Creating beautiful music in uncertain times

By Jeannie Piekos, Communications Committee

What happens when your business depends on community and a pandemic strikes? What if the perfect expansion opportunity presents itself amid social unrest, and the pandemic is still going strong with no foreseeable end? Do you take a leap of faith? You do if you are Sarah McCaffrey of Songs with Sarah.

Initially, Sarah wanted to be a performer. But along the way she taught music to children. After reading a life-altering book on a new approach to music instruction, she discovered the way she wanted to teach, as well.

"A friend sent me The Ways Children Learn Music by Eric Bluestine. I read it cover to cover and just drank it in," she says. "Reading this book about teaching toddlers and elementary-age kids how to learn music, not just read it and play it, but absorb it, I thought, "This is how I want to teach forever.""

Evolving her business

Sarah, her husband and four-month-old daughter moved to Field neighborhood from New York City. After teaching K-through-five students for five years in New York, her love of teaching babies was rekindled by having one of her own. She began teaching music to babies while she finished her master's degree. When a mom asked her about piano lessons for a four-

FRN neighbors react to uptick in crime

By Steve Date, Communications Committee

Like many neighborhoods in Minneapolis, 2020 has been a tough year for the residents and businesses of Field Regina Northrop.

The early months of the pandemic made it difficult for many small businesses to operate at full capacity. In late May, following George Floyd's death in police custody, many neighborhood businesses were vandalized. Criminal activity escalated throughout the summer with the corner of 48th and Chicago a frequent target. The activities include robberies, car theft and assaults. A stolen car crashed into an empty storefront. Homeowners have felt the uptick in crime as well, with break-ins of homes, cars and garages.

The 3rd Precinct Station was destroyed in the unrest. It has yet to be replaced. The precinct is understaffed due to police who have quit or taken a leave. The neighborhood has felt the shortage with longer response times to 911 calls.

Communication and cooperation between the Minneapolis Police Department and the city council has been inconsistent since the council voted to approve a pledge to "defund" the police. Confusion about the use of that term and what The New York Times described as a "quiet retreat from defund," even among some city council members, has slowed movement toward changing the culture and practices of the police department.

The types of crimes the businesses have suffered in recent months have an opportunistic element. According to police, the perpetrators have often been juveniles or young adults who seem to have little motive other than causing some trouble and getting away with some cash or a few items of value.

The same holds true for residential crimes. Reports of cars broken into and stolen, garages and homes entered, coupled with perceived slower response times from police has put a lot of people on edge and wondering when things will change. Neighborhood residents are saddened and frustrated about this, and many want to do something about it.

Below are some suggestions from the 3rd Precinct Sector 3 weekly updates (sign up

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FRN neighbors react to uptick in crime, continued from page 1

for alerts at tinyurl.com/signup-alerts) and from Crime Prevention Specialist Jennifer Neale regarding how residents can support the business community and feel safer in our neighborhoods.

Protecting our property
Home and garage burglaries: Lock your doors, lock your windows, even when at home. Get to know your neighbors and keep an eye on each other’s homes and yards. Make your home look occupied even when you’re not there. Be active in (or restart) block clubs. Call 911 if you see anything suspicious. Add security cameras.

Car theft and hijacking: Keep your doors locked, even while driving. Park in well-lit areas. Be aware of surroundings. Use a tracking device. Never leave anything of value in your car. Never leave your car running unattended. Memorize your license number. Because of a rash of license plate and catalytic converter thefts, park your car in the garage and replace the standard screws with “license plate security screws.” Be on the lookout for people who look like they might be stealing license plates or catalytic converters (under the car). Call 911.

Protecting ourselves
Don’t walk alone. Be hyper aware of your surroundings. Carry less cash and only items you need. Have your keys in your hand as you approach your car. Be prepared to give up your phone and wallet. Be a good witness. Call 911.

Protecting our neighborhood businesses
Several business owners have indicated they feel safer when there are customers in their shop and there is foot traffic outside. Make “watchful strolling” near neighborhood businesses part of your regular walk. Get to know business owners and others working there and let them know you value them and are watching out for them.

Welcome new board members!
We are pleased to announce new members to the Field Regina Northrop Neighborhood Group (FRNNG) board:
• Michele Johnson, secretary
• Kenna Shearman, education chair

Michele Johnson
I was born and raised in St. Paul. I have lived in South Minneapolis for 18 years. I like gardening, camping and fishing. I firmly believe that diversity is the key to life. Enriching others through positivity, patience, kindness and education is a way to bring people together. I am a passionate and goal-oriented person who works until the job is done – or my back gives out. My goal within the community is to do whatever is needed to make our neighborhood and city strong, secure and more informed. I know it takes all of us to do our part.

Kenna Shearman
I just reached the two-year mark of living in the Field neighborhood, but have been in the Twin Cities for 10 years. I am a special education teacher working as a special-education learning coordinator in my

Close to Home
Close to Home is the official publication of the Field Regina Northrop Neighborhood Group (FRNNG) and is published six times per year by the FRNNG Communications Committee.

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Education: Kenna Shearman
Greening: Elaina Moss and Joel Sass
Housing & Community Development: Nate Lansing
Parks: Open position
Open positions (in red) will be voted on at the rescheduled annual meeting. Check our website: frnng.org.
President’s letter

Hello to our community!

My name is Francesco Marraffa, and I am the interim president of the Field Regina Northrop Neighborhood Group (FRNNG). I live in the Field neighborhood with my wife, Rebecca, and three kids, Luciano, Francesca and Santino. I hope this edition finds you well. Undoubtedly, 2020 has presented us with unexpected challenges. Fortunately, if we tackle these difficulties thoughtfully, we can emerge stronger and happier.

I want to reflect on community and what made my childhood (admittedly a long way away in Colchester, England) seem more connected. Certainly, the lack of electronic devices and distractions helped me get to know my neighbors. We couldn’t use an “app” to state polarizing views and then hide away. Instead, we had challenging discussions, face-to-face, which ended with mutual respect and an acceptance that, although opinions may differ, we still can be neighbors and friends.

As a kid, although I would try to sneak into my neighbors’ yards to retrieve my football (soccer ball!), my parents encouraged me to knock on the door out of respect. Anyone who has seen the movie “The Sandlot” knows that knocking on the door can turn fear into an unexpected, enriching conversation.

To restate a concept mentioned at last month’s board meeting at McRae Park, the challenge should not be wanting to be understood, the challenge should be to understand the views of others with compassion (Sorry, Michele, if I messed that up!). Ultimately, our communities today are more fragmented and fragile than before, and more eclectic and diverse than ever — yet we have fewer face-to-face interactions with our neighbors, instead seeking comfort online with people and ideas that mirror our own.

Despite our current challenges, little things like ice cream socials, kid’s movie night in the yard and responsible socially distanced events can continue to bring us together. Welcoming new neighbors and helping each other should be a priority now more than ever — this is what builds community, trust and love.

Safety has been a concern — for my family, too. Last Sunday, someone came into my attached garage at 2 p.m. and stole a bike. Ultimately, I take responsibility for leaving my garage open. We live in the city, and there are opportunists around every corner. Our local businesses have been targeted with theft and vandalism. Let’s all try to renew our support for our local small businesses — even if it is just to stop in and say hello. Let’s look out for one another. Community means we actually care to care.

Join me for 1st Wednesdays

You’re invited to join me for a 1st Wednesday chat at 9 a.m. at Sovereign Grounds at 48th and Chicago. Come for coffee, meet and talk about your concerns and ideas for FRNNG.
Greetings, Field Regina Northrop neighbors!

First and foremost, Election Day — Tuesday, Nov. 3 — is right around the corner. Minneapolis is on pace to set a record for voter turnout, an exceptionally huge accomplishment as we continue to face a global pandemic.

- If you have not yet voted early in person or by mail, please visit vote.minneapolis.gov or call 311 to review your options for being heard in this critical election.
- Multiple Early Vote Centers will be open through Nov. 2 for folks to vote or return mail-in ballots in person.
- If you vote on Election Day, remember to double-check your polling place! Many have been relocated this year to accommodate social distancing and other public-health considerations as we continue to grapple with COVID-19.

We continue to feel the impact of the pandemic at City Hall, as well. Between now and mid-December, my City Council colleagues and I will continue our work to shape and ultimately pass a 2021 city budget. We continue to face significant revenue shortfalls, and there are many hard decisions ahead. There will be cuts across City departments, and we are focused on preserving high levels of service for residents and business owners, wherever possible.

I am pleased the City is poised to continue investment in two key areas for our community: senior services and sustainability, both of which were included in Mayor Frey’s proposed budget. There will be three public hearings for community members to weigh in on our budget process:

- Monday, Nov. 16 at 10 a.m.
- Wednesday, Dec. 2 at 6:05 p.m.
- Wednesday, Dec. 9 at 6:05 p.m.

These meetings will be held virtually, and you can find more details on the budget and opportunities to provide input at minneapolis.gov/budget.

Of course, in the coming weeks and months, we will continue our city-wide conversation about public safety. I remain focused on expanding our public safety system, not making it smaller. This means scaling up proven strategies that prevent violence and crime by addressing the root causes of each. This means setting up a system where we are always sending the best-trained responders to any given situation. We need some trained, accountable, armed officers to respond to extreme circumstances, but in many situations — from following up on property crime to mental health crisis response — we ought to have a more thoughtful, specialized approach. The people of Minneapolis deserve better than a one-size-fits-all approach to public safety. It’s time for accountability and results.

Finally, I continue to be proud of how this community has stood up to support local businesses during this especially challenging year. I encourage everyone to keep that up in the coming weeks and months. I’ll be doing as much holiday shopping locally as I can this year, and I encourage you to join me. Our take-out orders are helping to keep our vibrant restaurant community afloat. Meanwhile, the City continues to do what it can to support businesses now and to help them recover. We’re all in this together.

I want to be transparent that the deadline for this newsletter submission was in late September, a month or so before you’re reading this. In that month, I expect we will have received updates on various important issues — updates that might feel conspicuously absent here. To stay in the loop, I encourage you to subscribe to the Ward 11 Bulletin, my email newsletter, at https://tinyurl.com/ward11bulletin. In addition, you can always reach me at jeremy.schroeder@minneapolis.gov or (612) 673-2211.

Representing you at City Hall is a great honor, and I look forward to working together to keep our community strong.
One Block Club leader’s story

By Leighton Holmes

My husband and I moved to Minneapolis during the winter of 1991. Shortly after, while walking our dog, we encountered another couple who had also recently moved to the neighborhood. They had heard about a new program through the Minneapolis Police Department. We decided to sign up for training and become Block Club leaders.

Early on

I enlisted my neighbor, Kay, to help me establish a “phone tree” (before computers and cell phones!). We used the phone tree to pass along crime alerts from the CCP/Safe unit that described patterns of crime in our area, such as garage and car break-ins and burglaries. Block Club leaders from all of Field Regina Northrop (FRN) also met with the crime prevention specialist at the monthly Community and Safety Committee meeting to hear about crime statistics, discuss concerns on our blocks and learn from each other.

Kay and her family host our National Night Out (NNO) potluck event every first Tuesday in August, and I’ve continued to be a block leader all these years. Although this year, due to COVID-19, we’ve opted to postpone our NNO until Spring 2021.

Having an organized block makes neighbors feel connected — helping each other out with snow removal, sharing tools for projects, calling a neighbor who has left their garage door open, assisting those who are in need due to a medical condition or other life event, getting to know pets and kids, and sharing garden plants or tips with neighbors.

Become a Block Club leader

I encourage readers to consider being a block leader, especially if you’re the “new kid” on the block. There is no “test,” but there is training that informs you who to call and what to do if your block has any issues or concerns.

Being a Block Club leader is unique to each person and each block. It doesn’t take up a lot of time — especially in this digital world! I hope those of you who are the least bit curious will contact Jennifer Neale to ask her about becoming a Block Club leader. Jennifer Neale, crime prevention specialist, jennifer.neale@ci.minneapolis.mn.us, (612) 673-2839. ♦

Editor’s note: We look forward to other Block Club leaders sharing their stories. Please contact editor@frng.org Marty Koessel, chair of the Community and Safety Committee, invites readers to get involved. Contact Marty at communityandsafety@frng.org

Greetings, Field Regina Northrop Neighbors!

By Steffanie Musich, Commissioner 5th District, Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board

As I write to you today in this second week of September, the leaves have begun to change, the evening air is brisk and park staff are preparing virtual and socially distanced indoor programs for the winter months to help Minneapolis residents stay active. You can search for activities near you via an interactive map or by activity type by visiting: minneapolisparks.org/activities__events/ and selecting Browse All Activities. Cross-country ski trails will be groomed at Hiawatha Golf Course as soon as there are five or more inches of snow. Details on passes and trail conditions can be found at: loppet.org/tt/trails/

Changes to park operations related to the coronavirus are ongoing as knowledge about the virus and how it is spread continues to evolve. The park board’s pandemic response team works closely with the Minneapolis Health Department, Minneapolis Office of Emergency Management and the Minnesota Department of Health, which is leading the statewide response. Visit minneapolisparks.org/coronavirus for details about the park board’s response to the virus; you can also subscribe to updates of changes as they occur.

Planning and construction projects for the Minnehaha Creek Corridor, Hiawatha Golf Course property within Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park, Shoreline restoration at Lake Nokomis and play area improvements at Phelps Park are all underway. Additional plantings and invasive species management were done this fall as part of the Lake Nokomis shoreline restoration; comment periods on the Minnehaha Creek Corridor and Hiawatha Golf Course property were held; and the new playground at Phelps Park is complete and open for use.

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Northrop neighbor

Legacy home: Anthony Scott and siblings continue their father's legacy

By Steve Date, Communications Committee

Even though Anthony Scott didn’t move to the Field neighborhood until he was in junior high, he says it’s where he grew up. “I had a lot of friends there even before we moved,” he says. His grandmother lived on 39th and 3rd Ave. S. in the mid-’50s, and he spent a lot of time there. “I practically lived with her when I was young,” he recalls.

Anthony’s father, Walter Scott, was born in Mississippi and moved to Minneapolis from Chicago in the late 1940s, an era when many African-American families were moving to the Twin Cities. Walter and his wife, Margaret, had four children — Anthony, Walter Jr., Chaunda and George. Walter was employed by Northwestern Bell and worked his way up to be the first Black person to have a job in personnel management. The post-WWII years were a difficult time for Blacks to buy houses in south Minneapolis, but he eventually succeeded.

While in Chicago, Walter had an idea to write a book about African-Americans and their contributions. The first two books he wrote were about the Chicago and Minneapolis Black communities in the 1950s. He followed with two more volumes about African-Americans in Minnesota in the ‘60s and ‘70s. The Scott Collection, a compilation of the Minnesota books, has been published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press.

In the early ’60s, Walter bought a house on the 4600 block of 3rd Ave. S. in the southern part of the city’s African-American community, which stretched roughly from just south of downtown to the area around Field School, along either side of 4th Ave. The Black community in south Minneapolis was vibrant and cohesive in those days. The business district along 4th Ave. flourished with Black-owned businesses as the heart of the neighborhood.

The creation and location of the freeways through Minneapolis in the ’60s were partially responsible for the “boundaries” of the Black community. Equally defining were earlier “red line” and restrictive covenant practices of mortgage lenders and housing developers.

“Highway 94 cut off the Black community from downtown to the north, and 35W was the border on the west,” Anthony says. He doesn’t think it was an accident where they decided to put the freeway. “They could have put 35W in other places. It should have been farther west. It’s been the same story in other cities. It seems like when Black communities become prosperous, ‘something happens.’” In south Minneapolis, that “something” was not good for the community.

“A lot of the schools are gone now, but they were a really important part of the neighborhood,” he remembers.

“Everybody lived near a school. Warrington Elementary was torn down first. The adjoining Bryant Junior High was the next to go.” But the biggest blow was losing Central High School, which was very important to the identity and fiber of the neighborhood. “When Central closed, the community went down too,” he says.

Anthony graduated from Washburn High School, went on to college at Mankato State and held several professional positions during his career. He earned a master’s degree and worked in the rehabilitation and disability field for years before joining Child Protective Services.

Today, one of Anthony’s brothers lives in their grandmother’s house. Another brother lives in the house they grew up in on 46th and 3rd. Anthony owns a home on 42nd and 4th, and his son bought a Tilsenbilt house a few years ago near 40th and 5th. (See Tilsenbilt article in the September/October Close to Home) Home ownership, such a difficult goal for his parents, grandparents and other African-Americans of their time, has now become an important value for his family and for the neighborhood.

Years ago, he and his sister, Chaunda, came to realize how important his father’s books were, and they decided to continue where their father left off. Along with Charles E. Crutchfield, M.D., they edited and published the fourth volume in the Scott Collection — Minnesota’s Black Community in the 21st Century, released earlier this year by the Minnesota Historical Society Press.

Thanks to Anthony, Chaunda and many others, Walter Scott’s legacy continues, more than 70 years after he began the project.
Riding with Nokomis Cycle

By Jason Flagg, Communications Committee

Minneapolis, one of the most bike-friendly cities in the country, is home to many bike riders and bike shops. Those of you who live (and bike) in the Field Regina Northrop Neighborhood may not realize that one of our own bike stores, Nokomis Cycle, has been in business for more than a quarter century.

Owner Dwight Gronlund has run his shop at the intersection of Bloomingtion Avenue and 46th Street since 1994. That’s 26 years of sales and service for bike riders in Field Regina Northrop and beyond.

And it’s been even more popular than usual this year, with so many more neighborhood people working from home and staying home during the continuing pandemic.

“It’s been a huge year,” Gronlund said.

“Business is up about 40%. What else can you do except go outside? I think all businesses that deal with the outdoors have had a really good year. It’s unfortunate that it’s due to a pandemic.”

Gronlund said many people in the neighborhood have brought their bikes for tune-ups and repairs. People who may not have ridden much in recent years have gotten back on their bikes.

“I think corporate America really wants us to be on our phones and our computers, so it’s great that so many people have gotten outside again this year,” he said. “It’s good to see.”

What began as a bike repair shop has turned into much more: a store with new and used bikes, bike service and repairs – from minor services to complete overhauls – and recently, e-bikes. The store carries a full line of Electra GO! and Raleigh iE series electric bikes.

Gronlund offers customized bike service, as well. If a rider wants a unique bike, Gronlund will work with them to create exactly what they want.

Come spring, the shop offers a Monday night ride (March through September) for anyone who is interested. If the weather is good, just meet at the shop for a ride that typically winds around the lakes and back.

Nokomis Cycle can be reached at (612) 721-2959 or you can visit nokomiscycle.com.

National Night Out: Creating community one block at a time

By Patricia Miller, Communications Committee

While the social unrest and uptick in crime have left Minneapolis and Field Regina Northrop residents feeling on edge, having strong, connected communities can provide a solution. One way to create community is through National Night Out (NNO), typically held the first Tuesday of August. It’s a night when blocks organize gatherings of neighbors to play, eat, exchange contact information, discuss issues and challenges, and just get acquainted.

Because of the pandemic, neighborhood block groups gathered on September 15 to reconnect during this trying time. While the get-togethers may have been less elaborate, they were especially necessary this year. Research has shown that healthy neighborhoods are key to preventing violence and crime, and active block clubs increase hope and generate harmony.

Launched in 1984, NNO has involved 28 million neighbors in 16,000 communities across the U.S. For years, Minneapolis has embraced NNO, and in 2019, neighbors held 1,500 events, earning Minneapolis the number-one ranking among all cities with more than 250,000 people.

But NNO is more than one night of fun. It’s the culmination of year-long efforts by people working together in block and apartment clubs and other networks to prevent and address crime and other neighborhood challenges. It’s also a time to recommit to collaborative efforts with neighbors, businesses, police and others to improve the quality of life in the city.

The next NNO is slated for Tuesday, August 3, 2021. It’s not too early to start organizing an event for your block.

The city provides everything-you-need-to-know information for registering an NNO event, including having your street blocked off; planning what you’ll do, with lots of fun ideas; tips for seeking donations from local businesses; approaches for involving your local religious institutions; and much more. Go to minneapolismn.gov/nno for all the details.

Welcome, continued from page 2 district’s Care and Treatment Programs. I’m dedicated to my community and the work that needs to be done related to equity, access and representation. I believe that both connection and relationship building are crucial in continuing to build a thriving, caring and empowering community. As the education chair, I look forward to learning from, and working in collaboration with, you and our community.
Starting or continuing an anti-racism journey

By Patricia Miller, Communications Committee

George Floyd’s little girl was right when she said her daddy changed the world. One of those changes had people looking inward at their own feelings and beliefs about racism and how to address what they found.

If you’ve been looking for a place to start or a way to get involved, one place to learn more is the YWCA Minneapolis. Since 1891, the Y has been living its mission to eliminate racism and empower women. As a leader in the field of racial equity, it empowers communities and workplaces to stand against racism, embrace new perspectives and promote justice for all people.

Visit ywcampls.org/racial-justice to start or continue your anti-racism journey. Among the options you’ll find are:

Racial justice and public policy workshops. These interactive workshops help participants understand and combat different forms of racial injustice. Individuals gain clarity on the impact of racism, oppression and biases — along with actionable steps on how to overcome them.

• The It’s Time to Talk: Forums on Race” workshops frequently showcase speakers like Robin DiAngelo, who wrote White Fragility, and Ibram X. Kendi, author of How to Be Anti-Racist. The keynote speaker on October 21 was Khaled Beydoun, speaking on his book American Islamophobia: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear. More events for 2021 will be announced on the website.

• Advocacy workshops. The YWCA also helps individuals change existing and adopt new policies by working through the legislative process. The workshops give participants the skills and support they need to become involved in public policy. Recent virtual workshops addressed topics including: Intersectionality, Centering the Black Lived Experience and White Privilege 101. Check the website for the winter programming.

Racial justice facilitator program. Facilitators trained through this free program lead YWCA workshops and community conversations centered on racial discrimination and equity for all. The discussions are based on the indigenous tradition of circle dialogue and help participants work through difficult conversations about race and its effects. Trainings for 2021 will be posted on the website.

Inc.lude™ Diversity and Inclusion consulting. This service helps organizations combat the discrimination in their workplace that can create a toxic culture and inhibit productivity, collaboration and connection. The consulting is tailored to each team’s diversity and inclusion goals and develops initiatives to keep employees committed to change. It’s available for businesses, education organizations, government entities and nonprofits.

Field School resumes distance learning

By Jason Flagg, Communications Committee

Like so many of us, the students, teachers and staff at Field Community School have had to adapt to a new normal this year. After ending the 2019-20 school year with full-time distance learning, Field has started with that model again this fall.

Field principal VaNita Miller said everyone at school is better prepared than they were when things changed suddenly this past spring.

“It’s been a great start. The amount of learning that took place for teachers between the emergency situation in March, to having time to receive in-depth professional development from the district, to teaching students online is tremendous,” Miller said. “The teachers are more prepared and confident to take on distance learning and make it a positive experience for everyone.”

Even though many of the events that students attended through the school’s partnership with Project Success have been suspended, they are still able to work with Project Success during the school year. Miller said they will work with students virtually on English Language Arts, focusing on students in grades six through eight.

Miller added that enrollment at Field is down slightly this fall. Some students have left to attend schools that offer a hybrid-learning model, while others have moved out of Minneapolis to other parts of the metro.

Like all Minneapolis Public Schools right now, the building and grounds on the corner of 46th Street and 4th Avenue South are mostly empty, with no students filling the playgrounds at recess.

As principal, she has some words of advice to help get through a school year like no other.

“Understand that this is hard for everybody,” Miller said. “We appreciate all of the work that families are doing. This is a partnership, and we can get through this.”

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Walking the neighborhood

Signs o’ the times

By Steve Date, Communications Committee

Some of the images I’ll remember most from my walks this year will be the number of lawn and window signs.

We had yard signs last year, of course, and someone made it through the winter. In February, “All Are Welcome Here” and “Save Hiawatha Golf Course” messages began to poke through the snow. The marquee of the Parkway Theater announced upcoming movies and live shows. Remember those days? We had no idea what was about to come.

The early pandemic-related signs were written in sidewalk chalk. “Let’s get each other through this!” was the first one I noticed. The bunny sculpture was wearing a mask. Children (and adults) began making lovely drawings on sidewalks, accompanied by messages of “hope,” of “staying strong,” of being “in this together” and reminding us to wash our hands.

Then professionally printed versions popped up. When it became apparent that the early heroes were medical personnel on the front lines, we saw various “Thank You!” messages for them, followed by tributes and thanks to other essential workers and anyone pitching in to help. Children, unexpectedly home from school, began hanging artwork and messages in the windows of their homes. In May, the usual congratulatory high-school-graduate signs blossomed to include 4th-grade, 8th-grade, even kindergarten “graduates” who couldn’t have their usual closure to the school year.

We were staying at home, but we were expressing ourselves like never before. We were wondering how long the pandemic was going to dominate our minds and our behavior.

May 25th answered that question.

George Floyd’s name instantly became known around the world. Again, handwritten signs with his name on them, “Black Lives Matter” and other related messages appeared in yards, windows and businesses in our neighborhood. Now they can be found anywhere and everywhere. If we could travel to other countries, we would see them anywhere in the world.

Now, the election season has brought the usual “Vote For...” signs. I think about how elected officials have played roles, both in the problems and the responses to the problems we are facing. The election is a reminder that we have an opportunity to do something about this.

We will get through this. We always do.

I think back to that first chalk message I saw back in March, “Let’s get through this together!” It’s so simple and so hard to disagree with.

The signs we see while walking our neighborhood are generally hopeful and positive. But as a country, we sometimes don’t seem very “together” these days — on fighting the coronavirus, on our reactions to the death of George Floyd and certainly not on the election.

The small blue signs reminding us to drive slower take on a new meaning for me as we enter the final months of the year. Right after I vote, I’m going to make one that says, “20 Has INDEED Been Plenty.”

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5th District, continued from page 5

Each individual project has a project page at tinyurl.com/mps-parks-projects where you can subscribe to updates and catch up in detail on what’s happened since my last update to you.

My newsletter, the 5th District Dispatch is a great resource for more-frequent updates about the parks that I send out once or twice a month to keep my constituents informed. You can subscribe at eepurl.com/QZ_9. ❖

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Christian Fritzberg, Realtor
S.R.E.S. — I specialize in working with seniors.
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Building lifelong relationships one smile at a time

Close to Home, newsletter for the Field Regina Northrop Neighborhood Group  •  frng.org  •  November/December 2020
Creating beautiful music in uncertain times, continued from page 1

year old, Sarah investigated, and found, a similar piano method. She delved into the approach, even writing her master’s thesis on it.

Expanding into piano led her to open her first studio space in her attic. As her business grew, so did her family. After she gave birth to twins, she decided to move her business — and hire another teacher.

And then COVID happened

For several years Sarah had eyed the old Potina space at 48th and 4th. “It’s so charming and right in the middle of my neighborhood,” she says. Then it came up for rent in 2017, but before she could tour it, the space was snapped up. Fast forward to 2020.

When she saw the “For Rent” sign at 404 E. 48th Street it was mid-June — four months into COVID and only a couple weeks after the murder of George Floyd. She knew it was difficult timing, but decided to take a look.

“It was a totally impulsive thing that I think I needed to do. Songs with Sarah had really started to explode right before COVID, and then the baby and toddler classes just dropped. My registration fell by 80%. Nobody wants their baby on Zoom,” she says. “I thought my business was going to fall apart. My husband said, ‘You’ve worked too hard building (your business) up. It will come back.’ So, I called the landlord, and said, ‘I will do it.’”

While it is a time for growth and excitement, she recognizes it is bittersweet, as well. “When I walk around the neighborhood and businesses are gone, it’s hard to see,” Sarah says “This (space) emptied out because another woman in business had to downsize. But she told me, ‘I love that children are going to be making music here.’”

Songs with Sarah not only moved during the pandemic and unrest, but also expanded. With additional space, Sarah saw it as a perfect time to branch out, so she hired independent contractors to teach different instruments, in addition to her baby and piano classes. With the outside garden space and the spacious interior, she can offer classes and stay safely distanced. She told parents, “My goal for 2020-21 is to just keep your kids joyful and creating music. That’s the best thing we can do for them right now.”

Hope for the future

While the future may not be entirely blue skies, Sarah is looking forward to creating with children, families and other musicians. She says, “What people want right now is community. A music school is a great way to bring a community together. Our world is covered by a lot of dark clouds right now, but I have to believe the sun is behind them.

“Running a business, you have to be able to look at the future and what you’re going toward. I love the community in my neighborhood. What happened back in June brought people together and out of their houses. I felt the closest to my neighborhood than I’ve ever felt. This is my community. This is where we have settled. This is where we are raising our kids. I hear what people are saying in the suburbs about Minneapolis, and I don’t accept it.”

Sarah views 2020 as their soft opening. Watch for a big grand opening in 2021. For more information visit songswithsarah.com.

Protect your trees and shrubs now

By Jennifer Rensenbrink

Now that we’ve put our gardens to bed for the winter, it’s time for my least favorite chore: ensuring that young trees and shrubs are protected from rabbits.

If you’ve ever found your woody plants missing their bark suddenly in the spring, it was most likely done by rabbits.

As the ground freezes in late October and early November, green vegetation dies off. Rabbits will chew on old, dried-up leaves of perennials that you left standing, but they’d rather have living plant material.

As the days grow colder, rabbits start to chew the thin layer of bark off young trees and shrubs. If they chew all the way around the trunk of a tree, it’s almost always fatal — the leaves will be unable to transport sugars to the roots of the tree, and the tree will eventually die.

With shrubs, rabbits delicately eat all the fine bark off of the branches and stem leaving bare wood. They’ll also eat the small twigs clean off. Shrubs — especially native shrubs that tend to sucker — can sometimes recover, but you may be in for an ugly year or two in the meantime.

What can we do to avoid this? The very best way is to exclude rabbits with chicken wire cages — try to get them in place by the first week of November. Purchase a roll of chicken wire that is at least four feet wide, then cut into lengths of five to 10 feet, depending on the size of your shrubs or trees. Place it around each shrub, then connect the two ends by bending several of the edge wire pieces over each other, like a twist tie.

Be aware of shrubs that are next to a path where you might shovel snow. Those

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Southside Family Charter School makes the best of online learning

by Steve Date, Communications Committee

Before the pandemic arrived, distance learning, and reliance on technology in general, would not have been considered strengths by Brynne Macosko Paguyo and some of the other teachers at Southside Family Charter School. In fact, virtual learning sometimes goes against the grain of the school's approach of hands-on activities and group work with a lot of personal interaction.

Having to quickly develop an online teaching model last spring was a challenge, but it proved to be a good training run for this fall. “It helped a lot,” Paguyo said during the week school was starting up. “We were able to get a lot of feedback from families and make some changes.”

When we spoke, the teachers had just spent a couple of weeks making sure the students were all ready for school to start. They’d had conversations with each family about their access to technology and ways adults in the home could work with their children. Paguyo says teachers have been talking with parents more than ever this year, and somewhat ironically, teacher-family relationships are actually stronger because of distance learning, and it’s helped build a “we can do this” attitude.

The lack of physical proximity will take a certain toll over time. “Students in the lower grades have been most affected by the lack of personal contact,” Paguyo said.

While everyone is eager to get back into classrooms together, the school won’t do that until it’s safe. When the time comes, she adds, “We’ll get the younger kids in first — that’s our top priority.”

Social justice has always been a foundational focus of the school, weaving its way throughout the entire curriculum in all the grades. That’s still the case now, but the experiences the students are having have changed. Field trips and travel study are now virtual, and guest speakers are online. Learning about issues brought to light by the death of George Floyd, for instance, would have looked a lot different had teachers been able to take students out into the community. Paguyo says they’re making the best of it, but they look forward to the day when they can get back to face-to-face learning and taking memorable and often life-changing trips with the students.

Southside Family Charter School
southsidefamilyschool.org

Protect your trees, cont’d from page 10

Jennifer Rensenbrink is a University of Minnesota Master Gardener who lives and gardens in the Northrop neighborhood. Follow along with her gardening adventures on Instagram @jenniferrensenbrink.

Watch for the $1.00 Campaign

Since The Night On 48th Street Fundraiser has been postponed due to COVID-19, we ask you to please generously support our $1.00 Campaign. The campaign letter will arrive in your mailbox after Thanksgiving on November 27. FRNNG accepts donations of any amount.
The annual meeting & elections are postponed. Look for updates by mail and on our social media.

Inside this issue:
- Page 1: FRN neighbors react to uptick in crime
- Page 4: World update
- Page 6: Legacy home
- Page 8: Storying or continuing an anti-racism journey
- Page 11: Southside Family Charter School

Check our website and Facebook page for updates about scheduled events.