

# MINNETONKA MEMO

A publication from the City of Minnetonka



## Fire is fast

*This fall, teach your family about fire safety*

Watching firefighters rush up your street with lights and sirens blaring as your home burns is a horrible experience anyone would want to avoid.

A Minnetonka couple decided to turn their awful night into something much better. The Gammons are working to teach their young family more about fire safety and have stayed in touch with the Minnetonka Fire Department as they rebuild their home.

The trouble began last fall in the early morning hours when breaking glass from the heat of a fire set off their security alarm.

"The fire actually started in the back, outside of the home. It went undetected for a period of time until it spread into the home, including the attic," said Minnetonka Fire Marshal Luke Berscheit.

Thankfully, the family escaped unharmed. Still, it was terrifying just how quickly it spread and destroyed their home.

"Fire is fast. That's something we're working hard to make sure people understand," said Deputy Fire Marshal Sara Ahlquist.

"New studies show a fire can double in size in as quickly as one minute, depending upon what is burning and where, which means you may have as few as three minutes to escape."

With homes primarily full of synthetic furniture, safety experts stress that maintaining working smoke alarms on every level and in every sleeping area is more important than ever.

The Gammons recently visited the Minnetonka Fire Department to say thanks and learn more about fire safety. They also talked about how they plan to rebuild.



A street view reveals little damage, but the back of the home burned beyond recognition.

*Read more about fire prevention education on page 2.*



## FIRE DEPARTMENT AND CITY OPEN HOUSE

**Tuesday, Oct. 8 | 5-8 p.m.**

**14600 Minnetonka Blvd.**

# Building fire safety into your home

As the Gammons work to rebuild their home, they are choosing materials and features recommended by safety experts. That includes fiber cement siding, mineral wool for insulation and X gypsum for sheetrock. All have superior fire ratings. They also plan to install a home sprinkler system.

"We see safety advances in materials and technology every year," said Deputy Fire Marshal Sara Ahlquist. "There are also many simple and inexpensive steps people can take, even if you're not rebuilding."

## Fire safety checklist

- ✓ Maintain smoke alarms that are interconnected
- ✓ Sleep with doors closed to prevent the spread of fire
- ✓ Place fire extinguishers throughout home
- ✓ Check the condition of all electrical cords
- ✓ Clean the dryer of lint after each use
- ✓ Clean and check fireplace chimneys regularly
- ✓ Keep combustibles away from stoves, heaters and fireplaces
- ✓ Dispose of burning materials such as ashes, smoking materials, and coals from a grill by placing in a metal container with water before discarding



Interior damage to the Gammons' home.

More fire safety information at [minnetonkamn.gov/fire](https://minnetonkamn.gov/fire)



# Direct balloting begins Oct. 18

Come and vote early for the 2024 presidential election. Vote absentee in-person or by mail through Nov. 4. Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5.



## Direct balloting

Beginning Oct. 18, voters can place ballots directly in the tabulator Monday-Friday (8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.) at the Minnetonka Community Center, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd.



## Extended hours

<b>Saturdays, Oct. 26 and Nov. 2</b>	9 a.m.-3 p.m.
<b>Tuesday, Oct. 29</b>	8 a.m.-7 p.m.
<b>Sunday, Nov. 3</b>	9 a.m.-3 p.m.
<b>Monday, Nov. 4</b>	8 a.m.-5 p.m.



## Pre-register

Oct. 15 is the last day to pre-register to vote. After this date, you may still register while voting early or on Election Day with proof of residence.



## What's on the ballot

Visit <https://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us> to view your 2024 ballot.

More info: [minnetonkamn.gov/elections](https://minnetonkamn.gov/elections)

## Serve on multicultural committee

Minnetonka residents and community organizers may apply to serve on Minnetonka Police Department's new Joint Community Police Partnership Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC).

The advisory committee will meet monthly with police personnel to discuss topics important to members' communities and the police department. The goal is to strengthen police-community relations in an effort to better understand and serve our diverse community needs.

### Applicants should:

- Live or work in Minnetonka
- Embrace the diversity of our community
- Be willing and eager to participate in challenging and meaningful conversations
- Act as a bridge between the community and police department
- Work collaboratively to enhance relationships between police and the community, specifically with immigrants and communities of color

### How to apply

- Visit [minnetonkamn.gov/MAC](http://minnetonkamn.gov/MAC)
- Deadline is Dec. 1.

Questions? Contact JCPP Community Liaison Olivia Washington at 763-273-0855 or [owashington@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:owashington@minnetonkamn.gov).



## Meet Olivia Washington



Olivia Washington is Minnetonka Police Department's new community liaison through the Joint Community Police Partnership (JCPP).

Employed by Hennepin County, Washington works full-time within the Minnetonka department to build trust and dialogue between the department and Minnetonka's diverse communities.

"I'm truly excited to dive deeper into the Minnetonka community and connect with its residents. This role gives me a wonderful opportunity to listen, learn and build strong, trusting relationships that reflect the diverse voices and needs of our community."



## Congratulations!

Best wishes to Police Sgt. Steve Kniss (31 years), who celebrated a recent retirement with the City of Minnetonka. We thank you for your years of dedicated service to our community.

## Share your feedback

Visit Minnetonka Matters to provide your feedback on city projects and initiatives, including:

- The city's 2025 budget
- Police department drone program
- And more!

More info: [minnetonkamatters.com](http://minnetonkamatters.com)





# SAUNA in the PARKS RETURNS

Ages 18 and older

Celebrate the changing seasons by focusing on your health and wellness with family and friends.

Beginning Oct. 4, Shady Oak Beach will be transformed into a sauna and cold-plunge oasis. Adults can register for a 1.5-hour session in our Voyageur Mobile Sauna, equipped with an IKI wood fire stove, outdoor bonfire and overall glamping ambiance.

The lake will be open to registered guests for an optional cold plunge.

- Sessions available Fridays-Sundays
- Private group reservations available.

“It was so fun to try something new with friends, and we all felt so good afterwards ... What a great way to build community and unwind.”  
Gina Wolchansky, Minnetonka resident



More info: [minnetonkamn.gov/saunaintheparks](http://minnetonkamn.gov/saunaintheparks)

## New at The Marsh

Have you checked out The Marsh lately? Here's what's happening this fall:

### Join now

Don't be intimidated by the gym. The Marsh offers a relaxing, spacious environment that welcomes all abilities. Whether you're rehabilitating from an injury, new to an exercise regime or just looking for a quieter space to work out, check out The Marsh.

### Pop-Up Dinners

Café Anna Lisa is hosting freshly prepared pop-up dinners. These private, ticketed-only events include delicious starters, gourmet seasonal entrees and dessert, music and more.

### Upcoming events

**Oct. 13**      Sunday Brunch  
**Nov. 15**      Friday Dinner

### Retail shop to open

We're excited to announce The Marsh retail shop is opening soon! Watch for more info in November.



### Personal trainers

Need a little boost? The Marsh has more than a dozen personal trainers ready to help you tailor a fitness program to your needs. Check out our affordable packages and special deals for new members.

More info: [minnetonkamn.gov/themarsh](http://minnetonkamn.gov/themarsh)

Back by popular demand!



A friendly puzzle competition with prizes and more!

Saturday, Nov. 2

Session 1

9-11 a.m.  
1020701-01

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Session 2

11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.  
1020701-02

SESSION 2 SPONSORS:

GENERAL STORE  
OF MINNETONKA



More info and register by Oct. 23  
at [minnetonkamn.gov/jigsawjamboree](http://minnetonkamn.gov/jigsawjamboree)

Finding

COMMON GROUND

Disagreements on political viewpoints are on the rise in the United States. In an effort to bridge the divide and help residents agree to disagree, the city has invited Braver Angels Minnesota to give a presentation on Oct. 13 at the Minnetonka Community Center.

Sunday, Oct. 13

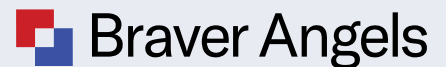
1-3:30 p.m.

Minnetonka Community Center

14600 Minnetonka Blvd.

Registration for this event is required at [minnetonkamn.gov/braverangels](http://minnetonkamn.gov/braverangels). This is a free workshop.

Braver Angels is a national movement that began in April of 2017, led by University of Minnesota professor Bill Doherty. The organization has led community conversations around the country, helping to reduce political discord.



Champion of equality

Williston Fitness Center Tennis Manager Felicia Raschiatore was recognized at the U.S. Open in September as a champion of equality.

U.S. Open Champions of Equality honors women across the USTA's 17 sections who have been leaders and trailblazers in advancing equality. Raschiatore's passion for tennis and dedication to equality have helped build the present and future of tennis and its next generation of leaders.

A former professional tennis player on the WTA tour, Raschiatore played in three grand slams and achieved a world ranking of No. 70 in singles and No. 80 in doubles. She has been the tennis manager at Williston since 2007.



# Water Quality

In a matter of weeks, Minnetonka transforms from a tree-covered canopy to a winter landscape. What we do with all of those leaves and to our streets and sidewalks can take a toll on our waters if we are not careful.

## What you can do



- Don't sweep leaves into the street. They wash into storm drains eventually feeding algae growth.



- Adopt a drain in your neighborhood keeping it clear of leaves and trash. Sign up at [Adopt-A-Drain.org](http://Adopt-A-Drain.org).



- Practice smart salting. One cup is plenty to clear 250 sq. ft. Clear it away once snow and ice melts.



## What we will do

- Minnetonka's engineering team designs infiltration basins – such as rain gardens – to prevent storm water runoff.



- The city works with four watershed districts to monitor and analyze areas that need improvement.



- The city carefully calibrates the entire fleet of snowplows to match salt use to winter driving conditions.

Learn more about what you can do at [minnetonkamn.gov/water](http://minnetonkamn.gov/water).

# Make a plan to tackle buckthorn

Are you frustrated by the spread of buckthorn on your property? You're not alone. Buckthorn is an extremely invasive shrub that forms dense, almost impenetrable stands in woodlands and yards. It shades out and replaces native plants, reducing diversity in Minnetonka's natural areas.

Unfortunately, successful buckthorn control requires more than just cutting down the plants. If you're planning to remove buckthorn, follow these tips to ensure your efforts are successful:



- **Don't** start until you have learned the most effective strategies for removal.
- **Don't** remove a lot of buckthorn all at once unless you have plenty of time and money to maintain the area afterward. Instead, remove it in stages over a period of years.
- **Don't** remove buckthorn between mid-April and Independence Day.
- **Please do:**
  - Prioritize removing female buckthorn.
  - Try to identify and protect valuable native plants that might be hidden among buckthorn.
  - Reseed as soon as possible after removal.
  - Maintain the site to manage any resprouting buckthorn or weeds.
  - Dispose of the debris properly.

## Ready to learn more?

You'll find a list of upcoming workshops and online learning modules at [minnetonkamn.gov/news](https://minnetonkamn.gov/news).

And here's another great option: Volunteer with us! Volunteering is a great way to learn new skills you can apply at home, while helping the community and meeting new people. Dates, locations and registration are listed at [minnetonkamn.gov/NRevents](https://minnetonkamn.gov/NRevents).

## City of Minnetonka Calendar

- 1 Farmers Market, 2 p.m.
- 7 City Council & Economic Development Authority, 6:30 p.m.
- 8 Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.
- 8 Fire Dept. & City Open House, 5 p.m.
- 9 Park Board, 6:30 p.m.
- 10 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 14 City Council Study Session, 6:30 p.m.
- 22 Book and Pie Sale, 11 a.m.
- 25 Burwell Spooktacular, 5 p.m.
- 28 City Council & Economic Development Authority, 6:30 p.m.
- 29 DEI Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 31 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.

City meetings are held in person. Visit [minnetonkamn.gov/participate](https://minnetonkamn.gov/participate) to learn how to also participate remotely. Watch meetings live and on-demand at [minnetonkamn.gov/tv](https://minnetonkamn.gov/tv).

For up-to-date information, visit [minnetonkamn.gov/calendar](https://minnetonkamn.gov/calendar) or call 952-939-8200.



CITY OF  
**MINNETONKA**

14600 Minnetonka Blvd.  
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952-939-8200 | [minnetonkamn.gov](https://minnetonkamn.gov)



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## Voting open for photo contest

From Oct. 4-11, vote for your favorite photos in the 2024 Minnetonka Photo Contest. Pick your favorite picture in each category at [minnetonkamn.gov/contestvote](https://minnetonkamn.gov/contestvote).

Winning photos will be featured on the city's website, social media, Minnetonka Memo and at an upcoming city council meeting.



**BURWELL** Friday, Oct. 25  5-7:30 p.m.  
**Spooktacular**  
Wear your best costume and have a spooktacular time  
at this free annual outdoor event!



Games • Crafts • Inflatables • Spooky hike  
Warm up by the fire • Burwell House tours • Food vendors

Free parking is available at St. David's Center.