

minnetonka memo

A Newsletter from the City of Minnetonka
March 2010

Remembering the late Ty Abel

ON JANUARY 19, 2010, LONGTIME Minnetonka resident and businessman Ty Abel passed away at the age of 94. For many years, the intersection of Minnetonka Boulevard and County Road 101 has been informally known as "Ty Abel's Corner."

In honor of Ty's longtime connection to the city of Minnetonka, we are re-running an excerpt of an article that originally was published in the August 1996 Minnetonka Memo and based on Ty's recollections of his life, as told to an interviewer.

Born and raised in Chaska, Ty Abel graduated from Chaska High School in 1933. While he dreamed of becoming a doctor or pharmacist, those dreams were changed by the Depression. As the family's oldest son, he had to find work to help his father supplement the family's income. Ty worked many different jobs to make a living, including newspaper delivery and clerking at hardware stores.

For several years he helped run a small service station, knowing that one day he wanted a station of his own. In October 1941, Ty and his wife Elsa took over the Standard Oil business at the southwest corner of Highway 101 and Minnetonka Boulevard.

Ty and Elsa rented a home their first year in Minnetonka, but soon bought a home in "The Pines" on Leroy Street.

In 1943, Ty left to serve in the U.S. Navy and didn't return until 1946. Elsa ran the station in his absence, selling gas for \$1 per six gallons. In 1946, a competitor built a station at the northeast corner of the intersection, but the owner soon suggested to Ty that he buy the new station, since he had all the business anyway. In July 1948, Ty moved across the street to his newly purchased station.

Service at that time was full service, and nozzles weren't automatic — the attendant had to hold the nozzle to fill the gas tank — and would then check the oil and wash all the windows. The station was open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week, including holidays. At first, Ty couldn't afford help, so Elsa brought all his meals to the station. If he had a service call, he'd put a sign in the window saying he'd be back in an hour. Ty also offered maintenance and repairs.



Ty Abel at his service station.

Ty Abel's service station brought many firsts to the city of Minnetonka, including a car wash and a Nash car dealership. Later, the Abels built the Aqua Bowl, closing the dealership in order to provide parking at the bowling alley.

In the early 1950s, the Abels moved to a small farm on Ridgewood Road. They also owned a duplex near Bay Street and Bay Lane, on a road that to this day is called "Abel Lane."

Ty was asked why he thought his business succeeded through the years, while others have come and gone. His response was, "Well, because we like what we're doing, and the people, I think, like what we are doing. We treat people right, give them a fair deal, do good work and make them feel at home and welcome."

From a leader in the area's first Chamber of Commerce, to leadership roles in the Lions Club and Bennett Family Park, to Raspberry Senior King in 1993, to president of his church, Ty played many key roles in the community.

Ty was preceded in death by his wife, Elsa, and is survived by son Michael (Michele); daughter, Kathleen Abel; son-in-law William Oyler; grandchildren Bill (Sarah) Oyler, Katie (Tony) Mulhern; and by nieces, nephews and other relatives. ♪

Changes to Eco Fair

ECO FAIR IS BEING REPLACED WITH A new environmental event this year, planned for early June and to be held outside. The event will feature a native plant market where you can purchase native plants from local vendors, native plant walks and fun kid activities. Look for details in the May issue of the *Minnetonka Memo* or on the city's Web site at www.eminnetonka.com.

For those of you who have attended the Eco Fair in the past, we appreciate your interest in natural resources and the environment. This edition of the *Memo* contains information on available upcoming natural resource workshops — turn to page 5 for a complete list. Please continue to check the city's Web site and future editions of the *Minnetonka Memo* for more natural resource educational opportunities.

Eggstravaganza is Saturday, April 3

CHILDREN 10 AND UNDER ARE INVITED to enjoy fun and treat-filled eggs at the spring Eggstravaganza Saturday, April 3, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Minnetonka Community Center. Enjoy a variety of events, including face painting, crafts, a jellybean counting contest, musical entertainment by Kidpower with Rachael, games and an egg hunt that takes place indoors and out. The spring bunny will be on hand, so parents, bring your cameras! Children must be accompanied by an adult. Don't forget to bring your basket for collecting eggs! It will be an "eggstra" special time! Registration is required by Tuesday, March 30, and the event fee is \$5. Call Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation Services at (952) 939-8203 to register. ♪

Adopt a Minnetonka fire hydrant near you

AS THE SNOW DEPTH INCREASES, IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER THAT FIRE hydrants be cleared of snow. Not only will an accessible fire hydrant save precious minutes for firefighters, it will also make the hydrant visible to snowplow drivers and less prone to damage as the streets department pushes back the existing snow banks to make room for the next snowfall. ♪



News for Neighbors

From the Minnetonka Police Department

NEWSPAPERS FOR NEIGHBORS APPEARS quarterly in the *Minnetonka Memo* with news for you about happenings in the Minnetonka Police Department. If you have questions about these items, call Nicole Nelson, crime prevention analyst, at (952) 939-8546.

Police citizen's academy applications due March 5

Beginning in April, the Minnetonka Police Department will offer the first-ever Police Citizen's Academy, an eight-week program that will provide Minnetonka residents with an in-depth look at the workings of the police department.

The program will include classroom lectures and hands-on experiences, covering topics such as police recruiting and training, crime scene investigations, emergency response team, community service officers, computer forensics, drug task force, school resource officers, police canine, crime lab, crime prevention, crime analysis, traffic unit, use of force and dispatch.

The academy is provided free to Minnetonka residents, with the goal of

educating residents about the daily operations and special training police officers receive and use to perform their duties.

Potential participants must fill out an application and meet the following criteria to be eligible for the academy:

- Commit to attending the eight-week program, Tuesdays, April 6 to May 25, 6:30–9 p.m.
- At least 21 years of age
- Reside in Minnetonka
- Agree to a basic criminal background check

Registration is due by March 5. Applications are available at the Minnetonka Police Department, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka or on the city Web site at www.eminnetonka.com. To have an application mailed or emailed to you, contact Nicole Nelson at nnelson@eminnetonka.com or call (952) 939-8546 and leave your name and mailing address.



Preventing theft from vehicles

If your customers or tenants are experiencing theft from their vehicles, you may purchase signs from the Minnetonka Police Department that state, "Prevent Theft: remove valuables from vehicles." Designed to provide a consistent message throughout the city, these signs are ideal for posting on private property including businesses, condos, townhomes, apartments, churches, or any other property with a parking lot vulnerable to thefts from vehicles. Signs measure 12"x15" and are \$15

each. To purchase a sign, call Nicole Nelson, crime prevention analyst, at (952) 939-8546.



2009 police department statistics

The police department's annual crime statistics for 2009 are now available online at www.eminnetonka.com—click on Police, then Crime Prevention, then Crime Statistics.

Street sweeping starts March 29

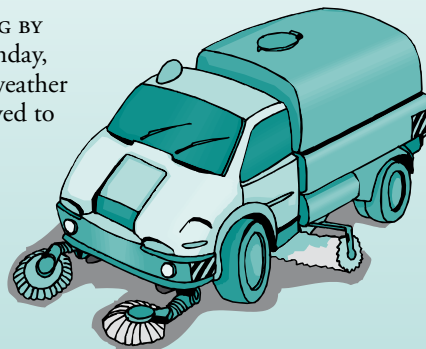
IN A SURE SIGN OF SPRING, STREET SWEEPING BY Minnetonka Public Works will begin Monday, March 29, weather permitting—and if the weather does not cooperate, the start date will be moved to Monday, April 5.

For four weeks, public works crews will sweep streets in two shifts, from 4:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The double shifts are necessary in order to finish sweeping in time to begin seasonal blacktop work on city streets.

Although crews try to stay out of residential areas in the early morning hours, it is not always possible. In these cases, crews try to minimize the noise and time spent in the neighborhood.

While the street sweeper does a good job cleaning streets, it can't capture all the debris, so we need your help! As the snow melts, identify the catch basins in your neighborhood, then remove and dispose of the accumulated debris and litter. This will help the street sweeping process.

Once sweeping has concluded, flushing of water mains will take place starting in late April. Look for information on water main flushing in the April *Minnetonka Memo*.



Upcoming events for Minnetonka seniors

LOCATED AT THE MINNETONKA Community Center, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka, Senior Services offers a wide variety of classes, programs, and activities for active older adults. For more information, or to sign up for the free monthly newsletter, the *Minnetonka Script*, visit www.eminnetonka.com.

Defensive Driving Classes

Call the Minnesota Safety Center at 1-888-234-1294 to register.

Four-Hour Day Course:

March 9, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Refreshments provided (no lunch).

Cost: \$20.

Four-Hour Evening Course:

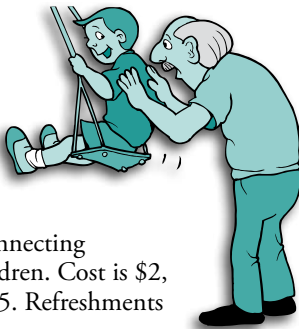
March 23, 6 – 10 p.m.

Refreshments provided. Cost: \$20.

Grandparenting 101

March 9, 1 p.m.

Grandparents with grandchildren from infant to age 6 are invited to attend for tips and pointers on connecting with grandchildren. Cost is \$2, due by March 5. Refreshments provided.



Navigating Medicare

March 11, 6 – 8:30 p.m.

Cost is \$10, due by March 8.

Tidbits from Maggie's hearth

March 12, 10:30 a.m.

Enjoy Irish cooking, storytelling and an authentic Irish lunch. Cost is \$6, due by March 8.

City seeks sponsors for public events

BUSINESSES, ORGANIZATIONS AND/OR individuals are invited to contact the city about sponsoring all or part of an event hosted by the city for the public. Upcoming opportunities include Summer Festival, the Burwell House Ice Cream Social, Music in the Park, Farmers' Market, and others. If you are interested in sponsoring an event, or for more information, please contact Recreation Services at (952) 939-8203. ☺

Chronic Conditions Workshop

Tuesdays, March 16 – April 20, 1 – 3 p.m.

Caregivers or individuals with chronic conditions are invited to meet weekly for six weeks to learn how to live well with chronic conditions. Set your own goals and create a step-by-step plan to improve your health. Cost is \$10 due by March 12. Call (952) 939-8393 for details.

St. Patrick's Day Party

March 17, 12 p.m.

Enjoy a delicious Irish meal of corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, Irish soda bread and dessert. Entertainment provided by accordionist John Kujda. Cost is \$7, due by March 12.



Breakfast at Applebee's

March 20, 8 – 10 a.m.

Enjoy pancakes, syrup, eggs, sausage, orange juice and coffee at the Ridgedale Applebee's. Tickets may be purchased at the senior center. Cost is \$6, due by March 16.

Bike Club Meeting Kick-Off

April 1, 10 a.m.

The 12 – 15 mile bike club route committee has 55 routes chosen already for 2010. Attend the kick-off meeting April 1. Annual fee is \$5 to join the group and receive route descriptions and email updates. Call (952) 939-8393 for more information. ☺

Upcoming concerts presented by MAM

THE MUSIC ASSOCIATION OF Minnetonka presents the following concerts in March. All concerts are free unless otherwise indicated. Donations are always gratefully accepted. For more information visit www.musicassociation.org or call (952) 401-5954.

Spring Gala Benefit

The **Minnetonka Youth Choirs** present the annual Spring Gala Benefit featuring special guest performer, a cappella men's choir Cantus. For reserved tickets, call (952) 401-5954. Adults: \$20; Students: \$15.

March 13, 7:30 p.m.

Arts Center on 7

18285 Hwy. 7, Minnetonka

Creative Connections:

A Concert for Two Orchestras

Minnetonka Civic Orchestra

St. Paul Jewish Community Center Orchestra

March 14, 7 p.m.

Arts Center on 7

18285 Hwy. 7, Minnetonka

Music to Lift Your Spirits

Minnetonka Concert Band

March 21, 3 p.m.

Arts Center on 7

18285 Hwy. 7, Minnetonka ☺

Summer employment available

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SUMMER EMPLOYMENT opportunities visit www.eminnetonka.com.

Departments hiring for the summer include recreation, public works and natural resources. Jobs range from part-time to full-time and many positions involve working evenings, weekends and/or holidays. Descriptions of positions available can be found on our Web site.

To apply, a completed city application form must be submitted. To apply online or download an application form, visit www.eminnetonka.com and click on Employment under "Most Requested" in the right-hand navigation bar. To obtain an application by mail, call the jobline at (952) 939-8212. ☺



2010 Property Taxes

Help is available for property taxpayers

Several state programs, described below, exist to assist eligible residents with the rising cost of property taxes. For additional information and links to the government agencies that run these programs, visit the city's Web site at www.eminnetonka.com or call the Minnesota Department of Revenue's tax helpline at (651) 296-3781.

Property tax refund program

The first program is the **property tax refund program**, or "circuit breaker." For taxes paid in 2010, homeowners with 2009 household incomes up to \$98,290 are eligible for a refund, and the maximum refund is \$2,530. Some renters with 2009 household incomes up to \$53,030 are also eligible for a refund. The maximum refund that may be available to a renter is \$1,510, and the amount provided also depends upon the total rent paid in 2009. There are additional eligibility allowances for renters/homeowners over age 65; those who are disabled; and for the number of dependents. Forms can be obtained from the Minnesota Department of Revenue (DOR) and must be filed with the DOR by August 15, 2011.

Special property tax refund program

A second state program is the **special property tax refund program** for homeowners whose property taxes payable in 2010 have increased by more than 12 percent and are at least \$100 over their 2009 taxes. The increase must not be attributable to new improvements, and homeowners must have owned and resided in their home on both January 2, 2009, and January 2, 2010. There is no limit on household income to be eligible under this program. The special property tax refund form is also available from the Minnesota Department of Revenue (DOR) and also must be filed with the DOR by August 15, 2011.

Senior citizens property tax deferral program

The **senior citizens property tax deferral program** allows people 65 years of age or older, whose household incomes are \$60,000 or less, to defer a portion of their property taxes on their homes. The program limits the amount of property taxes to three percent of the total household income for eligible property owners, and the amount of taxes to be paid each year will not change for as long as the homeowner participates in the program.

However, this is **not a tax forgiveness program — it is a low interest loan from the state**. The deferred tax is paid by the state to the county, and a **lien will attach to your property**. Annually adjusted interest will be charged on the loan, but will never exceed five percent. Application forms are available from the Minnesota Department of Revenue, and must be filed with the Hennepin County Auditor's Office by July 1 the year before the deferral would begin.

Foreclosure prevention counseling

The city of Minnetonka provides foreclosure prevention counseling through Community Action Partnership of Suburban Hennepin County. Call (952) 933-1993 for information.

Tax Notices

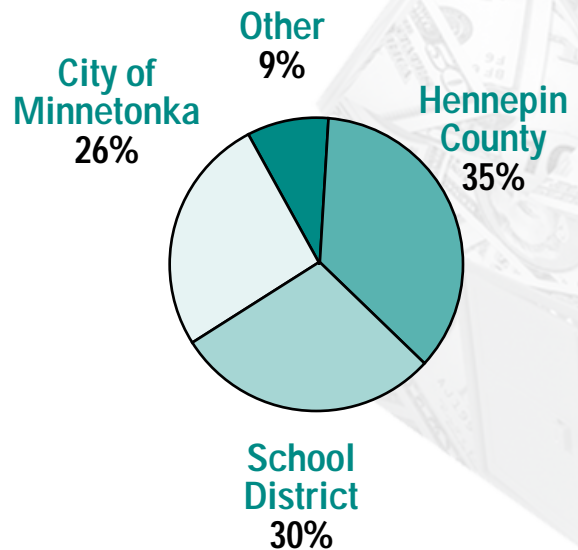
Residents will receive two notices this month related to property taxes. One is the **market value notice** from the city, which will affect property taxes to be paid in 2011 and is explained on the facing page. The other is the **property tax bill** for 2010, which is mailed by Hennepin County and must be paid this year.

City Tax Bill

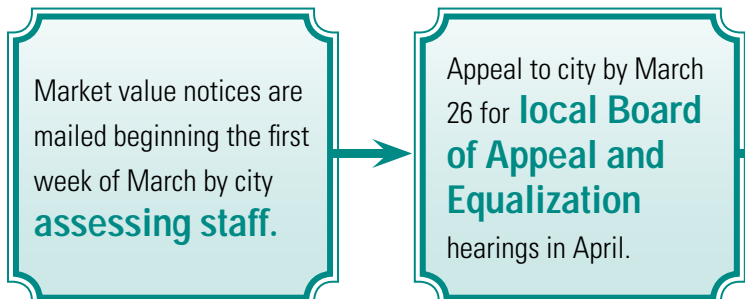
The city of Minnetonka continues to provide quality services at a reasonable price. The city provides a fuller range of municipal services than many other cities, and does not use special assessments to fund road and other improvements. Nearly eight of every ten dollars in city property taxes paid support streets and public safety, and most of the remainder is spent on parks and natural resources. Nevertheless, the city's tax rate remains among the lowest of comparable metro cities. Our residents continue to receive the high quality of services they have come to expect.

2010 homeowner's property taxes

The city of Minnetonka accounts for about one-fourth of a homeowner's total property tax bill. The remainder is comprised of taxes for your school district (30 percent), county (35 percent), and other jurisdictions (9 percent).



Market Value Appeals Process



2010 Market Value Notice

(Your market value notice applies to property taxes payable in 2011.)

Minnetonka's home values continue to decline

As with most locations in the metro area and across the nation, Minnetonka's real estate has continued to experience a decline in market values which began in 2008. Following a decline of around four percent last year, the Minnetonka single-family home declined between five and six percent in market value in 2009 from the prior year. Similarly, condominium and townhomes have continued to experience more significant declines. Commercial property values have also fallen again for the second year. It's important to remember that individual properties may vary greatly, and some may experience increases in value while others decrease.

Market values based on 2009 data

Property tax assessment in Minnesota is a complicated process strictly governed by state law. Although the city of Minnetonka administers the assessment, the city's work is overseen by Hennepin County and the State Department of Revenue. The state-mandated schedule requires that the values on your property, as reflected in the market value notice that you will receive in the mail this month, are based upon an analysis of real estate market trends during 2009. The values cannot reflect changes in market conditions since the end of last year. Changes this year will be reflected in the 2011 notices.

How is market value determined?

The Minnetonka Assessing Division maintains records for every property in the city. Adjustments are made to the market values of most properties, based on actual real estate sales from the past year for comparable properties. Approximately one-fifth of the properties are physically inspected each year, and adjustments to these are made based on the results of that inspection. Market value adjustments are also made for building additions, remodeling and other improvements.

What if I don't agree with my property's market value?

If you have questions or concerns about your property's market value notice or the assessment process, please call the Minnetonka assessing staff at (952) 939-8220. The staff can review property records and sales information with you.

Based on this discussion and review, the appraiser may or may not make a change to your market value. If not, you have the right to appeal.

How does the appeal process work?

The value subject to appeal is the taxable market value. Two avenues of appeal are available. Property owners may appeal directly to the State Tax Court. More common, however, is an appeal through the local Board of Appeal and Equalization, and if desired, then to the Hennepin County Board of Equalization.

The Minnetonka City Council convenes each year as the local Board of Appeal and Equalization and has local real estate professionals serve

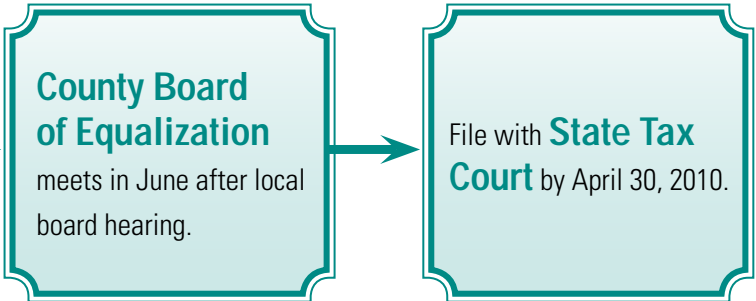
as its advisors. To make an appeal to the local board, you should first discuss your property's market value with the Minnetonka assessing staff. After that, you may make an appeal to the local Board of Appeal and Equalization by March 26 simply by asking that your property be listed for appeal. However, it is important to know that the local and county boards have the authority to raise or lower an appealed market value.

Remember, if you have questions or concerns about your property's market value or about the assessment process, please call the Minnetonka assessing staff at (952) 939-8220.

What do these numbers mean?

In early March, Minnetonka property owners will receive their 2010 market value notices. Four value amounts will appear on the notices:

- Estimated Market Value**
The assessor's estimate of the total market value of the property, or what the property would likely sell for on the open market during the year ending September 2009.
- Veterans Exclusion**
Qualifying disabled veterans may be eligible for a valuation exclusion on their homestead property, which would reduce the amount subject to taxation.
- Qualifying Improvement Value**
This figure shows that portion of the value of improvements made to an older home under the former "This Old House" law. This program expired with the 2003 assessment. However, property may still be receiving the value exclusion under this program.
- Taxable Market Value**
This is the value that your property taxes are actually based on, after all reductions, exemptions and deferrals are taken out.



Native landscapes a labor of love for these Minnetonka residents

MANY MINNETONKA RESIDENTS TAKE a strong interest in helping protect, preserve, and restore natural resources. Four residents in particular — Peggy Kvam, Heather and Brent Holm, and Maureen Hackett — have undertaken substantial projects to restore native habitats on their property and to help improve water quality in their neighborhoods. Below, these four residents reflect on and share some of their experiences and thoughts to help inspire and improve the success of other residents who are considering starting their own project.

Resident: Peggy Kvam

Project: Rain garden and native plantings

Location: North of Lake Minnetoga



Peggy Kvam in her new rain garden.

Peggy Kvam first became interested in native plant restoration in 2007, when she replaced several trees lost to Dutch elm disease with native trees and shrubs.

Not one to miss an opportunity, she planted a large rain garden to help capture and absorb the stormwater runoff that would otherwise wash across her lawn and into the street. Due to the potential benefits to water resources downstream, she qualified for a cost-share grant offered by the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District.

“My rain garden captures the runoff from dozens of homes upstream from my lot, and lets the water percolate into the soil, slowly restoring the groundwater and filtering pollutants,” said Peggy.

“As the plants grow, they provide food and shelter to wildlife as well. And, it’s beautiful, with flowering plants throughout the growing season!” said Peggy.

To plan and complete her project, Peggy relied on her experience volunteering in Minnetonka parks, guidance offered by her neighbors, and local reference books and workshops. Although she bought many of the plants, others were donated by neighbors or salvaged from other parts of

her yard. Peggy said her neighbors were very supportive of her efforts and advised others, “It’s a great way to get to know your neighbors, so talk to them and share your spreading plants, and you’ll be off to a great start!”

Residents: Heather and Brent Holm

Project: Full-yard conversion to native woodland and wildflowers

Location: North of Lake Rose



Heather and Brent Holm in their woodland landscape.

Heather and Brent Holm loved the beauty of native landscapes and wanted to replicate that beauty in their own yard, so they’ve been phasing in native plants ever since they began clearing buckthorn in 2004. They’ve gleaned information for their work from winter reading and from visiting other native landscapes. Their decision to make the change away from a yard dominated by turf has been reinforced by all the birds and pollinator insects attracted by native plants.

“Warblers move through in the spring and tons of late fall and winter seed browsers visit. The insect life is amazing, especially dragonflies and butterflies,” said Heather. The Holms’ native landscape also provides habitat for frogs and toads and is relatively low maintenance. Challenges include the four years it took to eliminate the invasive European bellflower, browsing from the deer and rabbits, and watering young plants during drought periods. Even so, the lawn has been reduced to a patch the



Before the Holms planted native landscapes.

Holms can mow in ten minutes with a push-mower, and most weeds are crowded out by native plants.

Resident: Maureen Hackett

Project: Savannah prairie under oak trees

Location: North of Lake Minnetoga



Maureen Hackett (right) and her daughter Marianna in their prairie garden.

About 13 years ago Maureen Hackett and her husband Roman chose to convert their entire back yard — a sloping woodland with turf grass — into native grasses and wildflowers, with the goals of providing habitat for birds, butterflies and bees, reducing lawn mower pollution, and providing beauty.

The conversion required buckthorn removal and preparation of the site for planting. In 2003 they decided to hire professional help, resulting in three thousand plant plugs planted in a 6,000-square-yard area. The Hacketts nurtured their native plants by removing weeds and invasive plants by hand.

“This is a work of love,” said Maureen. “Every day I walk through the garden down a path and watch the plants change nearly daily.” Their plantings attract wildlife and the occasional tree frog. “The movement of the grasses in summer is like water in an oasis,” says Maureen. As their plantings matured, Maureen learned “how great (the plantings are) for the water quality of the watershed,” with their deep roots that absorb and filter runoff. They have no regrets, and even hand cut their plants with a scythe in the spring, allowing the old plants to decompose and fertilize the trees. ♻️



After the Holms planted native landscapes.

Don't miss these natural resources classes

MINNETONKA'S NATURAL RESOURCES division continues to offer eco-topic workshops at selected times throughout the year. Due to the increased demand for woodland restoration topics the number of buckthorn and garlic mustard workshops and plant walks has increased. Watch the *Minnetonka Memo* and the city Web site at www.eminnetonka.com for dates and times of these and other talks. Below are a few upcoming workshops.

Purgatory Park Winter Walk

March 6, 1 – 3:30 p.m.

Purgatory Park

17315 Excelsior Blvd., Minnetonka
(Meet at picnic area parking lot)

Tired of being stuck indoors? Enjoy a winter walk at Purgatory Park and learn how to identify various plants in winter by looking at plant structure and habit, bark, buds and seeds.

Dress for the outdoors and join Janet Van Sloun Larson, city of Minnetonka restoration specialist and Kevin Clay, Midwest Natural Resources ecologist, on a one-and-a-half mile winter plant tour. The walk will follow the main trail with a little exploration off the path. Look at three habitat types and learn how to identify some dormant trees and shrubs and about habitat restoration progress. A plant list and map will be provided.

Registration is required and limited to 20. To register call Minnetonka Public Works at (952) 988-8400 or register online at www.eminnetonka.com.

Small Tree Pruning

March 9, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Shady Oak Room

Minnetonka Community Center

14600 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka

Are you one of the 900 households who purchased a tree through the city tree sale program last year? As a result of city's three tree sale programs, nearly 5,000 new trees have been planted in private yards throughout Minnetonka. But, you can't just plant it and forget it—you have to prune your new trees!

It's a common misconception that trees should not be pruned until they are mature. In fact, one of the best ways to ensure long life for a tree is to encourage strong branch structure with proper formative pruning.

At this workshop, you'll find out why trees in a landscape require more pruning than a forest-grown tree, where to start

pruning, how to make the proper cut, guidelines on how much to cut, best time of year for pruning, tools to use and the benefits of formative tree pruning. The first hour will include a presentation by Emily Ball, Minnetonka city forester, followed by an outdoor pruning demonstration on a couple different types of trees.

This workshop is being held earlier in the day in order to have some daylight for the outdoor pruning demonstration. Handouts will be provided. Registration is required and limited to 35. Please RSVP by calling Public Works at (952) 988-8400 or register online at www.eminnetonka.com.

Buckthorn Workshop

March 24, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Minnetonka Community Center

14600 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka

If you still have buckthorn but missed previous workshops, come learn about the do's and don'ts of woodland management. This talk by Janet Van Sloun Larson, Minnetonka natural resource specialist, is back due to continued demand. This workshop will be repeated in September and October. Registration is required—call (952) 988-8400 or register online at www.eminnetonka.com

Volunteers needed

Saturdays in March and April

March can be a pleasant time to work in the woods when longer days, warmer winter temperatures and songbirds remind us that spring is right around the corner.

Volunteers are needed Saturdays in March and April to assist with young buckthorn removal in two high-quality park habitats, the Jidana Park "hickory island" and Purgatory Park oak ridge. Volunteers will cut young second-growth buckthorn in order to release hickory, cherries, ironwood and other native woody plants.

Volunteers should dress in layers and wear winter boots. We will use loppers and hand saws to cut invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle above the snow-line. Volunteers can learn woody plant bud identification skills while working with others who have a common passion for the city's special woodlands. Work dates will be set for four Saturday mornings from March 13 to April 24 based on volunteer availability. Please call Janet Van Sloun Larson at (952) 988-8423 for more information. ☺

Winter tree pruning drop-off opens

THE CITY FORESTER RECOMMENDS November through March as the ideal time to prune oaks, as they are least susceptible to oak wilt disease during these months. This is also a great time to prune other trees, since insects and diseases are not active.

To assist residents who conduct proper winter pruning, the drop-off site at the Minnetonka Public Works facility (11522 Minnetonka Blvd.) will be open Saturdays, March 6, 13, 20 and 27, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. The site will not be open weekdays in March. The regular brush drop-off program starts Monday, April 12.

Branches up to 12" in diameter will be accepted. Christmas trees (without stands or decorations) will also be accepted. Proof of Minnetonka residency—a driver's license or utility bill—is required to drop off brush.

Please note: trash, grass, leaves, dirt, sod, lumber, fencing, or wood scraps are **not** accepted.

No brush or trimmings will be accepted from commercial tree or lawn services. ☺

Order rain barrels and compost bins

MINNETONKA IS PARTNERING AGAIN with the Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM) to provide rain barrels to residents at a discount (\$65 plus tax). New this year, RAM is also offering compost bins at a discount (\$55 plus tax). **Orders are due April 1.**

To purchase your rain barrel or compost bin, you must order online through the RAM Web site at www.RecycleMinnesota.org by April 1, then pick up your order at the Minnetonka Public Works facility April 16 or 17. Orders will be accepted by RAM until they are sold out. Rain barrels and compost bins will not be available for purchase at the pick-up site or event.

RAM also will be holding two other online sales this spring, at the city of Elk River Public Works facility and at the Living Green Expo. Please be certain to pick up your barrels and bins at the location you select when you order and mark your calendar with the correct pickup dates. No refunds will be available. You do not need to be a Minnetonka resident to order. For questions visit the RAM Web site or contact RAM directly at (651) 641-4589. ☺

minnetonka memo

March 2010



PRESORTED
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CITY OF MINNETONKA

A publication of the city of Minnetonka
14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka, MN 55345 • (952) 939-8200
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday–Friday

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Calendar

City of
Minnetonka

March
2010

Call (952) 939-8200
for meeting
locations.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Call (952) 939-8200 for meeting locations.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1 City Council study session, 6:30 p.m. (Topic: Liquor licenses, streetlights, signage)
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	11 Caring Youth reception, 7–8 p.m. 15 Economic Development Authority, 6 p.m. 16 Citizen Academy, 7–9 p.m.
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	18 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m. 22 City Council, 6:30 p.m.
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	29 Community Commission, 6:30 p.m.
28	29	30	31				3 2 Citizen Academy, 7–9 p.m. 3 Park Board, 7 p.m. 4 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m. 8 City Council, 6:30 p.m. 9 Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.; Citizen Academy, 7–9 p.m.

All meetings listed above are open to the public. Meeting dates and times are subject to change—please check www.eminnetonka.com for the latest information.

Minnetonka City Council and Planning Commission meetings are broadcast live on cable channel 16, and replays are available Mondays and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at noon, or anytime via videostream at www.eminnetonka.com. Agendas for council meetings are available on the city's Web site by the Friday afternoon prior to the meeting, and planning commission agendas are available by the Monday prior to the meeting.

Staying informed about city projects

THE CITY REGULARLY RECEIVES applications for projects that require planning commission and/or city council approval. Information on these, as well as many other city projects, is regularly updated on the city's Web site. If you'd like to stay informed, visit "MyMinnetonka" at www.eminnetonka.com—click on "MyMinnetonka" under "Top Picks." Through MyMinnetonka, you can learn about new projects in the city; provide online feedback on projects during their approval process, and receive email updates on projects. Planning commission meeting agendas are posted the Monday prior to the meeting. Visit www.eminnetonka.com for information. ∞

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JUDGES ENSURE THAT THE VOTING PROCESS goes smoothly and honestly. Serving as an election judge is a great way to meet your neighbors and protect one of our most cherished freedoms—the right to vote. Judges are needed for both the State Primary and the State General Election. This is a paid opportunity and training is provided. For more information visit our web site, www.eminnetonka.com or call Laura Ronbeck at (952) 939-8219. ∞

