

# the Friends of Loring Park

2022 Autumn

Volume 25, No. 2

## President's Message

### Departing Park Director Sandin Commended

At the Friends of Loring Park August board meeting, a resolution was passed to commend Loring Park Recreation Director Julie Sandin for her seven years of excellent service to the Loring Park Community. Julie has been transferred to Linden Hills Park, and we will miss her. She was dedicated to making Loring Park a vibrant and active park, and brought her creativity and planning skills to providing a diversity of programming: canoeing, yoga, arts, nature walks, and movies to name just a few. Julie worked at creating programming for all ages and cultures, and she was an excellent collaborative partner with the Friends. She was critical to

Loring Park's success in meeting the stressful challenges of the pandemic and the encampment. We cannot thank her enough, and we wish her all the best in her new assignment at Linden Hills Park. They are lucky to have her. Stepping into Julie's role is the new recreation director, Scott Erasmus, who came from Linden Hills Park

### Berger Fountain Update

After the the Berger Fountain Committee received the predesign report from the consultants Damon Faber, the Minneapolis Park Board Planning Department wanted to review internal funding sources and when they may be available for the construction of the fountain and plaza. Planning suggested a Request For

Proposals (RFP) be issued for a consultant to refine the cost estimates into those for replacement of the fountain and those for new construction—for example the plaza. This refinement will lead to the designation of funding sources. Again, the goal is to determine the amount of money that needs to be raised from the community. The RFP is also asking for solid, cohesive design construction documents so when fund raising begins in earnest the Berger Fountain Committee can show what the donations are going to bring to fruition. The downside to this process is that it looks like construction cannot start until 2024.

*David Hule*

*FOLP Board President*

## Friends Celebrates Twenty-five Years of Progress

The Friends of Loring Park (FOLP) was established as a 501(c3) non-profit organization in 1997 to "preserve, improve and support historic Loring Park in downtown Minneapolis". Dottie Speidel and the late Ione Siegel developed the vision for the organization, formed it from the former Park Committee of Citizens for a Loring Park Community (CLPC, the official neighborhood organization), and recruited the additional founding board members: myself, Marcia Stout, Karl Reichert and Diane Woelm.

Over the last 25 years, FOLP has become one of the leading organizations collaborating with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). The organization has won awards for the best public work of art in Minneapolis (the stained-glass window, commissioned by FOLP and designed by Reynaldo Diaz and Connie Becker in 2005) and for the Garden of the Seasons, and several of the garden volunteers have received volunteer awards from MPRB.

The accomplishments of FOLP (and all of the people who served on the board of directors or as volunteers, and collaborators from the neighborhood and MPRB) are too numerous to mention, but here are a few of my favorite highlights of the organization.

The early days from 1997-2003 of FOLP's existence were incredibly busy. We oversaw the implementation of the Loring Park Master Plan, designed by world-famous landscape architect Diana Balmori. The largest portion of Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) funding for the Loring Park Neighborhood went into the park—approximately \$900,000 (\$1.67 million in today's dollars!). Several hundred thousand dollars of additional funding were raised from the City of Minneapolis, neighborhood institutions such as the Woman's Club of Minneapolis and Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, and MPRB. All of this allowed for a myriad of park improvements and construction throughout the park in 1997. Major events that sum-

mer, such as the Pride Festival, were displaced to Historic Main Street Park along the Mississippi River. The pathway system was reconstructed, the viewing pier and playground were built, and the pond was drained to install a clay liner to prevent water leakage and decrease the need to keep the pond full by pumping of well water.

The Garden of the Seasons was also built during 1997, on top of the former horseshoe courts, which were moved to the other side of the pond. Forty-seven truckloads of soil were brought in to form the contours of the garden and thousands of brick pavers were installed to create the pathways, in a concentric circle plan first suggested by landscape architect Horace Cleveland in the 1880s. In the spring of 1998 Dottie and Ione convinced Bachman's to donate 7,000 annual plants to provide color in the woodland circle and outer ring of the garden, while the planting of perennials in the wheel of color was contracted to

*(History, con't p3)*

# A Silent Witness to History, the Oldest Tree in Loring Park Falls



The landmark tree of Loring Park has fallen. It was a bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) on top of the hill in the northeastern part of the park, with the circular walkway around it. This event happened Saturday, August 13 at about 7:00 am, when half of the crown, weighing several tons, came crashing down. The huge tree was hollow, and half of the cylindrical tube of the main trunk was torn off, leaving the other half in an unstable condition. Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board foresters cut the rest of the crown down by noon, and they cut the stump to the ground level the following Monday.

It was not windy that Saturday morning, so the question arises—why did half of the tree fall? Having spent much time in forests, I have witnessed many trees fall on calm days, especially when substantial rains came after a period of drought. Loring Park's oak tree was probably cracked by high winds during the June-July drought—two severe thunderstorms occurred during that time, with very little rain, but winds of 70 miles per hour. Then when the long-duration rain came a few days before the tree fell, it absorbed a few tons of water, and the additional weight could no longer be supported, so the huge

branch fell.

Inspecting the downed half of the crown just after it fell, I noticed that there was also 'included bark' where the limb branched off from the main trunk—bark was squeezed between the trunk and the limb, so that sound wood could not grow there, making the joint where the two halves of the crown came together weak and susceptible to wind damage.

Even at the very top of the tree, the leaves were dark green, and the twigs were crowded with leaves, indicating that the tree was very healthy in spite of the droughts of 2021 and 2022. However, its great weight, added weight of water when the rains returned in early August, accumulated minor wind damage, and the physical characteristics of the branch that broke off, determined its fate.

As revealed by the stump, the tree was hollow all the way to the ground, so we can never get a good ring count, but it surely predates the city of Minneapolis and probably predates the U.S. I estimate that its age was 250-300 years. During its long life, the tree saw an oak savanna landscape with frequent fires managed by Native Americans, followed by Joseph Johnson's farm in 1856, the establishment of Loring Park in the 1880s (then called Central Park) and the development of Minneapolis into a major metropolitan area.

The tree carried the evolutionary legacy of its ancestors that lived on oak savannas going back several thousand years, during which the species adapted to local conditions, and no doubt it has passed that legacy on to younger oak trees in the park via its pollen. There is also an ecological legacy—roots of the great tree spread at least 50 feet in all directions, some are more than a foot thick and will continue to decay for a century, slowly releasing nutrients to the soil, and creating channels filled with spongy rotted wood that roots of other trees can follow. Perhaps this tree's roots also followed the underground pathways from previous great oaks. In any case, the great bur oak of Loring Park is not totally gone—its evolutionary and ecological legacies still exist and will persist for centuries into the future.

*Lee Frelich, Director,  
University of Minnesota Center for Forest Ecology*



# Welcome New Faces!

## Jerry Amundson, New Board Member



The Friends of Loring Park is excited to welcome new member Jerry Amundson to its board. Jerry attended our July board meeting and was voted in at the August meeting.

Jerry is originally from Lakeville, Minnesota, where he grew up in the true Midwestern heartland. He is married and

has two dogs; a Rhodesian Ridgeback named Frank, and with a chocolate lab named Brownie. When asked about hobbies, Jerry says he loves walking his dogs in the park. He also runs and bikes, and he and his wife, Katy Mullen, have participated in Ironman Triathlons in the past.

Jerry sees life in the park as vibrant, a place where people live life out loud. We met Jerry on a volunteer Saturday, as he helped revive the charming shade garden beside the Superintendent's Building.

When asked what he would change if he could, Jerry replied, "I'd pick up all the litter along the shoreline in the park." In the meantime, he takes pride in doing his part picking up a few pieces at a time.

Jerry and his wife moved to the LPM tower from St. Paul. A deciding factor leading them to Loring Park was the oasis the park represents. Jerry enjoys the cultural diversity of the neighborhood, and the beauty of Loring Park as seen from the chic glass tower. Welcome, Jerry!

—Todd Miller, Friends Board Member

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## Scott Erazmus, New Park Recreation Director



Scott Erazmus came to Loring Park from Linden Hills in July. Scott got his start with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board with a part-time position at Northeast Park while working on his undergraduate degree at the University of Minnesota.

Originally from Minneapolis, Scott graduated from Southwest High, and now lives in Apple Valley, with his wife, five-year-old daughter and three-year old son.-

His favorite element of Loring Park is the feeling that he's in nature viewing the ponds and strolling the paths, all the while in the heart of the city.

Scott and his family enjoy exploring parks with their dog. If he could change one thing, he would (and plans to) bring more programming for kids. He feels it's important to keep a light, fun atmosphere with his staff, and prides himself on initiating fresh, new activities and engagement with children.

We're very excited to see what the future holds for our wonderful inner city park with Scott at the helm.

Stop in to say hello to Scott!

*(History, con't from p1)* Lisa Ringer from the west metro garden company then known as Three Seeds. The white, purple/blue, yellow/orange and red/pink color themes encountered as you walk around the circle, along with the red benches, were suggested by myself and rapidly accepted after numerous public meetings over a year-long period had failed to converge on a design.

In the following years, from 1997 to 2005, FOLP received permission from MPRB to start installing named benches that exist throughout the park, as well as named bricks in the garden pathways; these have been among FOLP's largest fundraisers. FOLP also raised funding to move the Superintendent's House (William Berry House) to the middle of the park and restore its bland grey color to the original Victorian color scheme, and FOLP helped to choose the design for the renovation and addition to the Loring Park Community Building (2003).

Loring Park hosted the Minneapolis Arbor Day celebration during this time period; 125 trees were planted in one day by volunteers and MRPB forestry staff, starting the park on a course back to the tree cover it had before Dutch Elm Disease hit in the 1970s.

By working with our collaborators at MPRB, CLPC the Loring Greenway Association, and many residents, FOLP has continued to be an important part of the fabric of the Loring Park neighborhood. Our spring kickoff event, presence at major events such as the Pride Festival and Loring Park Art Fair, sponsorship of ongoing events such as monthly volunteer gardening and weekly meditation, and co-sponsorship of events such as the Loring Park Acoustic Music Festival, and many of the events programmed by MPRB, continue to bring together neighborhood residents on a regular basis. FOLP has accumulated thousands of hours of volunteer time for gardening and invasive species removal, and hosted many public meetings.

The last few years has seen a resurgence in large projects and return to busy times reminiscent of the first few years of FOLP's existence. FOLP has been instrumental in rebuilding the tennis courts and the playground, which opened during summer 2022. Through the work of board member Todd Miller, the west circle garden that was on the 1997 Master Plan has finally been built and is now a beautiful counterpart to the Garden of the Seasons.

Many challenges for FOLP remain for the future. These include renovation of the 'Dandelion' Fountain, continued maintenance of the tree canopy, ongoing planting, pruning and weeding of the ever-changing gardens, the reemergence of the invasive cattails and need to restore native wetland plants along a mile of pond shoreline, water quality problems in the pond, and helping to implement the new Loring Park Master Plan approved in 2019, with pathway improvements and installation of the 'Great Lawn'.

These projects will require the same creativity that built our track record of success during the last 25 years, and I am optimistic that we will be successful in meeting these new challenges.

Lee Frelich, Director,  
University of Minnesota Center for Forest Ecology  
Past President, Friends of Loring Park

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Friends of Loring Park acknowledges the following gifts, which were gratefully received from April and August of 2022.

### GENERAL FUND

Don & Florence Ostrom  
Mark Nammacher  
Eric Lyle Anderson  
Robert E. Ross, in Honor of  
Lee Anderson & William Ferenbach  
David Braslau  
Lavonne Landsverk, in Memory of Lew Landsverk  
Doug Sandahl  
Kathryn Schilling  
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Eric Eskola  
Loring Way Condo Association  
Edith Leyasmeyer  
Palmira Gall

### BERGER FOUNTAIN

Kenneth & Beth Roering  
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Kathleen Humphries  
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Tracey Crue  
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Eric Lyle Anderson  
Kevin & Sandra O'Brien  
Yvonne C. Mullen, in Memory of Joe Mullen

### CARDS

Kim Ross

*Continued next page*

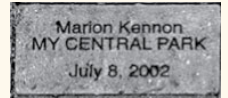
## Unique Opportunities to Support Loring Park

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.



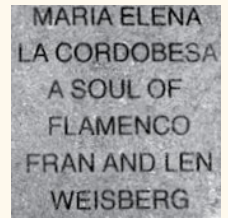
### \$75 donation—a 4x8 brick

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](http://www.friendsofloringpark.org)

# Support Loring Park Today!

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:

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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:**

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Brick is being donated \_\_\_ in honor of \_\_\_ in memory of:

\_\_\_\_\_

**8x8 Brick Donation: \$120**

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

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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: \_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_

**To sponsor the trees or perennials for the park entrance improvements, 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

## BRICKS

Stephen Gangstead, in Memory of  
Michael R. Peterson

Faical Rayani

Gregory A. Plotnikoff, M.D.

Mr. & Mrs. John Kafkas

Brent Nelson

Diane Newes, Piper Sandler & Co.

Nancy Emery

Robert Ralston, in Memory of Larry Olson

Rozalyn Maney

Bill & Corky Walsh, in Memory of Janice Lavoie

Carly Neren

## TREES

Bruce Langbein

Afagh R. Mohajeri, in Honor of Orkideh Mohajeri

Olivia Mirodone

Alice Lincoln

Sara Martineau

Derek J. Hook

## GARDENS

Olivia Mirodone

Nancy B. Miller, in Gratitude

MaryFaith Fox

C. Peterson

## PICKLEBALL COURTS

Susan & Andreas Papanicolaou

Tracey Crue

**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.

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[www.friendsofloringpark.org](http://www.friendsofloringpark.org)

### **Help Wanted: Administrative Assistant**

Love Loring Park? Organized and efficient? The all-volunteer Friends of Loring Park Board, is seeking an administrative assistant to perform the administrative tasks necessary to keeping the organization running efficiently. Duties include taking meeting minutes, keeping the Friends community informed of programs and events, maintaining data bases and mailing lists, assembling the newsletter, tracking donations, and updating social media. We are looking to hire a contract employee for 8 to 10 hours a month at \$25 an hour.

Interested? Just send us an email through the Friends website, [friendsofloringpark.org](http://friendsofloringpark.org), indicating your interest.

### **Morning Meditation Continues...**

Initially a month long experiment, Morning Meditation has been a regular Friday activity for 12 years, if I can remember that far back. But, who's counting?

And we will continue, every Friday in the Garden of the Seasons until Old Man Winter says, "Enough!"

**News Flash** This summer our group held a weekend retreat at Hokyoji Zen Practice Center in the Driftless region of southeastern Minnesota, a surprise extension of our simple morning activity.

Please feel welcome to join us, neighbors sitting together in silence as the day begins. So simple, so remarkably fulfilling. Coffee and comaraderie provided.

Fridays, 7 – 8AM in The Garden of the Seasons (Once it gets too cold, we will be gathering on Zoom.)

Please email [info@friendsofloringpark.org](mailto:info@friendsofloringpark.org) for the link. All are welcome!

**Learn more: Visit Our Website!**  
[friendsofloringpark.org](http://friendsofloringpark.org)