

# the Friends of Loring Park

2020 Spring

Volume 23, No. 1

## President's Spring Message

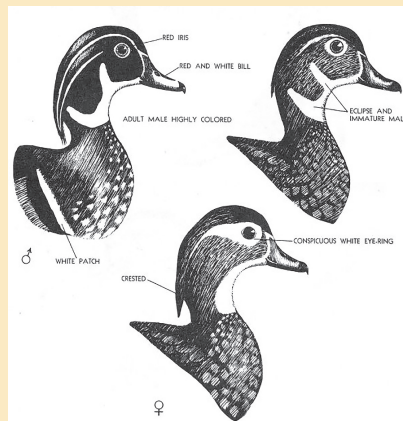
I am writing this message on Tuesday, April 14th, in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, so when you receive the newsletter in early May we may have a clearer picture of what the future holds for Loring Park meetings and events for the rest of 2020. As of now all park buildings are closed and the Friends of Loring Park has canceled the May Board Meeting and the Spring Garden Kick Off Party. The Gay Pride celebration has been cancelled along with the Music Festival in June, and July's Aquatennial Family Fun Night. At the present time the Park Board is not issuing permits for events and park rentals through the end of August. The Loring Park Art Fair, held in July, has not been cancelled, as the organizers are waiting to see if circumstances change for the better. Please check the Friends website or Facebook page for the most accurate and up-to-date information.

**Around the Park:** The Board would like to thank those who made donations to the Berger Fountain Rehabilitation Fund, as requested in our 2019 annual appeal. We received over \$5,000, bringing the fund to just under \$60,000. See Mary Bujold's article, right, updating us on the progress being made on the Berger Fountain project.

There is continuing bad news for the rebuild of the Loring Park tennis courts. The bid was let for a second time this November, and the same situation occurred as in the first bid: the bids

came in double the budgeted amount. At this time, the future of this project is uncertain, especially with the pandemic putting everything up in the air.

On a very good note, the wood duck house on the shore by the Community Building was used for nesting this year! We have been waiting for that house to be occupied so that we could install a camera paired with a monitor in the park building, letting visitors watch the nesting activities live. It is too late to mount the camera for this season, but the hope is to work out the technical hook ups and have everything ready for next spring's clutch of eggs.



Please all be safe, and hopefully we will all see each other in the park soon. We will get through this together.

—David Hile,  
Friends Board President

## Berger Fountain News

The Berger Fountain Workgroup Committee has been working diligently to move our process forward for the rehabilitation of our beloved fountain. We want to thank all who have expressed interest and have already come forward with donations to ensure that this community icon remains a part of the Park for the future.

We have a dedicated staff member from Minneapolis Parks, Emily Pachuta, working with us on this project, and have met with facilities management to best understand what funding resources are available through MPRB as we proceed with various components of the project.

Our near-term goals over the next three months include:

- Obtaining updated cost estimates for all mechanical and structural work needed; Securing a project manager to facilitate the project on our behalf
- Obtaining preliminary cost estimates and structural recommendations from a fabricator for the winter cover design
- Selecting and establishing an on-line funding platform for convenient access for our donors
- Updating the website and making the website a focus for ongoing communications regarding the Berger Fountain project

Again, we appreciate all your interest and look forward to bringing you more exciting news in the next few months!

—Mary Bujold, Chair,  
Berger Fountain Workgroup Committee

## COVID-19 CANCELLATIONS AFFECTING LORING PARK

As of press time, all Minneapolis park buildings are closed. Friends has cancelled our May board meeting, and the Spring Garden Kick Off Party. The Gay Pride celebration, and the Music Festival in June, as well as the July Aquatennial Family Fun Night in July have been cancelled. At this time the Park Board is not issuing permits for events and park rentals through the end of August.

**Park updates will be posted on Facebook (Friends of Loring Park), the Friends website, [friendsofloringpark.org](http://friendsofloringpark.org), and the MPRB website, [minneapolisparcs.org](http://minneapolisparcs.org)**

# The Lawn Ecology of Loring Park

Most of Loring Park is covered by mowed lawn. Lawns require a lot of work to maintain, use a lot of energy to mow (causing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions), and have minimal positive impacts on the environment. Although lawns have strong visual and esthetic appeal in society today, there were no mowed lawns for most of human history. Furthermore, at this time visions about lawns are changing rapidly; new concepts include more multi-species lawns, less high-maintenance mowed lawn, and more natural management techniques, with fewer artificial fertilizers and chemicals.

High-diversity plant communities (i.e. with more species per acre), produce more vegetative growth than monocultures, providing a larger foundational base of support for species higher on the food web. This is a general principle of ecology. A good example comes from plant-bird relationships—more plant species means more types of seeds available, and more insect species, providing food for a greater number of bird species. Diverse plant communities are also more stable in a changing environment, and can fill more different types of environments with vegetation.

For several years I carried out a lawn diversity experiment with the help of students in an Introductory Ecology course at the University of Minnesota. I asked students to count how many plant species could be found in lawns in their neighborhood, by surveying five sample areas, each one square yard in size. Students from the inner city commonly had 20-30 species of plants in their lawns, while those from newer suburbs, usually only 2-5 species. The explanation for high diversity in the inner city was that lawns had 100 or more years to accumulate new species, and many people did not apply weed killer or other pesticides to maintain a monoculture.

Many species of plants, native and non-native, can grow in lawns. Kentucky bluegrass—the most commonly planted grass—is actually not from Kentucky, but rather from Europe, as is our most common flowering plant in lawns, the dandelion. Old lawns have a mixture of many species, including species with conspicuous flowers such as various species of violets, creeping Charlie, and clover, and green plants with inconspicuous flowers, including numerous grass and sedge species, chickweeds and knotweeds.

From a lawn management point of view, the ecological-diversity principle means that diverse lawns have plant

species with specializations for particular habitat conditions, so that plants can fill a larger variety of ‘problem’ areas. Most lawns have sunny areas, shady areas, salty areas, wet areas and dry areas, and also variability in level of foot traffic. Try to make the commonly used monoculture of Kentucky bluegrass—envisioned as an ideal lawn by most people—grow in all of these areas, and you will fail. This single species cannot adapt to all these variations in habitat, it takes huge amounts of work to constantly reseed areas where it is not successful, and it requires constant watering and fertilization.

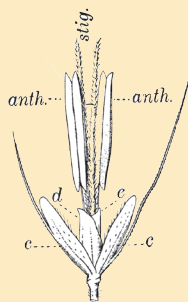
Fortunately, Loring Park has a diverse, multi-species lawn. As is the case for nearly all lawns managed by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, no fertilizers or pesticides are used in Loring Park.

It is also an old lawn with a lot of variability in habitat conditions, supporting at least 30 plant species. Perhaps the biggest environmental divide is between the western and eastern parts of the park. Prostrate knotweed occupies the western side of the park where salt from Hennepin Avenue and I-94 is deposited.

It is not only very salt tolerant, but you can walk on it and mow it. Perhaps most importantly (unlike Kentucky bluegrass), it stays green without being watered, except in the very worst droughts. The eastern part of the park has less salt, and therefore a lot of bee-friendly clover. It grows best in cool and moist habitats in semi-shady environments under our old oak trees. Clover also has nitrogen-fixing bacteria that grow in nodules on the roots; they extract nitrogen from the air and turn it into a form usable by plants, so that clover is self-fertilizing.

The dandelions in Loring Park anger people when they go to seed because it looks so messy. However, when people mow lawns, they stop the natural succession of plant species at the stage that favors dandelions. If not mowed, the dandelions would be gone in a few years, replaced by later successional species—larger grasses, then herbs like goldenrods, shrubs, and eventually trees. But we value lawns enough to put in the work and energy needed to hold succession at one place indefinitely, thereby becoming the dandelion’s best friends. My recommendation is to make peace with the dandelions and many other plant species growing in lawns with minimal fertilizers and pesticides, like the lawn in Loring Park.

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



**Now You Can Donate Online! It's Easy, Fast, Secure.**

**<https://www.givemn.org/organization/friends-of-loring-park>**

## 2020 Guest Artist Program Applications Due on May 3

The Loring Park Guest Artist program facilitates creative projects that arise from a dialog between Loring Park and the individual visions of Twin Cities artists. It is a unique opportunity to support local artists, as well as establishing a vital link between public parks and the arts.

Last year, we hosted Minneapolis artist Kelsey Bosch, whose sound sculpture, *Loring Park Soundscape*, premiered at the Community Arts Building last September. *Loring Park Soundscape* was scheduled to be reinstalled in the Performance Space building in early May, but the park buildings are closed due to COVID-19.

Look for full information about the Guest Artist program on our website: [friendsofloringpark.org/artist-residency](http://friendsofloringpark.org/artist-residency)

## Morning Meditation in Loring Park's Garden of the Seasons



Finally, spring! The Morning Meditation will tentatively return to the Garden of the Seasons on Friday, May 15. Traditionally we have been a seasonal group, sitting together in the park until winter's rudeness forced an end. This year, we were graciously allowed to continue at the First Unitarian Society until COVID-19 closed that door, moving us online to Zoom. "Perseverance furthers" or we just like being together. Come join us this spring. We'll be there, 7AM, sunny or overcast, quiet or lively, hot, cold, or perfect. It's always a new day, always a new Loring Park experience. What could be a better way to greet the day? Everyone is welcome. No experience necessary. Meditation instruction will be available upon request. Coffee and comradery always included. We hope to start on Friday, May 15, 7:00–7:45AM, in the Garden of the Seasons.

*Due to COVID-19, safe spacing will be observed. Morning Meditation updates will be posted on Facebook (Friends of Loring Park) and the Friends website, [friendsofloringpark.org](http://friendsofloringpark.org).*

*—Bill Tresch, Friends Board Member  
(and Friday Morning Meditator)*

## Meet New Friends Board Member, Nicholas Deacon

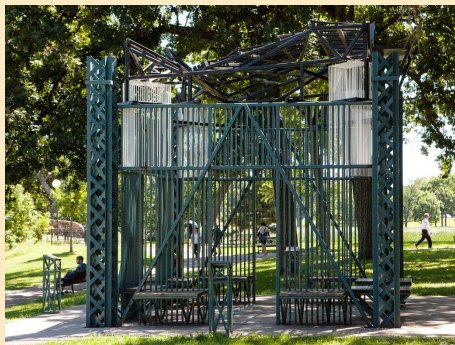
We are very pleased to welcome Nick to the Friends Board. Be sure to take a moment to wave and say hello when you see Nick around the Park!



"I moved to the neighborhood in 2013, and joined the Friends of Loring Park board 2019. My interest in the park spans the playgrounds and programs that my kids take advantage of, to the flower (and now vegetable) gardening that relies on volunteer support.

I am a member of the Biology Faculty at Minneapolis College, and the faculty advisor for the student gardening club, so I see many opportunities for increasing connections to our community members."

## Siah Armajani's Sculpture, *Gazebo for Four Anarchists*: a World Treasure Sits in Loring Park



*Photo Courtesy Walker Art Center*

Halfway between the bridge crossing the Loring Park pond and the park entrance across from the Walker Art Center, a cage-like structure sits next to the walking path. A bit odd and enigmatic, perhaps littered with debris from a nocturnal party to which you were not invited. Here sits a metal cage emphatically geometric, with a roof framed with steel tube stock, a complex, intricate structure of shifting planes which provides no protection from the elements. It's called a gazebo, but it's not a meeting place, or intended as a platform for a performance. It has four entrances, four columns on the corners, and the four benches in each corner of the pavilion are mirrored by benches on the outside, too. Four plaques, one in front of each entrance, are inscribed with four quotes from T.S. Elliot's *Four Quartets*.

Titled *Gazebo for Four Anarchists*: Mary Nardini, Irma Sanchini, William James Sidis, Carlo Valdinoci, it is Loring Park's world-class public sculpture, created by artist Siah Armajani. Armajani also designed the *Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge*, the familiar yellow and blue truss/suspension bridge that spans Hennepin Avenue and I-94, seemingly providing the escape route for this runaway child from the Walker Sculpture Garden.

Installed in 1993 as a gift from the Wheelock Whitney family, *Gazebo* was intended as a complement to the 1988 bridge. Armajani has designed and built many famous public works in parks and civic spaces throughout the world. Recently, models and photos of *The Gazebo* and other works were on display at his retrospective at the Walker Art Center and at The Met Breuer in New York City. *Gazebo* is currently in poor repair. The elements and the public have not been kind to this gift. Nonetheless, *Gazebo* remains an intriguing site to visit, ponder and reflect. It is insistently public, contemplative, socially engaged, defiant in posture and most fortunately, it belongs to Loring Park.

*—Bill Tresch,  
Friends Board Member*

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Friends of Loring Park acknowledges the following gifts, which were gratefully received between September, 2019 and March, 2020.

### GENERAL FUND

Virginia Canelake	Kay Constantine
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Terri Siderakos	Andrew Odlyzko
Gene & Pat Radecki	Emily Shapiro
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## 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.

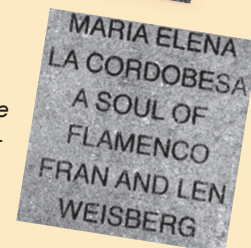
#### \$75 donation—a 4x8 brick

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.*



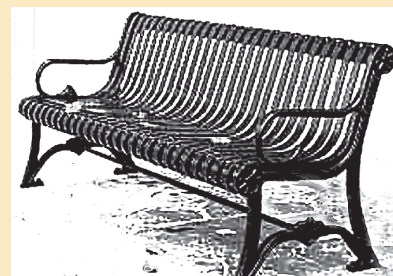
### Sponsor a native tree...

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.

**\$300 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: \_\_\_\_**

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**To sponsor the trees or perennials for the park entrance improvements, please call 612 673-5395.**

**Your Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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**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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## TENNIS COURTS

Richard Gwynne

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

## Renewed and Refreshed: Friends Gets a New Web Look

Board members Kia Thompson and Bill Tresch, with the help of "friend to the Friends" Sherry Brooks, initiated our web-site makeover. The new format makes it easy to find what you are looking for: opportunities to volunteer or donate, learn about park events or news, find information on Friends board activities, and more. The new site will be easy to maintain and keep current, so check back often for updates and beautiful new photos. Thanks to you three, and thanks to Bob White who created our original site many years ago. Same web address:  
[friendsofloringpark.org](http://friendsofloringpark.org)  
New mail: [info@friendsofloringpark.org](mailto:info@friendsofloringpark.org)

## 2020 Friends Gardening Calendar

Plant, water, weed, & deadhead. Meet your neighbors and cultivate community. No experience or pre-registration required, and all are welcome!

### Saturday Garden Group, 9 to noon

May 9	August 8
June 13	September 12
July 11	October 10

### Wednesday Garden Group, 9 to noon

May 27	August 26
June 24	September 23
July 22	

*Due to COVID-19, all dates are tentative:  
please sign up for the gardeners' email list on  
the Friends website, [friendsofloringpark.org](http://friendsofloringpark.org),  
to receive the most up-to-date information  
on gardening events.*