

the Friends of Loring Park

2024 Spring

Volume 27, No. 1

President's Message

After the winter that wasn't, we are all waiting to see what the effects will be on our park. Although March's snowfall was welcome, like many I am concerned about the overall lack of snow, and am hopeful we have a wet spring season.

My message today highlights a problem that many of you are familiar with: the deteriorating condition of the park paths. The number one activity in Loring Park is walking, and the park also hosts events—such as Pride, Holidazzle, and the Loring Park Art Festival—that involve hundreds of thousands of people using the paths. We are hearing from people with disabilities that the

paths have become dangerous and difficult to navigate. If you've been in the park you know that large sections of the paths are in urgent need of patching.

Present plans call for the paths to be replaced in 2027, as part of the implementation of the 2017 Loring Park Master Plan. Clearly we cannot wait that long.

If you have concerns about the condition of the paths, a situation that seems unsafe, or facilities that need repair, please call the MPRB at 612-230-6400.

See you in the park!

—David Hile, Friends Board President

Park Art Festival Under New Ownership, Community Stage Added

The Loring Park Art Festival returns under the direction of new owners this year. The owners, who also produce the Stone Arch Bridge Festival, Duluth's Art in Bayfront Park and the WE Fest in Detroit Lakes, are not planning any major changes for 2024, but there will be a noteworthy addition: a new stage, jointly sponsored by the Friends of Loring Park, Citizens for a Loring Park Community, and Twin Cities Pride, will be located by the Performance Building.

One event on the new Community Stage will be bitter-sweet: the 35-year old Minnesota Sinfonia will give one of their last performances as an Aquatennial event.

Friends Kick-Off Brunch

Saturday May 4, 10:00 a.m., Community Center

It's time to get back together and connect with old and new friends and neighbors.

Join the Friends of Loring Park for our annual brunch and get-together as we start the summer season once again. Enjoy light brunch and coffee, a talk by Lee Frelich, door prizes, and good cheer as we celebrate Loring Park!

Update: Loring Park Community Gardens

This will be the fourth season of growing fruits and vegetables in Loring Park, one of the first gardens created under the MPRB's Community Garden Policy, implemented in 2018. The program now has eleven sites, with seven more planned.

The Minneapolis College Urban Farm Collective student gardening club donated their raised bed planters after losing their on-campus garden site through the land sale and redevelopment of the H. Alden Smith House.

Part of the garden is allocated to the club; remaining plots are distributed to neighbors who applied through the MPRB website by its February 1 deadline. Plots were allocated using MPRB's equity-based criteria, which gives priority to residents who don't have other land access, plan to grow food, and have a connection to the park. Interest in Loring Park's community garden continues to outpace demand: 90 applications were received for the 26 plots. Discussions continue about how to expand plot availability.

Last summer, a perennial fruit bed with raspberry, gooseberry, and cur-

rrent plants was added along the west fence. Some beds are designated as "free for picking" whether you planted the seeds or not, but most gardeners enjoy their own harvest and donate any excess.

The program relies on community garden lead volunteers to maintain the garden spaces and foster relationships among and between gardeners, visitors, and park staff.

Be sure to say hello when you see the community gardeners working in the horseshoe area of the park this summer!

—Nicholas Deacon
Biology Faculty, Minneapolis College,
and Friends board member

Minnesota Weather Whiplash

The warm winter and early spring of 2023-2024

The winter of 2023-2024 has been the warmest ever recorded in Minnesota, for the December-February period, and it is in the running to edge out the winter of 2011-2012 as the warmest overall (including all of the cold months from October through April). What a huge contrast to last winter (2022-2023), which was one of the longest and snowiest winters on record! While last winter occurred during a La Niña (cold water in the eastern Pacific Ocean at equatorial latitudes, generally resulting in cold winters in Minnesota), this winter has occurred during the opposite condition, an El Niño. In fact, it is a so-called 'super El Niño' that led to the 2023 mean global temperature exceeding the 1.5 degrees C threshold that we were trying to avoid via the multinational climate agreements in Paris (known as COP 2015) and Glasgow (COP 2021). A La Niña is predicted to develop again for the second half of 2024; perhaps it will lead to a 'real Minnesota winter' next year (winter 2024-2025).

Super El Niño winters serve as time machines that allow us to see what a typical winter might be like a few decades hence in a warming climate. Thus, the super El Niño winter of 1997-1998 showed us what typical winters are like now, in the 2020s, while this winter shows us what a typical winter might be like in the 2050s or 2060s if we fail to mitigate climate change by reducing CO2 emissions.

Furthermore, with no snow the regional albedo (amount of sunlight reflected from the earth's surface) has been lower, resulting in air temperatures about 10 degrees F warmer than they would be with snow making this winter even warmer than from the direct effects of El Niño alone. The warmth and lack of snow have a lot of implications for the ecology of city parks and natural areas. For example, small animals need the cover of snow for protection from predators like hawks and owls, which have had an easy time spotting their prey this winter.

One of the odd effects of warmer winters and lack of snow can be colder soil temperatures. Snow is a good insulator and in very cold winters with deep snow (like last winter), soil temperatures can actually be warmer than in a warm winter with no snow. For example, as part of our research at the University of Minnesota, we measured soil temperatures every hour in a red pine forest at Seagull Lake near the Canadian border for two years,

and once the snow arrived in November, soil temperatures stayed constant—did not respond to changing air temperature—until the snow melted in early May. Soil temperatures stayed at about 30 degrees F all winter, even when the air temperatures at the nearest weather station were as low as -45 degrees F.

Low soil temperatures in snow-free winters can freeze out certain insects and pests like Japanese beetles and invasive earthworms. Roots of trees can also be negatively impacted, since below-ground parts of trees in Minnesota can have root damage at about 20 degrees F, while the above-ground part of a tree can survive temperatures as low as -45 degrees F (and even colder for species of trees in northern Minnesota). This is one reason that it is good to leave some leaf litter on gardens—the leaves provide some insulation for roots of trees and perennials in the absence of snow.

Another aspect of a low-snow winter is the possibility of an early spring which can lead to trees leafing out or flowering too early and then sustaining damage from late spring frosts. This is especially damaging for flowering fruit trees (e.g. apples, crabapples, cherries). Buds are already swelling as I write this article, and it is way too early for that to happen. Weather whiplash might bring damaging frost in May, as happened during the exceptionally early spring of 2012.

Finally, early springs can also lead to an active spring wildfire season. Leaf litter, twigs and other forest floor fuels are not compacted like they would be in a winter with deep snow so they dry out faster in the spring. Massive snowpacks like we had last winter take several weeks to melt, whereas this winter's measly snowpack is already almost gone (as of March 12) even in far northeastern Minnesota, leaving forest floor fuels exposed to intense spring sunshine. In the early springs of 1995 and 2007, major wildfires burned across northern Minnesota's coniferous forests. This year we have already had a 2000-acre wildfire in western Minnesota in early March.

Will we have the major wildfires and damage to trees that occurred in 1995, 2007 or 2012 this year? You should know by the time you read this newsletter.

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

Please stay in touch! info@friendsofloringpark.org | 612-673-5395
friendsofloringpark.org | Friends of Loring Park on Facebook

In Memorium: Robert Skafte



Robert Skafte, business owner, gardener, theatre artist, community builder and beloved neighbor.

The Friends of Loring Park and the community in general would like to pay our respects to Robert Skafte, July 13, 1957–December 8, 2023.

Robert studied ballet in his native California, then went on to perform with the Kansas City Ballet in 1984. Roughly a decade later he arrived in Minneapolis, joining the Ballet of the Dolls as a dancer and actor. A passionate and dedicated artist respected in his craft, Robert was also founder of the Stevens Square Farmers Market. A co-creator of the LaSalle Community Garden as well as the Overlook Community Garden above I-94 at LaSalle, his love of gardening and dedication to fellow volunteers were remarkable. He made getting dirty fun.

I knew Robert best as the cashier of the Oak Grove Grocery, where he was always glad to see all who came through the door. I lived next door and stopped in frequently. Robert lived across the street, and he and his beautiful dog Sammie were ever present in the community. He went out of his way to come and chat when he saw me tending my gardens in Loring Park, also

providing a delightful ‘canine fix.’ While I renovated and maintained the property in front of 214 Oak Grove, Robert planted and maintained the giant urn and gardens in front of the grocery at 218. We often chatted about changes on Oak Grove, and he always expressed concern without prejudice or bias. We agreed that strong communities require cultural and economic diversity, that the ability to look neighbors in the eye and greet each of them as a fellow human being was essential. He worried about rapidly increasing rental rates and crime in the Loring Park neighborhood, but never showed reason to believe that he would ever give up hope on the terrific people he called his friends and neighbors.

Robert’s memorial service on December 28 was abuzz with those who deeply love and miss him. He was truly one of a kind and a man of community, and will always be in our hearts, our thoughts, and our neighborhood gardens. Thank you, Robert. We miss you dearly.

—Todd Miller, Friends board member and nonprofit commemorative brick program manager 612-822-6984

It’s All Happening in Loring Park This Summer!

Volunteer in the Gardens

It’s gardening season once again, and time to join your neighbors in the collective task of working in the Garden of the Seasons. As volunteers, we are part of a neighborhood effort: our work is an expression of our community. It’s also a way to get our hands in the dirt!

Since 1998, the garden program has been a joint effort between the Friends and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; the MPRB gardener sets the agenda and provides direction and we all pitch in. Loring Park’s previous gardener has taken another assignment in the Park Board gardens. We await to see who our new gardener is after the hiring process is complete.

On May 11th, we’ll start by installing new plants. As the summer advances, our tasks evolve to meet the demands of the garden. Each year brings changes: new trees need planting in the center, additional plants will be added for color and texture. It’s always a work in progress.

Gardening is a great way to get outdoors and experience the seasons, knowing that our efforts are enhancing the natural beauty of Loring Park.

—Bill Tresch, Friends board member

*2nd Saturdays, 9 a.m., starting May 11th.
No experience required, tools provided.*

Loring Park Summer Events Highlights

Recurring Programs:

Yoga in the Park

Weds, June 5–Aug. 28, 6–7 p.m.

Music Programs

Tuesdays, June 4–Aug. 27, 7–8:30 p.m.

Community Singalongs

Third Thursdays 7–8:30 p.m.

Morning Meditation in the Garden

Fridays, Starting May 17, 7 a.m.

One-time Events:

Peace in the World Concert

Saturday, May 11, noon–5 p.m.

Kick-off to Summer

Tuesday, June 11, 6:30 p.m.

Pre-Juneteenth Event

Tuesday, June 18, 5–6:45 p.m.

Annual Dog Show

Tuesday, June 25, 6:45–8:15 p.m.

Twin Cities Pride

Saturday–Sunday, June 29–30

Aquatennial Family Fun Night

Wednesday, July 24, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Loring Park Art Festival

Saturday–Sunday, July 27–28

National Night Out (Woman’s Club)

Tuesday, August 6, 6–8 p.m.

Ice Cream Social

Tuesday, August 13, 6–7:30 p.m.

Pickup Truck Opera

Thursday, August 15 (evening, TBA)

Learn more: friendsofloringpark.org/events and minneapolisparcs.org/activities

Please...Pick Up the Pooch Poop!

Pet waste is ugly to see and unpleasant to smell, but even more important, when pet waste washes into the pond, it adds nutrients that foster weed and algae growth, deplete oxygen, and release ammonia, all of which are harmful to fish and other aquatic organisms, and shore plantings.

Please do your part, obey the law, and keep our park beautiful and healthy.

Unique Opportunities to Support Loring Park

CONTRIBUTIONS

Friends of Loring Park acknowledges the following gifts, which were gratefully received between October of 2023 and March of 2024.

GENERAL FUND

Laura & Robert Kadwell | Thomas & Gwynn Rosen
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Tom Akin & Tom Rauscher | David & Mary Hile
Bruce & Jane Nelson | Susan E Gaertner
Angelos & Terri Siderakos, in Memory of Elizabeth Wallace

Continued next page

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

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:

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: ___

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

Nickie J. Dillon, in Memory of Dennis A. Dillon
John H Wodele | Mike & Karel Helgeson
Patricia Rusch, in Memory of Janet Ampe
Georgia O'Brien | Mary A. Kloehn
Steven Schwartz | David Munn & Linda Luksan
Jean Kennedy, in Memory of Ione Siegel

BRICKS

Friends of Loring Park, for MPRB gardeners Leslee Hagberg, 2014-2021, and Andy Haberman, 2022-2023
Kerry Brady, in Memory of Elwood C. Anderson
Norman Jensen, in Memory of Joyce Sheffer
Roberta Lowe, in Memory of Paul McDonald
John Velie, for Paulette
Sue & Tom Schade in Memory of Tim Sheehan
Jane Confer, in Memory of Ogden Confer

TREES

Donald & Gail Mart | Afagh R. Mohajeri | Bruce Langbein
Peggy Hunter & Doug Wallace in Honor of Dr. Lee Frelich
Jane Confer and Ruth Benson, in Memory of Ogden Confer
Cynthia A Noet | Georgia O'Brien | Eric Lyle Anderson

GARDENS

Jon & Jean Albrightson | Margaret H. Berget | Laura Folden

BENCHES

Sue Jones

Do you have concerns about Loring Park? See a situation that seems unsafe, or facilities in need of repair? Call the MPRB hotline: 612-230-6400.

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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Visit Friends on the internet
www.friendsofloringpark.org

Berger Fountain Funding and Progress Report; State Funding Request

MPRB and the Berger Fountain Task Force hired Damon Farber Landscape Architects to complete a final design concept for the Berger Fountain and surrounding plaza area in the fall of 2023. The final design concept includes restoration of the fountain, creation of a new accessible plaza, and establishment of new garden beds and seating.

On behalf of The Friends of Loring Park (FOLP), Citizens for a Loring Park Community (CLPC), and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), State Senator Scott Dibble and State Representative Frank Hornstein requested funding from the State Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund for the Berger Fountain Project. We are hopeful that we will receive a grant estimated to be around \$250,000.

The total cost of the fountain and plaza is currently estimated to be \$3M. Given the potential grant from the State Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund and the funds raised to date that are listed below, a remaining \$1,722,500 remains to be raised.

The next step for the Berger Fountain Task Force is to engage a professional fundraiser to assist with raising the balance of the funds needed before Damon Farber can be directed to create final engineering drawings.

Thank you to all who have made generous donations to FOLP and CLPC in support of this project!

Breakdown of Matching Funds

FOLP and CLPC fundraising:	\$250,000
MPRB Park Dedication Funds:	\$419,500
MPRB Rehabilitation Funds:	\$350,000
City of Mpls Neighborhood Revitalization Program:	\$8,000
Total:	\$1,027,500

Be Part of the Berger Fountain Excitement!

Donate to Berger Fountain Open this QR code on your smartphone, text BERGER to 53-555 or [click here](#)..

Learn more about the project and how to support it at loringpark.org/berger-fountain/

Follow Berger Fountain on [Facebook](#) and on [Instagram](#)



Keep up with all the developments on the Friends website's dedicated [Berger Fountain page](#)