get you going. For more information, go to District10ComoPark.org/Cleanup.

Spring St. Paul Art Crawl returns

District 10 Como Community Council and the Dock & Paddle restaurant will host dozens of local artists showcasing their work at the Como Lakeside Pavilion and the Como Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Parkway, during the St. Paul Art Collective's Spring Art Crawl from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 25. More info and the latest updates are available at District10ComoPark.org/spring-art-crawl-como-art-pop-ups/.

Como community garage sale coming

District 10 is once again coordinating a community-wide garage sale from Thursday, May 14, to Sunday, May 17.

Please sign up before May 11 if you wish to be included in District 10's map of its community-wide garage sale locations. For further information and to sign up, click on to District 10's website: District10ComoPark.org/GarageSale.

Serving on District 10 council

Several seats are up for election in April to the District 10 Como Community Council board.

Consider attending some monthly meetings before making the decision to commit to a board position.

These positions serve two-year terms, through April 2028. To get

on the ballot, fill out an application at District10ComoPark.org/Elections. That's where you can also learn more about the roles and opportunities of board members.

The filing deadline is Tuesday, March 31. The election ends April 14.

For further information, go to district10@district10comopark.org.

Upcoming meetings

District 10 meetings are hybrid on Zoom and at the Como Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Parkway. Meeting details can be found on the District 10 website: District10ComoPark.org.

All D10 community meetings are open to the public and include time for community members to bring topics up for discussion.

- 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4 and March 18 — District 10 Como community meeting.

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

District 12 Community Council

Kasota Ponds Cleanup on April 11

Each spring, neighbors gather along Kasota Avenue with gloves on, trash bags in hand, and a shared purpose — caring for one of St. Anthony Park's most important natural spaces.

The annual Kasota Ponds Cleanup returns on Saturday, April 11, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Volunteers will meet at NAPA Auto Parts, 2530 Kasota Ave., before heading into the wetland area to remove litter and debris. The event is open to all ages.

Kasota Ponds are three of only four water bodies in St. Anthony Park and provide habitat for turtles, migratory birds, fish, pollinators and other wildlife. Through the years, volunteers have removed more than 2,200 pounds of trash

and recyclables, making a visible improvement in water quality and habitat health.

"A few hours of shared effort goes a long way — not just for the ponds, but for the connections we build with each other," said Reyd Jordan, Environment Committee co-chair.

This year's event will also highlight new restoration work underway. District 12 recently received a buckthorn removal grant from the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization. Volunteers will have the opportunity to learn more about upcoming efforts to restore native vegetation throughout the greater Kasota Ponds area.

District 12 provides gloves, safety vests and trash bags for cleanup. Neighbors are encouraged to dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes.

For more information and volunteer sign-up details, go to <http://sapcc.org/kasota-ponds>.

Community concerns arise over housing stability

Earlier this winter, the District 12 Board unanimously approved a Letter of Community Concern and Request for Continued City Action.

The letter comes in response to community concerns about housing stability and the impacts of increased federal immigration enforcement activity.

As the city's designated community engagement organization for

St. Anthony Park, District 12 regularly gathers input from residents, workers and local organizations. In recent months, neighbors have shared concerns about how current conditions are affecting daily life, including fear, uncertainty and the risk of avoidable displacement.

District 12 shared its letter with St. Paul Mayor Kaohly Her and St. Paul City Council members.

South St. Anthony Park Director Connor Zielinski, who helped lead the board discussion, emphasized the responsibility of the District Council during moments of community stress. "This was about communicating what we are hearing directly from neighbors and workers," he said.

The full letter is available for review at <http://sapcc.org/archives/>.

District 12 approves Luther Seminary Lower Campus Task Force Report

After six months of meetings, review and public engagement, the SAPCC Board of Directors unanimously approved the Luther Seminary Lower Campus Task Force report earlier this year, marking an important milestone in a careful, community-centered process.

The Luther Campus Task Force was convened to gather neighbor feedback and facilitate dialogue around the proposed redevelopment of the Lower Campus by Lifestyle Communities and their development associates SW Group and Monarch.

Over the course of their work, Task Force members met regularly, reviewed evolving materials and helped shape questions and discussion ahead of SAPCC's well-attended public forum held in November.

District 12 Executive Director Zev Radziwill reflected on the process, noting, "This was about creating space for neighbors with many different perspectives to come together, ask questions and share concerns in a way that was constructive."

Following District 12's unanimous vote, SAPCC formally submitted its task force report and letter of support to the city.

While this report adoption marks an important milestone, additional planning and public review remain ahead. The proposed redevelopment will continue through City of St. Paul planning processes and will also be reviewed by the City of Lauderdale, with future opportunities for neighbors to follow the project and share input as proposals move forward.

The full Luther Seminary Lower Campus Task Force report, along with the community forum video and presentation materials, is available at sapcc.org/forum25 for neighbors who wish to review the information in more detail.

While the Lower Campus phase has reached this milestone, the Luther Campus Task Force's work is

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The Park Bugle is a monthly non-profit community newspaper serving St. Anthony Park, Lauderdale, Falcon Heights and Como Park. The Bugle covers 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.

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EDITORIAL

From the desk of the editor

Bugle soars at 2026 MNA convention

By Scott Carlson

For the third consecutive year, the Park Bugle newspaper has emerged a winner at the Minnesota Newspaper Association's latest Better Newspaper Contest, capturing eight awards at the trade group's annual convention.

For the Bugle's small band of freelancers and regular staffers, the newspaper's strong showing reflects the talent and esprit de corps of its team members to the community. The plethora of awards came during the Bugle's 51st year of operation.

Here is a recap of the MNA awards for 2024-25 that were presented to the Bugle, which competed in the class of "non-multi day publications with circulation over 7,000."

General Reporting — first place: Staff

Self-promotion or House Ad — third place: Eddie Hofmeister and Wendy Holdman

General excellence — second place: Staff

Business profile — second place ("Speedy Market turns 30," July 2025; "Rock 'n roll butchers a cut above the average," Aug. 2025): Sarah CR Clark

Best use of social media — second place (Live Q & A series 2025): Laura Adrian

Arts & entertainment story — third place ("Chroma Zone Mural & Art Festival connects identity with community," Sept. 2024): Maya Betti

Columnist — second place (various): Scott Carlson

Special section — third place (various): Staff

These awards reflect our staff's talent and dedication to produce high quality journalism for our readers.

The 2026 awards presentation took place in late January at the MNA's latest annual convention in Brooklyn Center.

In the professional division, there were several hundred contestants vying for honors in more than 30 newspaper categories. The



The Park Bugle won several awards at the Minnesota Newspaper Association's Better Newspaper Contest. Pictured are (left to right): Eric Erickson, Steve Plagens, Anne Holzman, Sarah CR Clark, Betsy Carlson and Scott Carlson. Submitted photo.

vast majority of those winners were from commercial newspapers with far greater resources and revenue than the Bugle.

The Bugle's 2024-25 contest results come on the heels of the newspaper's strong showing in 2023-24 when it captured 13 awards. Those awards included first places in gen-

eral reporting, institutional advertising, sports feature and best use of social media.

The Bugle also won five awards in 2022-23. ■

Scott Carlson is managing editor of the Bugle.

COMMENTARY

Families urgently need reliable, affordable clean energy

By Holly Swiglo

Volunteering with several climate advocacy organizations across our state has shown me just how critical energy affordability is to Minnesotans.

We shouldn't have to worry about being stuck with soaring energy costs. We urgently need reliable and affordable options.

Currently, Congress has an opportunity to fix one of the biggest obstacles holding us back: a slow, outdated permitting process that hinders getting cheaper clean energy onto the grid.

To lower living costs for everyday Americans, we need the most cost-effective energy sources. Renewable energy is often the cheapest form of energy available, but it can take nearly a decade to permit and build. That delay means communities like ours are stuck with outdated energy sources while cheaper and cleaner options sit on the sidelines.

Meanwhile, the climate crisis is accelerating and the window to act is closing fast. Every year, air pollution from fossil fuels causes hundreds of thousands of premature deaths and disproportionately impacts disadvantaged communities.

Outdated permitting rules are not only driving up prices but putting public health at risk. Congress could cut emissions and pollution by unlocking the thousands of clean energy projects already waiting for approval and connection to the grid.

To date, a flurry of bipartisan bills addressing needed permitting reform have been introduced in Congress, and a bipartisan group of lawmakers has released a framework of policy recommendations. This is all encouraging, but we need to move from discussions to action.

The stark reality is that families in Minnesota face rising electricity costs as our energy demand grows.

According to the Energy Infor-

mation Administration, the average household price of electricity in the US rose by nearly 10% from 2023 to 2024. Nearly 90% of likely voters are concerned about rising energy bills, and two-thirds want more transmission lines to improve clean energy and grid reliability. The cost of living is a very real issue for everyday Americans.

Yet, sources of cheap and clean energy and its associated infrastructure are being held back.

Ultimately, permitting reform is not about politics. It's about ensuring that hardworking families in Minnesota can afford to keep the heat on this winter. A smarter, modernized permitting process can help approve good projects sooner and reject bad ones faster.

We can improve public health, create good jobs and unlock economic benefits for rural and urban communities alike.

Democrats and Republicans agree that America must build

more energy infrastructure to meet our growing demand.

The 2024 Energy Permitting Reform Act was a good starting point, and now our Minnesota Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith and Representative Betty McCollum must work across the aisle and seize this chance to act.

No family in Minnesota should have to fear the next blackout or crushing energy bill—especially when clean, affordable solutions are within our reach. ■

Holly Swiglo is a junior at Oberlin College studying environmental policy. She is from St. Paul and volunteers with the Minnesota chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby, a nonpartisan, grassroots advocacy organization that empowers everyday people to work together on climate policy. Find out more at cclusa.org.

"Railroad Island" history program set March 10

The latest in Kristin Anderson's monthly series on St. Anthony Park architecture and neighborhood history continues at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 10, at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Ave. Anderson's topic will be "Rail-

road Island." St. Anthony Park's early success relied on the railroad lines crossing the middle of the neighborhood. Anderson will explore the area's past and point out the remaining evidence of St. Anthony Park's "railroad island."

All are welcome. Presentations remain free, but donations help offset program costs (live and online tip jars available).

Anderson is a professor emerita of Art & Design at Augsburg University in Minneapolis.

Unable to attend the March session in person? Watch it live online or see a recording available for one week following March 10. Use the SAPLC YouTube channel bit.ly/Sap-history. ■

— Mary Mergenthal

COMMENTARY

Housing urged on Luther Sem, golf course sites

By Elaine Tarone,
Khalique Rogers and Joe Nathan

Quietly, Minnesota children are pleading for permanent housing.

For humanitarian, moral and financial reasons, we strongly urge that the Luther Seminary and University Golf Course sites include housing affordable for middle- and low-income families.

We agree with St. Paul City Council member Molly Coleman, who declared passionately during her recent campaign that “housing is a human right.” Providing a range of housing on these sites would benefit all St. Anthony Park residents.

But current plans for the seminary and golf course sites don’t appear to include housing for low-income families.

A few facts:

- The Minnesota Department of Education reports the number of Minnesota children and youth who experience homelessness on an average day increased by more than 2,000 between 2019 and 2025, from about 8,000 to more than 10,000.
- With assistance from several St. Anthony Park churches, 91 people, including 53 children from 28 families, currently are staying at the Project Home shelter in Bandana Square. They’re seeking permanent housing.
- Wilder Foundation research shows about one-quarter of Minnesota adults experiencing homelessness are working, many of them full-time, but still can’t afford housing.
- Research cited in The New York Times shows that youth from low-income families growing up in neighborhoods with mostly middle- and upper-income youth have far better life outcomes than similar young people living in neighborhoods with mostly low-income people.



There is some discussion about building housing on or near the 11th hole of what has been the U of M golf course — west of Larpenteur Avenue and Coffman Street. Photo by Joe Nathan.



Our personal experiences (from the authors of this commentary) help illustrate these statistics:

- On a cold November night, a mother, father and two young children entered a Culver’s on University Avenue to get warm. Both parents worked minimum wage jobs, caring for the children when they were not working. They’d spent the previous three nights in an unheated, abandoned garage. Some of us spent four hours trying to find them temporary housing, but the only available shelter space required the mother to declare that the husband was abusive (he wasn’t). We and a church paid for three nights in a hotel. Then Ramsey County arranged temporary shelter in a motel.
- One of us attended a local elementary public school while experiencing homelessness and living in a temporary shelter that wouldn’t allow the family to stay if both husband and wife were present. This separation caused long-lasting problems.
- While in kindergarten, that person was assigned to draw a picture of his home. Lacking one, the insensitive assignment produced shame and alienation.

Reducing homelessness isn’t just humane: it saves money. Extensive research shows that children who experience homelessness are far more likely to drop out of school, abuse drugs and become involved in the criminal justice system. This produces far lower earnings for the individual and far greater expense for taxpayers via, for example, chemical abuse rehab and prison/jail expense.

On the other hand, providing permanent housing for low-income families can transform lives.

- Creating environmentally friendly, economical housing by using solar roof panels on most units.
- Repurposing the planned condo at the Luther site into rental units for mixed income levels
- Working with St. Paul Mayor Kaohly Her, St. Paul City Council member Molly Coleman and Ramsey County Commissioner Garrison McMurtrey to promote inclusionary zoning and leveraging county and state funding programs to help create rental and ownership options for low- and moderate-income families.

Providing permanent housing for children, youth and families helps all of us. ■

Elaine Tarone is a MICAH & project home volunteer. Khalique Rogers is executive director of Catalyst for Systems Change. Joe Nathan, is founder and former director of the Center for School Change.

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Irish Soda Bread Recipe

4 cups unbleached flour
1 tsp soda
1 tsp cream of tartar
3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup butter, melted
3/4 cup currants
1 3/4 cups buttermilk

Mix dry ingredients. Add butter, currants and buttermilk and mix well. Stir in additional flour as needed to reduce stickiness. Knead vigorously on floured surface for 3 - 4 minutes until firm. Shape into 2 round loaves, dust with flour, score with an X. Bake on greased cookie sheet for one hour at 375 degrees.

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SCHOOL NEWS

Como Park High pivots to provide mutual aid to those in need

By Eric Erickson
News analysis

In the first months of 2026, the routines and rituals that bring stability to education in the St. Paul schools have been disrupted and have kept thousands of students from accessing their schools due to safety concerns.

Virtual learning for students began as an option effective Jan. 22 in the wake of turmoil over ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raids in the community.

At Como Park High School, nearly 30% of the student body was enrolled in virtual learning as the month of February began. Teachers still have the same students in their classes, but they can only provide in-person support and interaction to those who are present.

This creates a gap in obtaining equal access to education.

For students trying to learn from home, they must access the class content, reading, resources and assignments from the "Schoology" digital learning platform. If they need to ask for help, they must join a Google Meet that teachers host during "office hours."

Fears over ICE tactics

The fears that families were facing from federal ICE tactics were already limiting attendance before virtual learning was implemented. And that's when mutual aid efforts ignited at schools and communities across the cities.

The response of the Como Park High School community revealed the compassion, empathy and organization of people who want to protect democracy and help neighbors in need.

The Como Park Booster Club quickly pivoted its long-scheduled early January fundraiser into a donation drive supporting families who couldn't safely leave home. The club raised over \$17,000 through a givemn.org link, which allowed food and personal supplies to be purchased and delivered by a volunteer network.

Social worker Christy McCoy is one of many people helping to coordinate resources.

"The generosity and kindness are fueling our community, fostering hope and strengthening a sense of unity in the form of collective care," McCoy said.

Como Principal Diana Brown shared that sentiment, noting the response reveals the strength of Como Park.



Members of the Como choir and orchestra formed an ensemble to perform "Lift Every Voice and Sing" at an assembly in the Como Auditorium on Feb. 9. Photo by Eric Erickson.

"Seeing the parents, staff and community gather to uplift our most vulnerable population is heartwarming," Brown said. "Al-

though the circumstances are challenging, it is truly a blessing to be able to work in a place surrounded by love and protection." ■

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

It's annual Bugle poetry contest time again!

By Scott Carlson

Dear Bugle readers,

Do you take time to smell the roses?

Or slow down just enough so you are able to think about where life is headed?

Well, here's your chance to wax poetic: The Bugle is conducting

its 16h annual poetry contest in conjunction with National Poetry Month in April.

This year we are asking contestants to draft poems drawing inspiration from the words "hope" and "perseverance." The deadline for all poems, which **must be submitted by email, is 5 p.m. on Friday, March 6.**

Our contest is open to people, of high school age and older, with the first-place winner receiving \$50 and publication of their poem in the Bugle's April issue.

We will also publish the second- and third-place winning entries, with those winners receiving \$30 and \$25, respectively.

Here are our contest guidelines:

- We want to read poems that address "hope" and/or "perseverance."
- Poems can take any form you choose. But they must be in a form that is printable.
- The words "hope" and "perseverance" do not have to appear in your poem. Use them to draw inspiration and take your poem in any direction.
- The contest is limited to one entry per person. Deadline to receive entries is **Friday, March 6.**
- The contest is open to all Bugle readers. Current Bugle employees, Park Press board members and their families are **NOT** eligible to enter.
- Send poems to editor@parkbugle.org.
- In the subject line of your email, please put in the words "Poetry contest entry." And **please send all poems via email.**

Poems will be judged anonymously by a local poet. So, sharpen those pencils, fire up your laptops or whatever tools you use to compose and let the poetry flow. ■

Scott Carlson is managing editor of the Park Bugle.

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SCHOOL NEWS

School news around the town

Compiled by Janet Wight

Hmong College Prep Academy (HCPA)

Submitted by Anna Her, Creative Content Coordinator

In January, students from the Hmong American Peace Academy (HAPA) in Milwaukee traveled to Como Park to compete in the Hmong Cup Basketball Games on the HCPA campus. After several strong performances the HCPA boys' varsity team secured the win, ensuring that the Hmong Cup remained in St. Paul.

Athletes on both teams exhibited great effort and sportsmanship throughout this exciting competition.

Chelsea Heights Elementary School

Submitted by Principal Guillermo Maldonado Pérez

The January Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting focused



The Hmong College Prep Academy of St. Paul was winner of the Hmong Cup Basketball Games in January. Photo submitted by the school.

on race and racism with suggestions for how to engage children about these complex and challenging topics.

T. Mychael Rambo, a Twin Cities-based community organizer, actor and educator, was the guest speaker for this important subject. The meeting provided guidance, reassurance and practical tips for approaching these topics in age-appropriate and meaningful ways.

PTO meetings at Chelsea Heights provide an opportunity for families

to come together, share perspectives and learn from one another in a welcoming environment.

Murray Middle School

Submitted by Principal Jamin McKenzie and Parent Involvement Coordinator Stefanie Folkema

A spaghetti fundraiser in support of the Murray music program will be held on April 2 from 5 - 7 p.m. in the school gymnasium. The dinner menu will feature spaghetti, salad, bread and dessert. During the dinner, attendees will be entertained by students performing solo or ensemble musical pieces.

This "pay as you can" event has a suggested donation of \$10 per person, \$30 per family or \$50 (or more) for those who would like to "pay it forward." Proceeds will be used to purchase music and supplies and to defray transportation costs and registration fees for band/and orchestra honor programs.

Performances of the spring musical, "Cinderella: Youth Edition," will be held on March 13 and 14 at 7 p.m. and March 15 at 2 p.m. at the school.

Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS)

Submitted by Paige Yurczyk, communications and community outreach manager

Athletic milestones

TCGIS is celebrating 10 years of athletics this school year, which now includes nine interscholastic sports with the addition of dance team last fall.

The boys and girls cross-country teams each took second place at the Minnesota State Junior High Championships in late October. Several of the harriers competed in frigid temperatures and raced through a snowstorm at the USA Track and Field Junior Olympic National Cross Country Champi-

onships in Shelbyville, Indiana, in early December.

TCGIS is the only middle school in the state to offer a full indoor track and field season, providing young athletes the opportunity to compete using facilities at the University of Minnesota and Bethel University.

2025 was the second year for the athletic program's leaf raking fundraiser, which was made possible through the generous support of the neighboring community.

An athletics booster group has now been established thanks to the leadership of several parents.

Math medalist

Congratulations to eighth grader Julian Panzer, who medaled at the Minnesota Junior High Math Meet. ■

Janet Wight is a regular freelance writer for the Bugle and lives in the Como neighborhood.

Viewing the 'Shawls of Irish women' exhibit at Celtic Junction

By Kate Daly

"For generations, the shawl was one of the most recognizable elements of Irish women's dress."

As writer Robert Lynd observed in 1909, the shawl was the one garment worn by women throughout Ireland, regardless of region or circumstance. More than a practical layer against wind or rain, the shawl carried meaning — about identity, age, work, faith and belonging.

For more than a century, Irish women's shawls served as visible markers of everyday life. A shawl might signal whether a woman was young or elderly, married or widowed, heading to market or to Mass. It could be carefully saved for Sunday wear or worn daily while working, walking or tending family and land.

At the Celtic Junction Arts Center, 836 Prior Ave. N., the Irish women's shawls exhibit explores the history of Irish women's shawls as both material objects and social expressions.

From roughly 1850 to 1950, shawls appeared in nearly every Irish county, shaped by local customs as well as by trade networks, migration and the passing down of garments within families. While some styles became closely associated with particular regions, many circulated far beyond their places of origin.

My own interest in these textiles began during month-long Irish-language immersion programs in Connemara in 2019 and 2023. There, I first encountered a Galway shawl displayed at An Croomán community center in An Cheathrú Rua. It was a revered item in the community. That single object opened a much larger story.



Kate Daly is pictured with "Shawls of Irish women" exhibit. Photo submitted by Kate Daly.

Exhibit Hours: Monday through Thursday, 4:30–7:30 p.m., or by appointment at Celtic Junction Arts Center, 836 Prior Ave. N. St. Paul, MN 55104 Contact for an appointment: library@celticjunction.org.

What is often thought of as the Galway shawl is, in fact, only one example within a wide and varied shawl tradition found throughout Ireland.

In 2024, I returned to Ireland to begin independent research into

Irish women's shawls and their role in community life.

Drawing on museum and library collections, historical photographs, folklore surveys and the foundational work of the Irish Folklore Commission, the exhibit presents a range of shawl forms in, among other things, photographs and drawings with accompanying text. It also includes early brats and mantles; black fulled woven shawls and Donegal plaids; richly patterned Paisley shawls; Cork shawls; Inis Meáin crocheted shawls; and the iconic Galway shawl itself.

First presented at the Irish Fair of Minnesota last August, this exhibit is now on view at the Celtic Junction Arts Center. Visitors are invited to look closely at these images—not simply as clothing, but as witnesses to women's labor, devotion, migration and resilience across generations.

Many women may recognize echoes of shawls once worn by their own mothers, grandmothers or ancestors. ■

Kate Daly is a St. Anthony Park resident and a research associate at the Eoin Mckiernan Library located in the Celtic Junction Arts Center.

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Wellness

Razzle dazzle comes to dental care

By Kathy Henderson

It was time for me to have one of those full bitewing dental X-rays — ho hum, a standard dental practice I have long experienced over the years.

But before you could say razzle-dazzle, the dental hygienist on my recent visit directed my attention to a large computer-screen-sized, full color, 3-D, AI-assisted digital rendering of my teeth.

It turns out that AI (artificial intelligence) has entered the world of dental X-rays.

Not only was I seeing a colorful and highly visible digitally-produced image of my teeth, the AI tool had vividly indicated places that may require attention now or possibly in the future — prognosis predictions that also gauge the severity.



Dr. Joseph Opack of St. Paul Family Dentistry with an example of digital dentistry. Photo by Kathy Henderson.



St. Paul Family Dentistry dental hygienists Jackie Ascherman and dental assistants Nicole Wickersham and Toni Johnston. Photo by Kathy Henderson.

While AI's emergence into dentistry may not have been as news worthy as its ever-expanding role in education or industry, it has been transformative. At least, that's the word that has frequently ap-

peared in dental peer review journals over the past couple of years.

However, when "transformative" went from scholarly journals into a Forbes business magazine headline, "How AI is transforming dentistry from diagnosis to payment" (July 9, 2025) — it was time for a Park Bugle chat with Dr. Joseph Opack at St. Paul Family Dentistry.

Because this clinic, near the intersection of Lexington and Larpentour avenues, has two dentists with the last name Opack — Joseph and David — Dr. Joe will be used to avoid confusion. Dr. Peter Stanton rounds out the trio of dentists there.

I arrived at my recent appoint-

ment wondering how does AI's analytical role fit into the hands-on professional skills of a dental clinic, and where else, beyond digital X-rays, it is showing up?

As Forbes notes, the global AI dentistry market was valued at \$421 million in 2024 and is projected to reach \$3.1 billion by 2034. That translates to 636% growth in 10 years.

But while AI's impact on dentistry may be transformative, it is not taking over, assured Dr. Joe. Instead, he said, AI serves as an added tool for the dentist and clinical personnel.

AI a second dental opinion

Consider dental AI as an instant second opinion or a skill enhancer, Dr. Joe suggested. It contributes to, but does not replace, clinical experience, expertise and judgment.

Nor, as he emphasized, does it supplant a clinic's dentists, hygienists, dental assistants and front desk personnel's invaluable human interconnection with patients.

Dr. Joe noted, for example, while the AI tool for dental X-rays is trained on "something like 60 million x-rays, it is not perfect. But it is a tool that learns."

Thus, if any of the clinic dentists see that the AI tool missed something or they don't agree with the AI interpretation, they hit the misdiagnose button. Their AI software learns from that.

So, there's far more going on with dental technology and innovation than the AI razzamatazz of my digital X-ray. Different dental offices, different rates of usage. Here are some additional examples from this Como neighborhood dental clinic:

- AI-assisted diagnosis, treatment planning and production, including same-day crowns and implant surgery.
- Dental product: Curodont. When a very tiny cavity or crack is discovered (maybe via that digital X-ray), this brush-applied gel on the tooth's surface uses one's own saliva to arrest the cavity's progression and rebuild the tooth enamel. No drilling necessary!
- Ergonomics: Declination angled loupe. In contrast to

Dental care to p. 14

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Wellness

PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD: Bill Skon

By Sarah CR Clark

William 'Dr. Bill' Skon's long-time roots both in the neighborhood and in chiropractic are holding him steady in this uncertain time.

The son of two longtime St. Anthony Park residents, Skon has carried on the chiropractic legacy of his father and his own practice, Skon Chiropractic Clinic, 856 Raymond Ave.

With his clinic located close to both University of Minnesota Twin Cities campuses, many of Skon's patients are from places outside of the United States. They include southeast Asia, north Africa, Russia and Ukraine.

"I just love asking people where they are from and hearing their stories, to find connections," he said.

Skon's story is deeply embedded in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood. "My mom (Helen Wingblade) was born in the upstairs bedroom of a house on Commonwealth Avenue. It was storming

that day and the doctor came to the house in a horse-drawn sleigh."

Skon's grandfather (Henry Wingblade, Helen's father) was a teacher at Bethel Academy and eventually president of Bethel University and Seminary. He was instrumental in helping the school develop its first St. Paul campus, located across from the Minnesota State Fairgrounds on Snelling Avenue.

William Skon Sr., Skon's father, also grew up in St. Anthony Park. The practice, now in its second generation of Skon ownership, moved to its current location in 2014.

The clinic's space — previously owned by a landscaping business and used to show art — is bright and airy, perfect for the art it now holds made by Skon's wife, Suzanne Skon (suzanneskon.com).

After graduating from Northwestern College of Chiropractic in Bloomington, Skon joined his father's practice in 1985. His father retired in 1987.

But the current Skon, 71, doesn't

plan to retire anytime soon. "I love what I do," he said.

Most patients who visit Skon Chiropractic are looking to try it out for a session or two, Skon says. "And I'm happy to do that for people. We call that relief care."

"Others recognize they've had a problem for a long time and they come for a few months of care," Skon continued. "And a third group of folks come in for maintenance care. They realize that they do better if they get regular, or semi-regular, adjustments."

Bill Skon to p. 15

Dr. Bill's Top 4 health and wellness tips

Since federal immigration agents have arrived in Minnesota, it's been a tense time for so many across the state. When times are stressful, it's more important than ever to practice self-care.

Dr. Bill Skon shared with the Bugle his top tips for maintaining health and wellness:

- **Exercise.** "Exercise 4-5 times a week for a half-hour or an hour," Skon said. "That's the biggest thing, both to deal with stress and to keep our bodies healthy."
- **Stretch regularly and take frequent breaks from holding your body in extended positions.**
- **Diet.** "Eat healthy. Avoid sugar," Skon advised.
- **Drink lots of water.** "Out of everything, if there's one thing you do for your health, that's it. Drink water. That's the best thing. Your body functions better with water, that's all there is to it."

—Sarah CR Clark



TRANSITION TOWN

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

It's a beautiful day in the neighbor-woods

Postcards from the Future, part 2

By Eliza L. Swedenborg

Background: Postcards from the Future is a community art and dialogue project supported by Transition Town—All St. Anthony Park and Friends of Breck Woods. The project hosted workshops exploring the future of the Luther Seminary campus, which will soon be sold and redeveloped.

Participants were invited to imagine how this land might be re-envisioned to strengthen community well-being. The text below is a synthesis of those conversations. The first part of this series appeared in the February Park Bugle.

Up and over the hills we time travelers go, through the old Luther Seminary “lower campus,” past new apartment buildings and multi-family homes, until we arrive at the entrance to Breck Woods.

Now, in the year 2046, a trail marker stands here with a map showing paths that now connect



A redesigned path through Breck Woods and the Trolley Trail — here imagined as the Bridal Veil Trail — could help connect neighbors in St. Paul, Lauderdale and Falcon Heights with each other and the natural world. Art by Allie Rykken.

the St. Paul, Lauderdale and Falcon Heights communities.

As we follow the trail into the woods, the light dims beneath

a dark green canopy. We have walked these woods before, but our footing is surer now. The path has been redesigned to be more accessible for all.

The trail opens into a clearing,

where we come upon a class of preschoolers gathering sticks for a small campfire outside a yurt. A yurt in the woods? A preschool campfire? Impossible, you say!

Listen, I'm just a time traveler, reporting what we saw. And of all the futures we could have visited, this one held a yurt, a campfire and a group of children overflowing with excitement, joy and awe.

In 2046, these woods have become a living classroom—not just for preschoolers, but for people of all ages. Back up the hill, one building hosts a free little explorer's library. A shared closet holds mud boots of every size, binoculars, bug spray, and other gear available for anyone to borrow. Nearby is a shed full of tools for community groups caring for the woods.

As we continue walking and step onto the old Trolley Trail (singing “It's a beautiful day in the neighbor-wood!”), signs of that care are everywhere. Former stands of buckthorn have been replaced with a native understory that shelters migrating birds. Young trees

are taking root—recruits ready to grow tall when the old canopy trees someday fall.

Finally, we take the tunnel under Larpenteur Avenue and emerge near the new development on the former golf course, just as the sun begins to set.

In 2046, and the years preceding, life isn't all butterflies, bicycles and yurts. This community has weathered waves of crises. For those of us non-billionaires, the lived economy has swung worse and worse again. These years saw droughts, floods, heat waves, wildfires, and the continued unraveling of the ecological web.

Meanwhile the foundations of the institutions we once took for granted have continued to crack.

The redevelopment of the old Luther Seminary campus did not solve any of these challenges. Not even close. And yet, while the challenges we face become more daunting and urgent, the little things we *do* have agency over still matter.

The way in which this land is redeveloped matters. Through it we can reinforce existing patterns of isolation and fracture, or we can gather the community's energy toward restoration and reciprocity, strengthening the fabric and resilience of community through shared belonging and collective care. ■

Eliza L. Swedenborg is a board member of Friends of Breck Woods and a member of Transition Town—All St. Anthony Park.



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EVENTS AND MORE

Compiled by Kathy Henderson

St. Anthony Park Garden Club

Guest speaker Abby Fenton, naturalist and seed librarian, presents "Winter Sowing," the value and ease of growing native plants from seed, as part of this hands-on winter seed sowing workshop.

Business meeting 6:30 p.m.; refreshments 7 p.m.; and program 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3, at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Ave. Enter from the Como Avenue front door.

boréal Art Loft

"Postcards from the Future" and other works by Allie Rykken runs March 2-29 in the Art Loft at boréal Gifts and Goods, 2276 Como Ave. Opening reception is scheduled from 2 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, March 15. This interactive exhibit brings to life community visions for the future of Luther Seminary's campus and beyond.

Community Art Show

Annual juried art show continues through April 4 at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Undercroft Gallery, 2136 Carter Ave. Viewing during regular office hours from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays and from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Sundays.

Larson Gallery

"Beyond the Bounds" continues through April 10 at Paul Whitney Larson Art Gallery, 2017 Buford Ave., lower level, Student Center, University of Minnesota, St. Paul campus. Gallery hours: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays; Thursdays to 6 p.m. Closed during spring break, March 7-15. Virtual viewing at storymaps.arcgis.com/stories.

Women's Drum Center

Drum Basics Camp, a four-part drum series for women ages 16 and older, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, March 18 and 25 and April 1 and 8, at 2242 University Ave. W. Drums are provided. \$60. Registration required at womensdrumcenter.org.

Community sing

Join pianist, accordionist, storyteller and vocalist Dan Chouinard and singer-songwriter Ann Reed for a free community sing-along

at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 16, at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 2136 Carter Ave.

Schubert Club

Music in the Park features Baroque chamber music by Le Consort at 4 p.m. on Sunday, March 15, at Saint Anthony Park United Church of Christ, 2129 Commonwealth Ave. \$36-\$25. <https://schubert.org/event/le-consort/>.

Bell Museum

2088 Larpenteur Ave. W., Falcon Heights. See website for regular museum hours, planetarium schedule, admission charges and registration: Bellmuseum.umn.edu.

Pi Day

Celebrate mathematics fun by decorating a link to add to the Bell's Pi Day chain that started in 2019. Let the first three significant figures of pi (3, 1 and 4), the circumference of a circle, inspire arithmetic art, pi-ku (a poem with 3 syllables; 1 syllable; 4 syllables), or a phrase in Pilish (the number of syllables match the digits of pi). 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 11; Thursday, March 12; Friday, March 13; Saturday, March 14; and Sunday, March 15, in Horizon Hall. March 14 is the birthday of renowned theoretical physicist Albert Einstein.

Sketch-in at the Bell

Bring your art materials and sketch in the Touch and See Lab and at the wildlife dioramas from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 12. Registration required.

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory

Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily at Marjorie McNeely Conservatory, 1225 Estabrook Drive. Free. A voluntary donation of \$4 per adult and \$2 per child is appreciated. comozooconservatory.org.

Orchard Odyssey

An adult program that includes viewing of rare and stunning orchids in the greenhouse and insider tips from an expert horticulturist on how to keep orchids thriving. 8:30 to 10 a.m. on Sunday, March 1, and from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18. \$50. Registration required.

Winter flower show: continues through March 15. This year's show highlights shades of orchid purple, pink and blue with lime green accents.

Spring flower show: opens March 20 for two sessions: March 20 to April 26 and from May 1 to June 7.

Senior strolls: 9 to 10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 10, and from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24. Special time reserved for adults ages 55 and older.

Red Cross Blood Drive: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4. Register for a timeslot. Schedule online or call 1-800-RED CROSS.

Urban Expedition

Dakota Homeland: 1 to 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 1, at Landmark Center, 75 Fifth St. W. Free.

St. Patrick's Day Festivities

Celtic Junction Arts Center 836 Prior Ave.

Kickin' It Irish: Show-style step dance and live music featuring Dublin native and original Riverdance cast member Cormac O'Sé and the O'Shea Irish dancers accompanied by an international six-piece band. 7 p.m. on Fridays, March 6 and 13; 6 p.m. on Saturday, March 7, Sunday, March 15, and Tuesday, March 17; and 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 7, Sunday, March 15, and Tuesday, March 17. Advance tickets recommended: \$30-\$25; free youth admission for 1 p.m. matinee performances.

St. Patrick's Day Parade

Noon on Tuesday, March 17, Mears Park to Rice Park along Fifth Street in downtown St. Paul. stpatismn.org/parade.

Landmark Center

75 Fifth St. W.

Day of Irish Dance: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, March 15. Irish dance performances and competition teams. \$9-\$7.

St. Patrick's Day Celebration: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17. Traditional Irish music and dancing, Irish Marketplace and Irish and American food and drinks. Children's craft. \$9-\$7.

The St. Patrick's events at Land-

mark Center are produced by Irish Arts Minnesota (IAM) in partnership with the Landmark Center.

Easter Activities

Easter Bunnies: Children's Easter-related activities and crafts. Meet the bunnies, go on an Easter egg hunt and dye some eggs from 10:30 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March 21, at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 2136 Carter Ave.

Senior activities

The St. Anthony Park Area Seniors offers a mix of in-person and virtual activities during March. Unless another location is listed, activities take place at Centennial United Methodist Church, 2200 Hillside Ave. W. Unless specified, registration is not necessary. Office phone number: 651-642-9052. Email: sc@sapaseniors.org.

In person activities include:

SAIL: Stay Active and Independent for Life: A fitness class for balance, strength and flexibility. 10 to 11 a.m. on Mondays, March 2, 9, 16 and 23 and on Wednesdays, March 4, 11, 18 and 25. Call the office or email to register.

Pound Fit: Full-body movements with drumsticks set to music. 10 to 11 a.m. on Tuesdays, March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31. Limited class size. Call the office or email to register.

OARS: Older Adult Resource Series: Setting up an estate plan and reviewing essential documents

(will, power of attorney, health care directive). 10 to 11 a.m. on Thursday, March 5. Contact office for more information.

Game day: Coffee and board games. 10 to 11:45 a.m. on Friday, March 6.

Card making workshop: 9:30 to 11 a.m. on Thursday, March 12. Supplies are provided. Space is limited. Call the office or email to register.

Handiwork group: 10 a.m. to noon on Thursday, March 12, at St. Anthony Park Library, 2245 Como Ave. Bring your own supplies and drop in to socialize with your neighbors.

Equal Portions: Noon to 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 19, at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 2136 Carter Ave. Catered luncheon and presentation, \$15. Register by Wednesday, March 11. Call the office or email to register.

Poetry group: 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Friday, March 20.

Virtual:

Call the office or email for Zoom link.

Chair yoga: 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Fridays, March 20 and 27. Space is limited.

Lunch bunch: Noon to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 25. Socializing and bingo. ■

Kathy Henderson lives in St. Paul and is a freelance writer for the Bugle.



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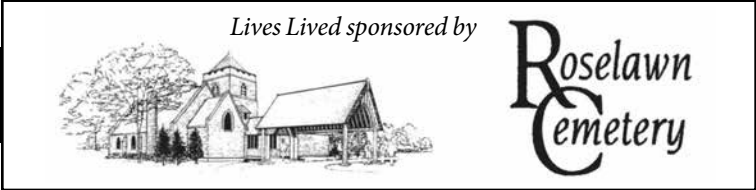
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LIVES LIVED

The Park Bugle prints obituaries free of charge, on a space available basis, as a service to our communities. Send information about area deaths to Mary Mergenthal at mary.mergenthal@gmail.com or call 612-670-8510.



Donald Ausemus

Donald Keith Ausemus, 95, of St. Anthony, died Feb. 4, 2026, in Arden Hills. Don was born in Minneapolis to Dr. Elmer Ausemus and Wincel Crocker Ausemus.

After graduating from Murray High School, Don earned a bachelor's degree from Utah State University and a master's degree from Macalester College. Don served as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force from 1952 until 1955.

After his service discharge, Don began a 40-year career with the St. Paul Public Schools, working first as a teacher and later as a secondary school principal.

Before joining Faith United Methodist Church in St. Anthony, Don was a longtime member of the St. Anthony Park United Methodist Church. Don was an active member of the NE Metro Golden K Kiwanis Club, tutoring elementary students for 20 years, helping at the Roseville Keystone Food Shelf, as well as volunteering with Meals on Wheels. His lifetime passion was fly fishing for trout.

Don was preceded in death by his parents and daughters, Suzanne Welstad and Dawn Furse. He is survived by his wife Nancy Nielsen and daughter Kim Funk of Louisville, Kentucky, nine grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

Memorials can be given to NE Metro Golden K Kiwanis, 2661

Civic Center Drive, Roseville, MN 55113 or to the donor's charity of choice.

Donna Hofmeister

Donna M. Hofmeister, 97, Roseville, died Jan. 24, 2026. She was preceded in death by parents, George & Viola (Matson) Thill; husbands, Clifford Greene and Edward Hofmeister; son Thomas Greene; two great-grandchildren; and siblings, Geraldine Kohnen and George Thill, Jr.

Donna is survived by children, Janet (Douglas) Fairbanks, Ron Greene (Deb Denison), 10 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at the Church of the Holy Childhood, with interment at Calvary Cemetery.

James Jernberg

James Everett Jernberg, 94, Falcon Heights, died Dec. 30, 2025. Jim was born Nov. 10, 1931, in Duluth, the only child of Bert and Anna Jernberg.

James grew up during the Great Depression and World War II in a close-knit community of hard-working first-generation immigrant families.

After graduating from Denfeld High School, Jim attended the University of Minnesota-Duluth (UMD), sitting next to Sally Johnson in one of his first classes as a freshman. Thus, began a love story

for the ages. Midway through freshman year Jim put his education on hold to enlist in the Air Force, serving during the Korean War.

During Jim's first military leave he and Sally went on their first date. During his second they became engaged, and during his third they married. The couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2004, just months before Sally's death.

After discharge from the Air Force, Jim completed his bachelor's (Economics, UMD) and master's degrees (Public Affairs, U of M-Twin Cities) and earned his doctorate in Political Science at U of Wisconsin-Madison.

Jim spent his career at the U of M's Humphrey School of Public Affairs, where he was a respected colleague, beloved professor, Director of Graduate Studies, and associate dean. Jim was an advisor and mentor to hundreds of students over the years.

Jim and Sally's home was for decades the gathering spot for his graduate students and alumni, as recently as his 94th birthday.

Jim was also deeply connected to his Catholic faith community at St. Frances Cabrini. During his decades as a parishioner, Jim served as church council member, finance committee chair, mass coordinator, liturgical reader and fundraiser, among other roles. Jim also treasured his neighbors and the neighborhood he had called home for more than 60 years.

Jim was an avid golfer, a sports enthusiast and an arts supporter. Jim and Sally loved to travel, with their most favorite place the family island on Rainy Lake, at the Minnesota/Ontario border.

Known for his extraordinary memory, Jim had a story about everything and everyone. An eloquent and elegant wordsmith, he was a prolific writer and an engaging speaker.

Jim was a fierce advocate for human rights and social justice. He lived a life of integrity, generosity, kindness and humility. His deep love for people and his ability to both see the best and bring out the best in others will be his legacy.

Jim is survived by daughter Nancy of Falcon Heights, son Jim (Teresa) of Osakis, and son John (Theresa) of Roseville; seven grandchildren; two great-granddaughters; and dear friend Jody Hauer.

Mass of Christian Burial has been celebrated at the Church of St. Frances Cabrini, Minneapolis.

Memorial gifts may be directed to the church; the UMD Sally B. & James E. Jernberg Reaching Higher Scholarship, z.umn.edu/UMD_JernbergReachingHigherScholarship; or to either the Jim Jernberg Award Fund (dedicated to improving students' lives) or the James E. Jernberg Fellowship at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, 301 19th Ave S, Suite 300, Minneapolis, MN. 55455.

William C. Reeves III

William C. Reeves III, 76, St. Peter, formerly of Falcon Heights, died Jan. 12, 2026. He was a graduate of Alexander Ramsey High School.

William was preceded in death by his parents William and Jean; brothers Denny and Craig; and grandparents William and Marge Reeves. He is survived by brother Terry Reeves (Brenda), sister Meg, and his long-time friend Bruce.

Thomas Zwiener

Thomas Zwiener, 95, died Jan. 5, 2026. Tom was born in Ortonville, Minnesota, in 1930 to Chester and Naomi Zwiener.

A 1948 graduate of St. Paul Murray High School, Tom was an all-city athlete in football, baseball, hockey and basketball.

He graduated in 1955 from Gustavus Adolphus College, where he

was an All-American quarterback for several championship teams and was inducted into the school's Athletic Hall of Fame. Tom's college studies were interrupted for two years as he served his country in the U.S. Army during the Korean War.

In 1957, he married Lynn Wagener. Tom worked in insurance in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, and won several club championships in golf there.

Tom and Lynn moved to Falcon Heights in the early 1960s. Tom blessed his family and all of those around him with a kind heart, warm smile, and wonderful sense of humor.

He was preceded in death by his parents and brothers Charles "Chi" and William "Billy." Tom is survived by his wife of 68 years, Lynn; sons Wade and Steve (Olga); daughter Betsy (Tom) Cogdall; four grandchildren; and a great-grandson.

Memorials preferred to Alzheimer's Association. ■

There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They are messengers of overwhelming grief and unspeakable love.

— Washington Irving —

World Day of Prayer

The local observance of World Day of Prayer will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, March 6 at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Ave. There is no charge and all are welcome.

World Day of Prayer, a service dating back to the 19th century, is

held annually around the world on the first Friday in March.

Each year, Christian women from a different country write the service. This year, it has been prepared by the women of Nigeria. The theme for 2026 is "I will give you rest: Come." Matthew 11:28-30. ■

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- ❖ **ST. ANTHONY PARK LUTHERAN CHURCH**
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Web, Facebook and Instagram: [SAPLC](https://www.facebook.com/SAPLC)
Live stream on YouTube Channel: bit.ly/3nWjlDD
Sunday worship in-person: 9:30 AM
Wednesday Dinner Church: 5:30-7 PM
Music School, all-ages, Wed. evenings: [saplc.org/Music](https://www.sapl.org/Music)
- ❖ **ST. ANTHONY PARK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**
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Wednesday Eucharist 12:00 NOON followed by lunch
Contemplative worship 5:00 PM, 1st and 3rd Sundays

To add your place of worship to the directory, contact Roald Sateren at 651-468-4040 or roald.sateren@parkbugle.org

Classifieds

Send your ad to classifieds@parkbugle.org or P.O. Box 8126, St. Paul, MN 55108. Ads are \$1.15 per word. Phone numbers, email addresses and websites are considered two words. Add a box or art for \$11 each. Next deadline: Mar. 11, 2026.



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Cat rescue from p. 1

Robinson agreed. “When I saw the kittens huddled up at the bottom of a window while snow was piling up around them, getting them safe and warm became my only priority,” he said.

Although the couple no longer fosters cats due to having young children at home, they are still passionate about cats and cat rescue. Currently, they have two rescue cats, Piper and Lenny, at home.

Meanwhile, another St. Anthony Park resident found and trapped the mother cat and took her to Pet Haven too, where they named her Momma SuzyQ. She was happily reunited with her surviving kittens, which by then had been named Milton, Maxine and Willy.

Kerry D’Amato, executive director of Pet Haven, said the surviving kittens were six or seven weeks old and in poor health when they arrived. She bottle fed them for one day before SuzyQ rejoined her brood.

“We were able to reunite mom a couple days after bringing the kittens into care. She was so happy to see them and they burrowed into her with loud purrs,” D’Amato said.

After the veterinary staff at Pet Haven cared for the kittens, feline foster parents Jada and Dan Fehn took the family home in late November.

Jada Fehn detailed the various veterinary services that were provided at Pet Haven: spaying/neutering, enucleation (due to Willy’s severe upper respiratory infection), vaccinations, medical tests and the implantation of microchips. “At Pet Haven, many people contributed to keep the little family healthy and happy,” she said.

“My husband and I consider cat rescue our life purpose. We usually have multiple foster cats and we are completing multiple community cat projects at any given time,” Jada said. “I have cared for hundreds of cats and kittens in my rescue work,” she added.

Debbie Smith, another concerned neighbor, coordinated a volunteer effort to deliver fliers and participate in nighttime searches for the mother cat. She also received texts and phone calls from residents with the mother cat’s location which enabled her to develop tracking data.

Additionally, a GoFundMe effort was established which raised \$1,100. These funds were used to

reimburse volunteers for veterinary services as well as to provide a generous donation to Pet Haven to offset the spaying/neutering charges.

SuzyQ and her kittens remained with the Fehns until late January when they were all adopted. SuzyQ and Milton were adopted together and Maxine and Willy were adopted together, providing a storybook ending to this tale of collaboration and compassion. ■

Janet Wight is a regular freelance writer for the Bugle.

Bugle deadlines

Here are our Bugle deadlines for the next three issues. We appreciate when writers and readers submit articles early.

Please note that publication dates reflect when papers go out for delivery; mail delivery may take several business days.

Bulk drop-offs of the paper are usually completed two to three days after publication.

Story guidelines

Want to send an article to the Bugle for print consideration?

Send your submission to editor@parkbugle.org. Your article, story or letter should be sent in Times New Roman, 16-point

font. Articles are subject to space availability.

Please include your name and phone number in case we have any questions on your submission. Thank you.

April: Senior Living
Copy/ad deadline: March 11
Publication: March 24

May: Home & Garden Guide
Copy/ad deadline: April 8
Publication: April 21

June: SAP Arts Festival
Copy/ad deadline: May 13
Publication: May 26

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LIBRARY CORNER

Library Corner
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Celebrating all things round and beautiful

By Rita LaDoux

Much around St. Anthony Park is under stress right now, so the St. Anthony Park Branch Library Association (SAPBLA) is offering a short rolling off-ramp for neighbors to join together and to celebrate all things round and beautiful — pies on PI Day!

Spicing up the event this year,

we're folding in a Junior Division pie contest for participants under age 18, in addition to our adult Savory and Sweet divisions.

The annual event will be held at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Ave., from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 14 (3.14). Bring your sweet or savory pie to the Luther Place side door by 1 p.m. in order for it to be judged.

Then come back at 2 p.m. to share in the delicious fun.

This spirited family event was started two years ago and offers a great chance to gather 'round the table with family and friends — old and new.

Our crusty judge will be rolling out ribbons for the winning pies based on the same criteria as our neighbor, the Minnesota State

Fair: appearance, texture, flavor/and aroma. Attendees will top off this sweet event with a vote for Best in Show.

This is a family friendly event. There will be crafts and activities for children. No judging there! We as a community believe in fostering love of pie in our young people — so please bring them!

Come and join the community

conversation with the St. Anthony Park Branch Library Association — while enjoying a cup of coffee or tea and a slice of pie.

And share a round of applause for the winning pies — and pie bakers too! ■

Rita LaDoux is chairperson of the St. Anthony Park Branch Library Association.

St. Anthony Park Library events

Compiled by Kathy Henderson

You'll find familiar favorites and ongoing programs on the March calendar at the St. Anthony Park Library, 2245 Como Ave. Unless specified, registration is not necessary.

Family storytime

10:15 to 10:45 a.m., repeated from 11:15 to 11:45 a.m. on Tuesdays, March 3, 10, 17 and 24.

Stories, songs, rhymes and puppets in the library's auditorium for children ages 5 and younger, their caregivers and siblings.

Teen Crochet Corner

4:30 to 5 p.m. on Thursdays, March 5, 12, 19 and 26.

Hands on lessons to make anything crochet related. No prior knowledge needed. Supplies provided.

Show and tell

6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 11.

Bring a special or meaningful item to the library and share its story with others. All ages welcome.

Handiwork at your library

10 a.m. to noon on Thursday, March 12.

Drop-in session co-hosted by St. Anthony Park Area Seniors. Bring your own supplies and knit, crochet, embroider and socialize with your neighbors

Paw Pals: Read with Enzo

10:15 to 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 14.

Youth ages 5-12 can read to Enzo, a friendly dog who loves to sit and listen to stories. Register in advance for a single 15-minute reading session by calling the library at 651-642-0411 or by email: SaintAnthonyPark@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Shake your sillies out!

Playtime from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Saturdays, March 14 and 21 and April 4.

An early childhood playtime for children ages 5 and younger that includes stories, stretching and movement.

Financial literacy at your library!

2 to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18.

Co-hosted by the SAP Library and Sunrise Banks, the program's topic is available at the library or at a Sunrise Bank.

St. Anthony Park Library Book Club

6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 23.

Join us in the lower-level auditorium for conversation and refreshments. Call the library at 651-642-0411 to find out the March book selection.

Crafting Teens

4 to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24.

Teens ages 12-18 are welcome to drop in, hang out and create. There will be new crafting fun every week.

Changing Times Book Group

3 to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 28.

"Worldly Things," poems by Michael Kleber-Diggs. Explore how poetry can serve as a vehicle for change and a deeper understanding of social justice.

Kleber-Diggs will read some of his poems and lead a discussion

and Q&A around his journey as a poet and his work with the Minnesota Prison Writers Workshop.

St. Anthony Park Branch Library Association

Pi Day Celebration

2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 14, at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Ave. The St. Anthony Park Library Association's annual open meeting, including an informal pie-judging contest and eating of all things round.

2026 Book Sale Fundraiser

Donations of new and gently used books will begin being accepted in April for the book sale scheduled for Friday, June 5, and Saturday, June 6. Details: sapbla.org/calendar/booksale2026. ■

Compiled from the library website by Kathy Henderson.



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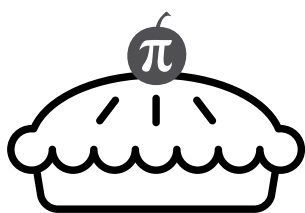
Open Mondays-Saturdays 10:00 am-5:00 pm and Sundays 12:00 pm-5:00 pm



PI DAY CELEBRATION

Saturday 3.14 (March 14) • 2 - 4 PM

St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church
2323 Como Ave (Luther Place entrance)



Join the St. Anthony Park Branch Library Association for the annual Pi Day Contest and gathering!

- Pie (sweet and savory entries are welcome)
- New Junior's Division (under age 18)
- Beverages provided
- Family Friendly
- Learn more about SAPBLA

For more information visit www.sapbla.org

Dental care from p. 8

the typical awkward postures that teeth cleaning requires, hygienists using this loupe sit up straight and appear to be looking into space (in contrast to leaning over and looking directly into a patient's mouth). It's about quality patient care and career longevity, as its use reduces the strain on the hygienist's back and neck.

Two-way benefits

Dr. Joe credited Dr. David Opack for championing the technological advance of digital X-rays at their clinic. While the clinical team's focus is on the detailed information provided on teeth, gums and bones, patients appreciate its vivid and easily seen outcomes.

"Patients can clearly see what we see," Dr. Joe said. They no longer need to struggle to figure out what's being interpreted based on the small, hard-to-decipher black-and-white images of the past.

Cavity, heal thyself

Have you ever heard the expression "watch-area," as an alert for potential cavity development? Dentist clinics of today can do more than just wait and track.

Dr. Joe is excited about Curodont, a brush-applied gel product that originated from the Swiss company vVARDIS, becoming available in the United State only in late 2024.

"Cavities start as a small hole," Dr. Joe said. "If it is caught early

enough, a tiny crack detected by AI analysis, for example, we can etch the area and apply a solution of Curodont. No drilling"

A cavity repaired without drilling? This sounds like something out of TV's "Jetsons."

It gets even more futuristic when Dr. Joe explained that "Curodont attracts minerals (calcium and phosphate) from a person's own saliva to arrest a cavity's progression and rebuild the tooth enamel."

It's also low-risk. "Research," he adds, "shows a 90 % success rating and there are no side effects with reasonably good follow-up home care."

If the Curodont procedure fails, a traditional cavity filling process is the fallback.

The University of Minnesota's School of Dentistry website highlights that it is leading the way with digital dentistry throughout its curriculum and in its Continuing Dental Education and mini-residency offerings. AI supports students' work both in simulation and clinical environments. ■

Kathy Henderson lives in St. Paul and is a regular writer for the Bugle.

Chris Deming



Spring is here!

Let's connect on the opportunities this market has to offer.

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MINNESOTA NATIVE PLANT OF THE MONTH: Skunk Cabbage

By Dave Crawford

Common Name:
Eastern skunk cabbage, clumpfoot cabbage, meadow cabbage, polecat weed, and foetid pathos

Scientific Name:
Symplocarpus foetidus

Dakota Name:
Wahpe İniyan
 (wahpe means leaf, iniyān means to have one's mouth inflamed)



This photo shows eastern skunk cabbage during the growing season in the metro area. It is one of the first blooming plants of our Minnesota spring. *Photo by Dave Crawford.*

Why would we want to highlight a plant that smells like a skunk or carrion, can irritate your skin if handled, and can be toxic if ingested? Why go so far as to suggest it could make a beautiful addition to your (very) wet woodland or wetland garden?

Skunk cabbage is exceptionally strange. It's the first wildflower to bloom in spring, but few people notice it. It generates its own heat. It quickly informs you that you've made a mistake if you try to eat it raw. It smells disagreeable to most people. It has conspicuously large leaves for a plant native to our climate.

Early blooming

March is not generally a favorable month for viewing wildflowers in these parts. Skunk cabbage doesn't

care. The flower is at ground level, mahogany-colored, pointy hood, 3 to 6 inches tall, with pale mottling, well camouflaged, growing best where spring water oozes to the surface. Leaves don't appear until later.

The hood hides a 1 to 2 inch tall, egg-shaped cluster of densely-packed flowers. These flowers will develop into seed heads whose seeds will drop in late summer and early fall to grow and form skunk cabbage plant communities nearby. You can see this in the photo.

Heat generation

Skunk cabbage blossoms counteract March cold by heating themselves up. They easily melt the snow

above and around them. Guinness World Records grants them first place among heat-generating plants. They can raise their temperature by 78° degrees Fahrenheit under field conditions. The heat helps disperse scent, which attracts cold-hardy insects like flies to the comfortably warm flowers, where pollination can occur.

Do not eat!

Although the leaves and underground stem of skunk cabbage could be eaten after being properly boiled or dried, eating the plant raw causes immediate burning in the mouth and throat. The plant contains concentrated, needle-

like calcium oxalate crystals that strongly irritate animal tissue and can cause death in large doses.

For our indigenous communities who have an ancestral relationship with this and many other plants historically found in Minnesota, skunk cabbage has sacred and medicinal uses.

The smell of skunk cabbage has been compared to skunk scent, rotting meat or "fresh cabbage with a slight suggestion of mustard."

Leaves emerge after the flower, and can grow up to 2 feet long on their 1-foot stems. They're bright green and highly conspicuous.

Although there are other species of skunk cabbage in North America, Minnesota is the westernmost part of the range for Eastern skunk cabbage, which can be found from Nova Scotia to North Carolina in the east. In Tennessee, it is considered an endangered species.

Growing skunk cabbage in a

home garden requires deep, organically rich soil that stays constantly wet and is shaded in the summer. Plants are only available from specialized nurseries — taking plant material from public lands is illegal. Furthermore, collecting plants from the wild is extremely damaging to their habitat, especially since they have deep, tangled roots and grow in wet, heavy mud. An eastern skunk cabbage can live up to 200 years.

Better yet, go searching for it in our local parks this late winter to early spring. Parks that have seepage areas at the bottom of rocky cliffs or steep slopes are worth checking, or visit the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden in Theodore Wirth Park, where skunk cabbage can be viewed from maintained trails. ■

Dave Crawford is a retired Minnesota state park naturalist.

Bill Skon from p. 9

The most common ailments that Skon treats are neck and shoulder tightness as well as headaches. Skon understands these to be the effects of hours spent working at desks and computers.

Also, many of Skon's patients are victims of car accidents.

"Many are in rough shape and it's really fun to take them from not being able to do anything to getting them back to their functional life — which takes time, months or years even. But that's what makes it great to do this kind of work. It's quite amazing."

Skon is also a certified medical examiner, which enables him to provide truck and trailer drivers their required Minnesota Department of Transportation physicals. That helps to stabilize his business, he said.

Skon uses many different kinds of therapies in his practice, including ultrasound, electrical stimulation, a hot water jet table and physical therapy modalities. If a

patient needs more expansive care, Skon is well connected to orthopedics, neurologists, and nearby massage therapists — very, very nearby, actually.

"Soul Logic is right next door and they're great," Skon said. "They offer massage and acupuncture. I really like having someone right across the hall that we can refer people to for massage."

Asked if the current federal immigration raids in the local area have affected his business, Skon said, "My practice has been a little slower in the last month — not like during Covid — but enough for me to wonder how much people are shutting down."

And Skon's conversations with patients have taken a new tone,

"Now I just apologize to everyone for what they're going through. If someone comes from a country in rough shape, like Ukraine, I reach out to them and say, 'It's so sad to hear about what's going on in your country.'"

"We are now sad to hear about what's going on in Minneapolis. Who would have ever thought?" Skon lamented. "I mean, people who have been here a long time, residents with passports, are afraid to go outside because of how they look. It's impacting people's lives and their bodies."

When Skon isn't busy using his skills to bring comfort to people, he enjoys spending time with his three kids and six grandkids (and has an impressive coaching history, having coached basketball and soccer teams for all three of his kids). He is an avid bicyclist, averaging approximately 2,500 miles a year, and golfer.

He and his wife also enjoy traveling, particularly to Europe and Florida's Sanibel Island. ■

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

City Files from p. 3

still ongoing. The group will next focus on future conversations related to the Upper Campus area.

Committee meeting dates

SAPCC encourages neighbors to attend committee meetings, which are held both in-person and online each month. Learn more about meetings and how to get involved at sapcc.org.

March 2026:

- **Land Use Committee:**
7 p.m. on Thursday, Mar. 5

- **District 12 board:**
7 p.m. on Thursday, Mar. 12
- **Environment Committee:**
6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Mar. 25
- **Equity Committee:**
6:30 p.m. on Monday, Mar. 30
- **Transportation Committee:**
7 p.m. on Tuesday, Mar. 31

Submitted by Zev Radziwill, executive director of District 12 Community Council

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Class of 2026 Thielen Scholarship winners

By Eric Erickson
Sports analysis

Como Park High School entered its third year of partnership with the Thielen Foundation by celebrating five seniors and the scholarships they earned.

The foundation, established by former Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Adam Thielen and his wife Caitlin, awarded \$1,000 scholarships to each standout senior to assist with their future studies.

Since its inception in 2018, the foundation has donated over \$4.4 million in support of its mission to empower youth in achieving their potential. The Thielens began making a difference at Como in 2024 with the donation of a brand-new weight room.

Collectively, the foundation is providing over 50 scholarships for students in their partnering schools throughout Minnesota this year. Students are nominated by their coaches, teachers and school staff because of their leadership in school and sports achievements.

Here's the Como class of 2026 Thielen Scholarship recipients:

Jonas Tetevi is president of the Como Student Council, was captain for the football team and is also captain for the boys basketball team. His positive attitude toward everybody at Como, and encouragement of everyone he encounters, are character traits that cross over into the community and his work with the St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department.

Jonas has a 2.8 grade point average and has challenged himself with several college-level courses. As a student athlete, Jonas was voted the best running back in St. Paul by the city conference coaches last fall. He was also a two-time team MVP and all-district selection.

Remarkably, all of Tetevi's football honors came after breaking his foot during the first game of sophomore year, forcing him to miss an entire year of athletics. Jonas stayed positive through rehabilitation and competes without complaint despite lingering effects from the injury.



Student council president and basketball captain Jonas Tetevi accepts a Thielen Scholarship with family members during halftime of a game at Como. Photo by Koua Yang.

Robin Engman-Phiri is vice-president of Como's Student Council. She has led projects throughout the last two years that promote student activities, fundraisers and outreach to the greater Como Community. Robin has a 4.0 weighted GPA and is an excellent communicator in the classroom.

Robin played JV girls basketball for three years, and varsity golf and soccer for four years. In soccer, she was a two-time all-conference honorable mention and team captain for the Cougars as a senior.

In golf, she's been honorable

mention once, all-conference twice, and will be team captain again this spring. Her coach notes that Robin is everybody's favorite golfer to play with in the city conference because of her positive and welcoming attitude.

Hattie Miller has a weighted GPA of 4.39 and is an AP Scholar. She is the president of Como Park's Future Farmers of America (FFA) and has volunteered at the State Fair's Miracle of Birth Center. Hattie also volunteers as a reading buddy to students at Como Park Elementary

School, serves on student council, and is a member of the jazz band, concert band, pep band and choir.

As a swimmer, Hattie was a two-year captain for the Cougars, earning honorable mention in 2024 and all-conference in 2025. She's a school record holder as part of the 400-relay team and was voted hardest worker by teammates two years in a row.

Her coach says, "Hattie understands leadership and seeks to acknowledge, include, and support all of her teammates."

Niko Solheid has a weighted GPA of 4.65 and already takes several classes at the University of Minnesota as a PSEO (post-secondary enrollment option) student. She is also in Advanced Placement and College in the Schools courses at Como, earning AP Scholar recognition for passing several national exams.

As a student-athlete, Niko has played badminton throughout high school, helping Como to a third-place finish at state in 2025. In volleyball, she was a two-year captain, leading the team in assists. Her coach describes Niko as a "calm and steady leader who used her volleyball IQ to make others better, consistent with energy, attitude and effort."

Blessed Htoo is a leader at Como and in the Karen community. He leads by example, bringing a calming, peaceful presence into every environment he enters. In the classroom, Blessed has a GPA of 2.93 and has improved his academic skills throughout high school.

As a student-athlete, Blessed guided the Como boys soccer team to the state final last fall. A team captain who led the Cougars in scoring with 15 goals, Blessed's leadership was essential and his conduct was impeccable, helping everyone focus and manage emotions, according to his coaches. Blessed is also a varsity volleyball player. ■

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

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