President’s Message
It is with much pleasure I am reporting the progress of two major renovation projects in Loring Park.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board approved a contract with DeLaSalle High School to reconstruct the four tennis courts. DeLaSalle made an agreement with the Park Board to construct tennis courts in a Minneapolis Park in exchange for the tennis courts removed from Nicollet Island for the newly constructed football field near the school. Park Board planning staff hopes to put together a schedule to complete construction of the courts this year. Friends of Loring Park will continue to campaign for the addition of three pickle ball courts, a waiting garden area and a drinking fountain.

The second project progressing is the reconstruction of the playground areas. The Park Board has held the public meeting on the proposed design. The final design will be approved by the Park Board soon, and construction should proceed for this year’s construction season. To see the design of the playground go to the Park Board website.

Finally, the Berger Fountain Committee which has been in hiatus during the pandemic has been reactivated by Chair Mary Bujold and will get on track to move this project along. There is incentive to get going on the project: at Thomas Lowry Park, three blocks away from Loring, reconstruction of the 100-year old Seven Pools (essentially a fountain) has begun. This project was planned and funds raised by the neighborhood in conjunction with the Park Board. Hopefully the Berger Fountain will proceed in a similar way. Additionally, we are advocating that the old fountain will be turned on this year.

The Art Fair is scheduled for Saturday July 31 and August 1, 2021 and there is discussion about a Pride Event and Hollidazzle occurring in some form or other this year. Stay tuned for updates.

Thanks for your support of Loring Park. Stay positive and test negative.

—David Hile, Board President
Friends of Loring Park

What’s Up (or Down) With Loring’s Lake Levels?
We’ve been getting questions about Loring Park’s low lake levels. Rachael Crabb, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) Water Resources Supervisor, has the story.

Why is Loring Pond so low? Two reasons. The first is that the pond loses water quickly. It is likely “perched” above the level of groundwater in the vicinity. That means, in general, that water in the pond will percolate out. It is very likely that in the past, before the neighborhood was developed, before streets were put in, and before Bassett Creek was put in a tunnel, the level of groundwater and the level of Loring pond was higher than what we see today.

From about 2014-2019, our region had the wettest period it has experienced since modern record keeping began. For Loring, this was a good thing, because it made it easier to keep the lake level up. The second reason: it is just not raining. In 2019 we ended the year with over 12” of extra precipitation. And during that 2014-2019 period, there was so much excess precipitation it was like we had an extra year of normal precipitation during that period. We had some soaking rains this April that kept our average near what is normal for this time of year, but it has been dry since then, and all over our region, the water table is falling back towards normal—which is a tough spot for Loring Park’s water levels.

(Continued on p3)

Welcome to Kate Olender, New Friends Board Member
I recently had the pleasure of a phone chat with new Friends of Loring Park board member, Kate Olender. She not only enjoys working with plants outdoors, but also is an indoor houseplant enthusiast. Kate is originally from Michigan, where she was on the Board of Garden Projects Advisory Committee and taught children about the importance of nutrition to good health. A graduate of Michigan State University, she spent ten years on the East coast before moving with her significant other to Oak Grove Street a few years ago. She was receiving our newsletter and then one day, by chance she stopped to chat with a gentleman named Nick (a Friends board member) who was in the Minneapolis College’s community garden. She had questions about water quality, and before she knew it, she’d been invited to attend a board meeting, and the rest is recent history.

Kate Olender
Kate enjoys the wildlife in our lovely inner-city park. Relaxing on a bench with butterflies, bees and hummingbirds in motion around her brings peace. She describes feeling “linked” to her community when in the park. She recently purchased a microscope and has made of a hobby of studying water samples from the pond. Kate has also taken on updating and re-organizing our data base, helping us to track donors and volunteers. The board is fortunate to have her positive nature and cheerful personality among us. We look forward to getting to know her better. Welcome Kate!

—Bill Tresch, Friends Board Member

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—Bill Tresch, Friends Board Member
Toxins in Nature—Yes, Even in Our City Parks

Contrary to most people’s impression that natural areas and parks are very clean environments, they actually contain many natural chemicals. Thousands of species of microbes and hundreds of species of plants and insects are chemical factories that have evolved over millions of years to produce chemicals to compete with rival species or to repel animals that may eat them. Although many of these chemicals are helpful to human health, many are incredibly potent toxins and they are present everywhere at low concentrations in soil and water.

There are lots of poisonous plants in Loring Park and the surrounding neighborhood. For example, seeds of the native maple tree box elder have hypoglycin A, a toxin that can kill horses, but you can also tap the trees for maple syrup and it is very safe. Cytisine in Kentucky coffee-tree beans is toxic to humans and dogs, however, it is easily destroyed by heat, hence the use of these beans after roasting as a type of ‘coffee’ by Native Americans and European settlers. The toxin is also in honey locust bean pods, but apparently at lower concentrations, since few reports of toxicity to dogs have been reported. Cytisine is used as a drug to help people stop smoking; like most chemicals it can be medicinal at the right dose, but can cause problems at higher doses.

Many plant toxins are concentrated in a certain part of plants, such as seeds, to repel insects that might eat them, while certain animals that disperse their seeds may have resistance to the same toxins via coevolution. For example, scientists hypothesize that woolly mammoths ate both Kentucky coffee-tree and honey locust bean pods, digested the pulp around the seeds (which has cytisine in it) and deposited the seeds far from the mother tree.

Native wildlife species are discriminating as to which plants they will eat or avoid. But domestic animals (and humans) often lack these skills, and will eat toxic plants, hence the problems with dogs, cats, and horses when they eat certain plants. A good example of differential toxicity among species occurs in the very poisonous mushrooms in the genus Amanita. Fungi are incredible chemical factories that create not only nutrients that can improve human health (beta glucan, antioxidants, B vitamins to name just a few), but also kill. Squirrels, however, can detoxify poisonous mushrooms like the destroying angel, the most toxic mushroom known for humans. People see squirrels eat these mushrooms (sometimes they pick and store them high in trees to eat later as dried food), and then falsely assume that they are safe for human consumption. I have seen destroying angels growing in lawns in Minneapolis, although not in Loring Park.

Moving on to bacteria, some of my favorite species are in the genus Clostridium. These bacteria have been of interest to me ever since I heard about them while working on my degree in bacteriology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison 40 years ago. Their toxins are incredibly strong and have killed millions of people in the history of civilization. Clostridium perfringens produces a toxin that kills people by circulating in the bloodstream, even if only a small part of the body is infected, in a disease known as gangrene. Clostridium botulinum produces the botulism toxin, one teaspoon of which is thought capable of killing several million people, by relaxing all muscles so that the victims stop breathing. Clostridium tetani produces a toxin that does the opposite, causing all muscles in the body to contract at once in a disease known as tetanus. All of these toxins are present in low amounts in soils and water almost everywhere on the planet, even in Loring Park, and you are likely breathing in the spores of these bacteria with every breath. Yet few people or animals die from these toxins because the ecosystem processes break them down and keep concentrations at very low levels, and furthermore, they can only grow and produce toxins in the absence of oxygen, and therefore do not grow in healthy people with good oxygen circulation in the bloodstream. They only become problems in rare circumstances such as improperly canned food (botulism), and injuries that become anaerobic due to lack of blood flow (gangrene, tetanus). In nature they become a problem for animals mostly as a result of humans interrupting the natural function of ecosystems, such as producing nutrient pollution that leads to highly eutrophic, stagnant, anaerobic water where these bacteria can grow, sometimes killing thousands of waterfowl. Most ecosystems are balanced among thousands of species that use chemicals to carve out their niche in the environment. Humans have the ability to use these chemicals as drugs or nutritional supplements at certain concentrations, even though some may be toxic at higher concentrations. About half of our prescription drugs originate from natural sources, and many more potentially useful drugs will be found if we don’t destroy the amazing chemical factories that have evolved over hundreds of millions of years in the Earth’s remaining forests, wetlands, aquatic and marine habitats.

—Lee Frelich, Director, University of Minnesota Center for Forest Ecology
Minneapolis College’s Urban Farm Collective News

The second season of fruit and vegetable gardening has begun in the eastern half of the former horseshoe courts in Loring Park. After the Park Board adopted their Community Garden policy in 2019, Minneapolis College donated the raised bed planters that had been used by the college’s Urban Farm Collective student club. The club lost their garden site on campus as part of the land sale and the redevelopment of the H. Alden Smith House. The college club is now allocated space in part of the Loring gardens; the remaining plots are allotted to neighbors who applied and were selected through Park Board’s equity-based criteria.

The MPRB closed the solicitation for this year’s community garden spaces in February. The Urban Farm Collective will again manage the beds in February. The Urban Farm Collective, "Who Knew? The Underground Story of Loring Lake’s Levels” in the Autumn 2020 Friends Newsletter for a detailed explanation of pumping groundwater into Loring Lake.

The pandemic, social unrest, encampments of the unhoused, and economic uncertainties were huge challenges during last summer’s first season, but a regular group of gardeners met each week to weed, harvest, plant more seeds, water and maintain the gardens. The student club members donated surplus food to the college’s food pantry, operated by the student support center. Over twenty gallons of radishes, basil, spinach, mustard greens, cilantro, tomatoes, and peppers as well as 15 pounds of potatoes and squash were donated last year.

This summer, park staff will be hosting programs around gardening and healthy eating, every other Thursday.

—Nicholas Deacon, Friends Board Member

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Lake Levels, con’t from page 1

To counteract low and falling water levels, MPRB has a permit to add up to 12 million gallons of water to Loring pond. The groundwater well is deep enough that we are not taking water from the same aquifer that is near the surface. We parse out the allotment through the year, and have added 2 million gallons so far this spring. We may have to add another million gallons to get the level back up, but adding water now may leave us short in fall.

MPRB’s goal in adding water to Loring pond is to have as little exposed soil as possible to try to prevent cattails from sprouting. We don’t need a lot of water to do this - just a few millimeters, but in dry years it is a balancing act.

—Rachael Crabb

Water Resources Supervisor, MPRB

(Continued from p5)

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<th>TENNIS COURTS</th>
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<td>Annie George &amp; Ryan Waefller, in Memory of Natalie Westreich</td>
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<td>Pamela Canning, pickle ball courts</td>
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<td>Richard Gwynne, Nancy Miller</td>
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<td>Gregory Holmbeck, Nancy Anderson</td>
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<td>Aaron, Ally &amp; Adam Mayer, in Memory of Maggie Mayer</td>
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<td>Leslie Berndtsen, in Memory of Ellyn Hosch</td>
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<td>Fran &amp; Jim Mullin, in Memory of Dr. Jerry Mullin</td>
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<td>Judy Morgan, in Memory of Steve &amp; Sue Morgan</td>
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<td>Helen Swedien, 60 years with Tom Collins &amp; Barbara Cavender</td>
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<td>Teresa Burnett, in Memory of Sally Mayo</td>
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<td>Garrett Fulton, to Garrett &amp; Andrew</td>
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<td>Friends of Loring Park, in Memory of Kerry Dikken, Blasted Art</td>
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<td>Bill Tresch, in Honor of Mable Gullickson</td>
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<td>Ricky Blackmon, in Memory of KURT R. Erickson</td>
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<td>Ricky Blackmon, in Memory of John M. Aas</td>
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<td>Jennifer Olson, “reserved brick Beth Parkhill, John &amp; Mom Together at Last</td>
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<td>Afagh Mohajeri, in Honor of Mary Hile</td>
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<td>Don Rudrud, in Honor of Gardeners Margaret MacRae, in Memory of Roderick MacRae</td>
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<td>Sue Shepard, Cathy Bogolub, Judy Bond, Julie Schultz Brown, Janis Hardy, Louise Matson, Louise MacKay, Martha Palm, Pat Rice, Marie Sathrum, Beverly Topp, Sara Adams Turnbull, Gretchen Vander Weide, Bill Tresch, Pat Davies, and Pat Drake, in Memory of Lee Andrea Holmen</td>
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CONTRIBUTIONS
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GENERAL FUND
Paula Vesely  Andrew Jellinger
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Nancy Anderson  Nancy Stenson
Carole Martin  Richard Buringa
Dennis & Nora Hunchar  Jeanne Corwin
Gary Judd  Mary Dwyer
B. Wagnild  Ruth Crane

Unique Opportunities to Support Loring Park

The Friends of Loring Park works with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to provide financial and volunteer support for Loring Park so that it will continue to serve the recreational and leisure needs of the public.

Friends offers three unique opportunities to honor, remember, or recognize a special person, event or place.

Donate a brick…
to the Garden of the Seasons. The ongoing personalized brick campaign seeks to replace the asphalt outer walkway of the Garden of the Seasons with a beautiful brick pathway.

$75 donation—a 4x8 brick with three lines of print (14 characters and blank spaces per line)

$120 donation— 8x8 brick with six lines of print (12 characters and blank spaces per line)

Special characters (bell, star, heart) are available for $10 per symbol. Custom logos: call for quote.

Sponsor a native tree...
Friends of Loring Park is working closely with the MPRB to support the master plan that will create a vibrant canopy of hardy native trees in Loring Park.

$500 donation

Dedicate a Bench
to a friend, a loved one, your company or family, or perhaps to remember a special event. Your dedication or message (up to 37 characters) can be forged on the cast iron armrest.

Bench with personalization — $3,000
Anonymous sponsorship — $2,500

Please consider a tax-deductible donation
For further information, call 612-673-5395 or visit www.friendsofloringpark.org

(Continued on p5)
Yes! I’d like to support Loring Park with my tax deductible donation!

**Bench Sponsorship:** $3000 with inscription, $2500 without inscription

Inscription - 37 characters including blank spaces:

_________________________________________________________

**Bench is being donated ___ in honor of ___ in memory of:__**

**4x8 Brick Donation:** $75.00

Inscription - 3 lines, 14 characters per line including blank spaces:

_________________________________________________________

**Brick is being donated ___ in honor of ___ in memory of:__**

**8x8 Brick Donation:** $120

Inscription - 6 lines, 12 characters per line including blank spaces:

_________________________________________________________

**Brick is being donated ___ in honor of ___ in memory of:__**

**Awakening Notecards ($12.00 per 5 pack) Qty: ___ Total: ____**

**Loring Scenes Notecards ($12.00 per 5 pack) Qty: ___ Total: ____**

**Loring Scenes Postcards ($12.00 per 10 pack) Qty: ___ Total: ____**

For more information on donations, please call 612 673-5395.

Your Name _____________________________________________

Address _________________________________________________

Telephone ___________________ E-mail ______________________

Please send notification of my gift to (name and address):

_________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________

**Total Donation enclosed: ________**

Mail this form with your check to: Friends of Loring Park, P.O. Box 52074, Mpls, MN 55402

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**Mission**

The Friends of Loring Park was formed to develop financial and programming support for Loring Park. Its purpose is to implement the vision and master plan adopted by the Loring Park community and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The Friends of Loring Park, a tax-deductible Minnesota nonprofit organization, administers the Loring Park Restoration Fund.

**President**  Pat Davies

**Vice President**  Marcia Stout

**Treasurer**  Past Presidents

**Secretary**  Lee Frelich

**Graphic Services, Tib Shaw**

Published by The Friends of Loring Park, a 501[c][3] organization
Garden with The Friends: Second Saturdays
The Garden of the Seasons is a volunteer community garden. Join your neighbors—everybody is invited, and we are always looking for more gardeners.
Second Saturday of each month, May–October, 9AM until noon.
May 8, June 12, July 10, August 14, Sept 11, Oct 9

Welcome Back, Everyone!
Twin Cities Pride
July 17, 18
Loring Park Art Fair
July 31, August 1

Summertime Happenings
Canoeing on Loring Pond: Learn paddling techniques and safety tips from our trained Naturalist guides, then explore the water with friends, family and neighbors at your own pace. Canoes, life vests and paddles are included. Wednesdays from 5-7pm starting June 30th.

Outdoor Movie Nights are back at Loring Park! Mark your calendars for movies in the park on Monday, August 2nd and 9th at dusk. Bring a lawn chair or a blanket, pack a picnic and head to the park with family and friends for a fun, safe and free night of entertainment.

Check out these other park programs: Birding for Seniors; Pollinators and Plants; History of the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Parks Systems (including Indigenous history); Emerging Wildlife in the Parks; Gardening and Healthy Eating; and Take a Walk With a Naturalist.

Visit www.minneapolisparks.org for program details and more park info.

Meditation in the Garden of the Seasons, Fridays, 7:00–7:45 AM
Free meditation group, no experience necessary, join your neighbors, coffee, chairs, camaraderie provided!

Thistle Pulling Wednesdays
Help Us Halt the Invasion!
All Welcome! Meet at the Garden of the Seasons for tools, gloves and instructions.
Fourth Wednesdays from May to October, 9AM until noon.
May 26, June 23, July 28, August 25, September 22, October 27

Join Us...Thistle Be Fun!