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It's about time to *spring ahead* with your clocks and your thoughts. Hopefully you will find in this issue of the *Corcoran News* some warm, green ideas to catch up with the robins. I have indeed seen those spring birds. The first robin I saw was on my birthday in late March.

My mother's favorite season is Spring, but I guess that comes naturally when you're a gardener. I remember how excited she would get about the sprouting bulbs and new green shoots coming through wet dirt all over the yard.

There was a sliding door in our living room that led into the backyard with cement steps. I remember the first green shoots of tulips I'd see every year were some hidden right by those steps, so out of the way. They were so green- beckoning like old friends telling us to take off our shoes and come outside to play.

Watching the seasons turn in South Minneapolis is exciting. Now with Spring, people are out on the sidewalks just to be outside, the Midtown Public Market will soon be blossoming with local foods, and the lakes ice will break and wake up the fish below. And of course, the buzz of the MayDay Parade waking up a hibernating community.

... And just two weeks ago there was two feet of snow on the ground. Happy April, neighbors!

From Carla Kaiser, CNN Editor

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If you're looking to buy a 1-4 unit home in Corcoran, or if you purchased a home in Corcoran in the last 12 months, don't miss out on the CNO Homebuyer Assistance program! Funds may be used for assistance with down payment or rehab, or conversion of a previously non-homesteaded property. You make no payments until you move or sell, and if you remain in the home for five years, the loan is forgiven!

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€# First time homebuyers only	€# Must have bought a 1-4 unit home within the past year.	€# Must buy a 1-4 unit home previously non-homesteaded and convert it to owner-occupied homestead.
€# For down payment and/or closing cost assistance	€# Must be used for rehab of home, interior or exterior.	€# For down payment and/or closing cost assistance
€# Up to \$2,000 Deferred loan	€# Up to \$2,000 Deferred loan	€# Up to \$2,000 Deferred loan
€# 0% interest rate	€# 0% interest rates.	€# 0% interest rate.
€# Forgiven after 5 years	€# Forgiven after 5 years.	€# Forgiven after 5 years.
€# Income limits apply based upon family size (i.e. family of 1 - \$40,250 2 - \$46,000 3 - \$51,750 4 - \$57,500).	€# No income limits apply.	€# Income limits apply (same as Down Payment Assist. limits)
€# Must be owner-occupied	€# Must be owner-occupied.	

Low interest loans (3 or 4%) are also available through CNO in amounts up to \$10,000.

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By Cyndi Butler, Corcoran Resident

When I first joined the planning committee for Marsha's Benefit, I asked the group for the honor of writing an article about the benefit and about Marsha, for the *Corcoran News*. I knew that the many neighbors who know and care about Marsha would want to know about the benefit and how they could help Marsha and her family.

It took me quite a while to work up the nerve to start my article, I was worried that I wouldn't do justice to the extraordinary woman that I came to know through her work on a multitude of issues over the years.

Marsha Brekke embodies the spirit of the Corcoran resident. For years she has worked hard as a single parent to raise her two daughters. Her work ethic has gained her the respect and undying loyalty of her co-workers and clients, past and present, several of who are among the group of people planning the

upcoming benefit. But working hard during the day and at home was not enough for Marsha. Over the years I have seen her work on more issues than I can name. She is one of those amazing people who sees a problem and, instead of just complaining about it like most of us would, she actually does something about it!

When she saw that her block needed someone to organize National Night Out and other efforts, she became a block leader. When neighborhood youth complained that they needed positive things to do, she started a Teen Job Fair that went on to become an annual event for 11 years drawing up to 1000 teens and 60 employers. When things were going down hill at Corcoran Park she took on the Park Board and got things back on track. She donates food to the neighborhood Clean Sweep, has volunteered in numerous area churches, schools and parks. Ask anyone who

knows Marsha, and they will name another cause she has organized or been a part of.

In 1996, Marsha had her first bout with cancer. Being the fighter we all

know she is, she recovered. But the cancer came back and now she is in stage four; the cancer is in her liver, bones and lymph nodes. Because she's Marsha, she still goes into work, but on a very limited basis and this causes a financial challenge. That's why a group of people have come together to give a little back to someone who has given so much to her family, friends and community.

You can help too. **Rigcug" lqkp"wu"qp"Ucvwtfc{"Cr tka"4;" htq o "33<22" c0 o 0"vq"5<22" r0 o 0"cv" Gdpgp|gt"Nwvjgtcp"Ejwtej."** **Egfc t" Cxg" cpf" 63" Uv0. "hqt" Octujc" DgpgLv** Admission is free for the event, which includes a silent auction, live auction, and a lunch that you can purchase. There will also be live music throughout the event.

If you are unable to attend the benefit, donations are being accepted at all TCF branches to the *Marsha Brekke Benefit Fund*. The goal is to raise \$10,000, which will then be matched with \$5000 by the *Care Abounds in Communities Fund* of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. We are also accepting donations for the silent auction of small and large items. For more information please email benefit4marsha@yahoo.com.



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My name is Carlos Quezada. I am the new program assistant for Latinos En Acción, formerly the Midtown Latino Organizing Project (MLOP). I am originally from Mexico and I have lived here since September 1997. I am also the owner of Tecnologia Azteca, a home-based small business specializing in computer repair, training, and sales for the Spanish speaking community.

I have had a passion for reaching out to the Latino Community in Minneapolis since I realized that there was a lack of programs, resources and technology which inhibits many Latinos from moving forward. I am excited to be working with Latinos En Acción and I feel that I will be able to help Latino immigrants feel welcome and at home in the City of Minneapolis.

One of the more exciting projects that I am working on is the United Youth Soccer League. We are currently enrolling boys and girls from ages 6 to 15 years old. It is free to enroll, we only ask for a \$10 donation to help cover operational expenses. Please call me at 612-721-8800 for more information on this program or any other program of Latinos En Acción.



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Written by Sara Blanch, Corcoran Resident and member of Caring Corcoran Neighbors

Prostitution has been a problem for our community for some time and throughout the years many diligent members of our community have sought to fight the ongoing problems we have faced from the residual effects of this business. We have seen the force and strength of Southside Prostitution close down the many saunas up and down Lake Street. Phillips Weed and Seed have barbecues to reach out to the girls and help them begin to feel the beginnings of being part of a normal and caring community. And there are many other well founded efforts to get the women off the streets and have a chance at a normal life. Volunteers of America actually has a treatment program specially designed to empower these women and give them hope. The problem, unfortunately, it no one really knows about this wonderful program that was started when William Nelson, Director of Correctional Services at VOA, his staff and two former prostitutes brought their idea of prostitution rehabilitation to the legislator. They went to the legislator, when Jesse Ventura was Governor, asking for one

million dollars. They didn't get that, but they were awarded six hundred thousand and they took their proposal to the Sisters of the Good Shepard and the quiet upscale North Oaks Community and were granted an offer to start their rehabilitation there.

A small group of local community members representing the 3rd precinct, Phillips Weed and Seed, Public Housing, Caring/Concerned Corcoran Neighbors and others with the help from Gary Schiff were given the opportunity to meet Mr. Nelson and tour this facility. It was a remarkable experience. The center has two buildings. There are twenty-four rooms and each woman is given their own room which immediately leads to a sense of independence that is a key element of the program. There are two main rooms that are primarily used for group therapy but also allow the women to watch TV and movies in the small amount of free time they have. The programs director Vicky Smiley is an amazing woman and sets the tone of self-respect and caring as the backbone for the programs success. The women in this program are there by choice, they are there

to deal with not only their drug addictions, but also their past histories of sexual abuse. They are then given and taught tools to gain economic stability. The staff is there for these women to build them back up, to face their demons and to continue their support after they are finished with their 90-day program.

We were split into two small groups and given tours separately. Because our group was double the size of occupancy there, we tried to be small and unobtrusive to the women and their living space. While one group toured the facility, the other group had the opportunity to listen to the programs history, their challenges and successes. We also had a question/answer session to find out how we in our community could help out further. Mr. Nelson and his fellow staff offer something these women have lived too long without and that is hope. The hope that there is life without prostitution and that each woman that enters through those doors is worth having a good life, a life with love and respect. To be with their families and children and to live normally amongst a community and to

become an actual part of it.

One main problem facing the center is the accountability of the judges who hand down the sentencing to these women. They are often times paroled or put into the basic drug rehab program. They are in and out of the system in the matter of days or the thirty days it takes to go through the average treatment center. The judges are not using the best option out there, because this program that has an 85% success rate! These are people who are not only addressing the issue of drugs, but how to build people back up that have had continual struggles their entire lives, if not a majority of it. It's time to start speaking up and holding the people of the judicial and governmental systems accountable in helping the people of their own communities. These women deserve a chance at a drug free and uncontrolled life. Volunteers of America are offering these women what our own government has turned their backs on, and that is hope.

If you would like more information please contact the CNO office at 612-724-7457 or VOA 612.721.6327.

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By Val Lies, Corcoran Resident

In a unique example of interorganizational cooperation, the city of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Public School District, and the staff of Folwell Middle school (located between 36th and 37th Streets and 20th and 21st Avenues) are joining forces to created an area of beauty, education, and environmental betterment this summer.

Currently, the 3.6 acres on which the Folwell School sits is 89% covered with impervious surfaces which shed rainwater and snowmelt runoff directly into the city sewer systems. The roof drains on Folwell connect to the sanitary sewer while the asphalt-covered grounds shed all runoff into the stormwater sewers. The recently instituted "stormwater utility" charge (which all property owners now find on their Minneapolis water bill) for the Folwell is projected to be \$9500 annually due to the high percentage of rainwater runoff.

The construction of Folwell Rain Garden and

the redirection of the roof drains (as mandated by Federal and State governments) to the rain garden will eradicate that fee.

The expanse of asphalt on the southern end of Folwell's property will be removed except for a basketball court area at the northeastern corner. A 200 foot by 60 foot rain garden will be dug out and planted along the western edge of the space. The rain garden will dip to a depth of approximately 7 1/2 feet and will be planted with 27 varieties of native flowering plants and 4 or 5 types of native grasses or sedges. The remainder of the section will be covered with turf grass and an irrigation system will be installed. The western edge and approximately two thirds of the southern edge of the lot will be bordered by a concrete wall.

Rain and snowmelt will drain to the low area of the rain garden and soak through the loose, sandy soil naturally within 24 - 48 hours. Thus, more rainwater will replenish the groundwater tables and less will rush to the Mississippi through the sewers.

Plants both beautiful and advantageous to wildlife are slated to be put in. Providing spring to fall color, the rain garden sill contains several types of asters, yellow gentian, fragrant purple hyssop, Canada anemone, meadow blazing star, mountain mint, blue vervain, butterfly weed, and purple prairie clover, among others. Native grasses to be planted are fringed brome, bottle brush sedge, wood sedge, fox sedge, and switchgrass. Black chokeberry, red-twigged dogwood, and winterberry flowering shrubs will provide food for birds. Several thornless honeylocust trees will be planted as well.

Ongoing maintenance of the garden and grounds



Artistic representation of a rain garden by Marie Gardeski, Powderhorn Resident

will be the responsibility of both the city and the school district.

According to Carla Steinbach, Folwell's principal, the school feels the loss of field space will be offset by the educational opportunities to be found in the up-close study of nature that will be available in the rain garden. A proposed walkway through the rain garden and looping along the western edge facilitate such study. The walkway may not be possible due to budget constraints. Additionally, the school may be interested in participating a project to paint a mural on the wall which will border the western and southern edges of the property.

Beginning in mid-June after the close of the school year, the project is scheduled to be completed near the end of July. Several other public sites (i.e. Longfellow, Sanford, and Phillips) throughout Minneapolis will also be undergoing similar refurbishment.

For a good explanation of a rain garden, see Johnny Jones, Jr.'s re-printed column on rain gardens from last year, on page 7.

THE CORCORAN NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS
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The Corcoran Neighborhood News
 Corcoran Neighborhood Organization
 3451 Cedar Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55407

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First Market in MN to accept EBT/food stamp cards

Beginning on Saturday, May 6, the parking lot of the Anishinabe Academy on Lake and 22nd will once again become an oasis of bedding plants, local farm-raised meats, fresh baked bread, local artwork, and the first edible spring greens of the season. Springtime at the market will bring veggies such as lettuce, spinach, sweet peas, and strawberries (starting in mid-June). But amazing Minnesota produce isn't all the Midtown Public Market has in store this season- we will also be making history, as the first farmers market in Minnesota to become accessible to EBT/ food stamp cards.



technology, making this a sustainable program for years to come.

Our winter outreach has resulted in new partnerships to strengthen the market and diversify our vendor mix. The

Food stamp benefits in Minnesota were transferred to EBT debit cards in 1998, making the inexpensive, local produce at farmers markets inaccessible to food stamp recipients. Starting this spring, the Midtown Public Market will use a central wireless POS device to process EBT transactions, and will distribute one dollar tokens that can be spent on any eligible items in the market. By making the market responsible for handling the technology and reimbursing vendors for EBT sales, it will be easy for people to use their EBT/ food stamp benefits at the market and for farmers to handle the transactions. This same system will allow us to swipe credit cards and give out tokens. Now shoppers won't have to leave to find an ATM! A one dollar fee per credit card transaction will help to cover the cost of the

Whole Farm Co-op's stand will feature products from more than 20 local growers from Central Minnesota. All members of the co-op use sustainable, nontoxic or organic methods on their farms. Shoppers can place orders for any of their wide array of farm products online or by phone, and pick their order up at the market. The Minnesota Food Association's New Immigrant Agriculture Project is another new vendor; their program participants learn sustainable farming methods at their training center in Wilder Forest.

The EBT/ Food Stamp program and our outreach to diverse vendor and community groups is supported by a grant from Project for Public Spaces, Inc., with funding provided by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The grant is one of twelve projects supported by Project for Public

By Joanna Stone, Market Coordinator

Spaces' new, highly competitive initiative to diversify markets nationwide. Undertaken in partnership with the Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) and the North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA), the grants are part of a three-year, \$3 million grant-making program, which began in 2005 and is funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

"Throughout the years, Project for Public Spaces has deepened its understanding of the complex relationship between a market and the community it serves," says Steve Davies, Project for Public Spaces Senior Vice President and the Director of the Public Markets Program. "These grants provide much-needed financial support for farmers markets to reach their potential as central places in communities as well as significantly contribute to their communities' overall well-being. We hope these markets will inspire national adoption of innovative farmers markets and community development programs."

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East Lake St and 22nd Ave S**

Email info@midtownpublicmarket.org to sign up for weekly email updates on the market- what's in season, who's performing, and more!

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3451 Cedar Ave South
phone (612) 724-7457

WWW.CORCORANNEWS

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CNO is looking for a neighborhood resident who enjoys finance. Our current Treasurer is stepping down and we are looking for a volunteer to take her place. No experience necessary but a basic understanding of bookkeeping procedures is preferable.

Responsibilities include:

- Attending the monthly board meeting and giving a financial report
- Signing checks 2 times a month
- Reviewing all payables and receivables, timecards, and bank reconciliations
- Reviewing monthly financial reports prepared by the Bookkeeper
- Assisting the Director in Audit preparation
- Helping create the budget
- Attending any Personnel Committee meetings



Time Commitment: Approx. 6-10 hours/month

For more information, please contact Amy Arcand at 612-724-7457

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Latinos en Acción

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My name is Carlos Quezada. I am the new program assistant for Latinos En Acción, formerly the Midtown Latino Organizing Project (MLOP). MLOP was the result of a partnership between the Longfellow Community Council (LCC), Corcoran Neighborhood Organization (CNO), Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association (PPNA) and the Resource Center of the Americas (RCTA).

was to reach out and organize the immigrant communities in the City of Minneapolis with a special focus on the Latino community. As a result of surveys and research regarding our name recognition and relevance, MLOP has changed its name to **Ncvkpqu"Gp"Ceek»p**. The name is changing but the goals and objectives remain the same. There are some exciting new programs for immigrants this year. Stay tuned.

weeks, I will be contacting many of you to inform you about and enlist your support for these very important programs. One of the more exciting projects that we are working on is the United Youth Soccer League. We are currently enrolling kids from ages 6 to 15 years old. We need sponsors and

By Carlos Quezada, Program Assistant



volunteers and hope you will consider helping.

I look forward to talking with you in the coming weeks. Thank you.

**Latinos En Acción,
612-721-8800**

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As a community service, CNO offers photocopy and fax service at the CNO office.

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Fax Service

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Sorry, No incoming faxes accepted.

Neighborhood.org
 Minneapolis, MN 55407
 fax (612) 721-7588

Churches in the Neighborhood

On December 1st last year, Lebanon Lutheran Church at 21st Ave and 36th St. welcomed Central Community Church to share space. The purpose is to expand the message of Christ in the neighborhood. They moved into Corcoran from the Standish-Ericsson Neighborhood. Lebanon's services continue to be at 9:30am on Sundays, with many other community activities throughout the week, including special services for Holy Week and Easter. Sunday school is also offered for children.

Lebanon has welcomed Larry Fannon to the staff as an Associate in Ministry. The position is a partnership with Lebanon and Hosannah! Lutheran Church in Lakeville. Larry will be out and about in the neighborhood, so let's help him feel welcome.

Central Community Church is a non-denominational church that has ministered in the South Minneapolis area for the past 13 years. Walt McFadden was just installed as senior pastor. Central emphasizes ministry to the whole family and has programs for children and teens of all ages. They provide a job-training program, small groups, and Wednesday children and teen programs. Central is contemporary, multi-racial, and casually comfortable.

Central is scheduling a grand-opening weekend over Easter. On Saturday April 15th, they will sponsor an egg hunt at Corcoran Park from 10am-noon. Easter service is at 11am on Sunday with a dinner following.

The Brazilian Church of Hope is also worshipping in the Lebanon Church building on Sunday evenings at 6pm. If you speak Portuguese, you are invited to attend this bilingual service. When entering for this service, please enter through the red door off 36th Street.

For more information on any programs or churches, call Lebanon Lutheran Church at 612-729-7356.

Nc" Okuk»p< Nosotros, los residentes de Corcoran, en toda nuestra diversidad, procuramos reforzar y proteger el carácter único, vida llevadera, y la tela social de nuestro vecindario. Nosotros procuraremos alentar y habilitar a todos los residentes, negocios y dueños de propiedades para unirlos, hablando de nuestras cuestiones comunes.

EPQou" Okukqp"Uvcvg o gpv< We, the Corcoran residents, in all our diversity, will strive to strengthen and protect the unique character, livability, and social fabric of our neighborhood. We will endeavor to encourage and empower all residents, businesses and property owners to unite in addressing our common issues.

South High and Beyond

By Sue Redmond, Corcoran Resident

CNO volunteers, new residents, visiting parents from out-of-state, and old-time friends came down to Corcoran's own Chatterbox Pub Brunch on Saturday, March 11. A good time was had by all!

The food was fantastic, but my favorite part was seeing a lot of volunteers and Corcoran residents that I have had the privilege to meet and work with this year walk into the Chatterbox with all their family and friends. What a wonderful way to come together!

Let's face it! Beginning a day with good food and good friends is a wonderful way to support neighborhood spirit, and

a local business. Frankly, most of us don't mind bonding over a meal even if there is no other "cause" than the pleasure of each other's company.

Thank you to everyone who had brunch for Corcoran last month. We raised \$500 for CNO, a great push in keeping our neighborhood an excellent place to live. If you would like to join in the fun the next



Photo by KT Simon-Dastych, Longfellow resident

CNO Board member Gerry Tyrrell and his mother, Jane from Kentucky, enjoying their meal with family and friends.

time around, keep reading the newspaper for details as we are planning another date in the fall.

Sue Duoos

I live just down from South High and arrived home to find a letter from a student working on *The Southerner*, the South High newspaper. The letter was a request for feedback from immediate school neighbors on student parking. The school has closed their lot to student parking this year, causing street parking to increase. An effort was being made by the newspaper students to communicate about the parking issue, and despite the outreach, there were only a few returned calls.

I met with Sage and Micah at our local coffee shop to talk about the school paper, what there is available for youth in Corcoran and to discuss developing a relationship between the Corcoran News and neighborhood youth. The *Southerner* is distributed only at the school and features sports

and other student activities. Both Sage and Micah are seniors and college bound, so this is their last year on the paper. Both students report their parents are active in the community. They are aware of the crime concerns in the neighborhood. They say there is not much for youth to do in general in the neighborhood. Most spend time at the Mall of America or just hang out at friend's houses. There are few places to hang out besides coffee shops that are youth friendly and popular. The parks tend to be used by youth younger than these high school students.

We hope to incorporate more youth contributors from South High or the neighborhood to the Corcoran News. If local youth or students are interested in making submissions, contact CNO.

I have held a spot on the market board to lend support from the YWCA as much as I can. The market is a fantastic neighbor to the YWCA providing another healthy alternative convenient for our members.

More recently, Amy Arcand has asked me to fill the CNO Executive Board Vice Chair position. I accepted only after knowing that I am joining a strong leadership group with the drive to be heard and to generate positive change. I feel lucky to have had the experience in CNO being a community liaison for our YWCA members, the local businesses, and Corcoran residents.

I also hold the Vice Chair position on the Hiawatha Lake Business Association. All of this

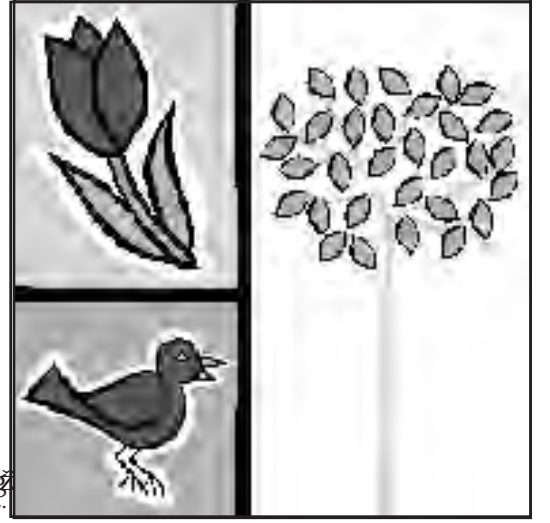
work in the community assists me in keeping "global" in my day-to-day work at the YWCA.

When I do get some free time, you may find me in the pool with the other bedheads at the crack of dawn, or trying to squeeze in some other training time. See you at the gym!



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Above is an example of the beautiful work you'll see at *Ala Dean and the Marvelous Lamp*, created by Anne Sawyer-Aitch. Anne participated in the team of *Stories on a String*, the puppet troupe that performed at the Midtown Public Market in 2004. After that summer of Saturday performances, she has spent her time developing *Ala Dean* which you'll see this month! Congratulations, Anne... from your friends in Corcoran!

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The first spring thaw can be an unattractive time, as frozen litter is uncovered in our yards, sidewalks, gutters, and park areas. Set aside an hour to 'adopt' your block, and make its sidewalks, boulevards, and streets look clean again. When the April showers come, that excess litter will where it belongs instead of rushing into our storm water systems, lakes, and rivers.

year, 7,320 pounds of trash was collected from areas surrounding these waters during the Annual Earth Day Watershed Clean Up hosted by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and neighborhood organizations.

contact the Earth Day 24-hour hotline at 612-313-7722, or visit www.minneapolisparcs.org.

April 22 is Earth Day, and brings the opportunity to join larger groups cleaning up our city waterways. Almost 1,000 people of all ages are expected to gather around the popular lakes, creeks and rivers of Minneapolis to gather garbage and celebrate Earth Day from 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m., Saturday, April 22. Last

The events will be held, rain or shine, at Powderhorn Lake (meet at Powderhorn Community Center, 3400 15th Ave S), Lake Nokomis and Hiawatha (meet at Nokomis Community Center, 2401 E. Minnehaha Pkwy), and many other watershed sites. Gloves and trash bags are provided, and day-of registration makes participating easy. For more information, including a full list of events and sites,

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the City of Minneapolis encourage residents to help keep city streets, yards and parks clean on Earth Day and every day. Clean communities mean cleaner lakes and rivers.



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Gardening For Hummingbirds

By Johnny Jones, Jr, Corcoran Resident

I must admit, I am amazed at the skills and ability of this amazing creature of God. I was in my garden last summer and there was a ruby-throat hummingbird taking nectar from my honeysuckle vine. This amazing creature can fly backwards, forward, hover, or take a dive. It can do all of this because its wings can turn 180% in all directions. Wow, that is amazing! There's a few more amazing facts about this creature. The hummingbird wing speed is 80 beats per second at normal speed. For the male in a mating dive, that speed increases to 200 beats per second. And when the hummingbird is resting it takes 250 breaths per minute... Amazing! If I had that kind of metabolism I would never need to diet.

Now, if all this doesn't amaze you, keep reading: They fly 500 miles nonstop across the Gulf of Mexico to their winter homes. They lay eggs the size of a pinto bean. They weigh in at 3 grams. Now, if that doesn't get you up to create a garden for this amazing creature, nothing will. I still wish I could loose weight like them!

Now let us talk about feeding them and attracting them to your yard and garden. What do they like to eat? They combine nectar and insects for their meals- insects for protein, and nectar for energy. They need to stop often to feed, perhaps stopping in your yard if you have the right plants. Hummingbirds need plants that have tubular flowers that enable them to engage their long needle-like beaks and tongues to lap up the sweet nectar from inside the long tubular flower.

To create that garden, make it curved and narrow with flowers that are different heights. Don't over crowd your beds. This will not allow the hummingbirds space to hover around the plant. Do you like to be crowded when you are eating? Of course not.

Hummingbirds don't locate nectar by scent. They locate it by color, the brighter the better. And here's some news: they love red. They will come to other bright colors as well, but make sure you plant colors in clusters. Many people have seen hummingbirds come to red clothes hanging on clotheslines.

Here is a list of annuals and perennials that will attract hummingbirds. They are high in nectar and they are tubular in shape. Many of these plants attract butterflies as well. What a deal-two for one!



Favorite hummingbird flowers include:

- Bee Balm, Butterfly Weed, Cardinal Flower, Beard Tongue Columbine, Coral Bells, Foxglove, Delphinium, Geranium, Hollyhock, Lupine, Phlox, Salvia, Spider Flower, Honeysuckle (Red), Zinnia

Happy gardening, and hope you see many hummers. Hang in there; they will come to your yard. Remember the rules: bright colors, tubular flowers, clusters and no crowding.

Johnny Jones, Jr. has a home-base business selling bedding plants plantmaster345@aol.com or 612-724-4817
Next month's topic: Gardening for Butterflies


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This article was originally published in the May 2005 issue and has been edited for space.

“What is a “Rain Garden?” you ask. A rain garden is an attractive garden with a special purpose; to reduce the amount of storm water entering our beautiful lakes, rivers and streams.

A rain garden is constructed as a place to direct the rain from your roof or driveway, and is landscaped with native perennials for our region. Rain gardens have a shallow, bowl-shaped ponding area, loose absorbing soils and are created to have the same function as a natural meadow. To put it simply, it's a shallow, wet area in your yard that is planted with native plants and wildflowers that like “wet feet”.

“Why a rain garden?” you ask. A rain garden is a natural way for you to help solve our storm water pollution problems, help recharge groundwater, and protect our water resources. A rain garden keeps rain



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By Sue Redmond, Corcoran Resident

Have you ever had a reaction to a cleaning product? I did years ago using a furniture spray. I got a headache and spots in my vision. I thought about it at the time, got rid of the product but ended up replacing it with yet another chemical cleaner. Many of us grew up in the generation where the smell of chemicals like pine or artificial scents meant clean. Clean surface but not clean environment. The other weekend, I finally got to that space where I stash cleaning supplies - some that have been there for years. I have seen the green cleaning products (meaning environmentally friendly) around and made my decision to commit my home to non-toxic products. Traditional cleaning products place pets and kids at risk. My old products are bagged up for the next recycle drop-off this spring.

Local green products are on the store shelves right next to the traditional products. Yes – they do cost a little more so be prepared. You can also make your own if you get motivated. A little baking soda scrub goes a long way.

method® products are the green Target brand. I replaced my spray cleaners with a lavender spray and grapefruit spray, depending on my mood. I replaced my wood cleaner with an almond oil based product – smells great and I do not worry about getting it on my hands or my pets being around it.

Restore® products are plant-based from a Minnesota company based in Shoreview. You buy the first set of bottles and then refill them at stations in local co-ops. They are sold at Lunds, Byerly's and Kowalski stores. No need to buy all those plastic bottles.

Mrs. Meyer's® products are from a local company with big national sales. They are sold in Lunds, Byerly's, Whole Foods, World Market and with Simon Delivers. Their line ranges from cleaning to pets supplies, are biodegradable made from essential oils. You pick by scent and purpose.

To learn more check out the Twin Cities Green Guide, you can browse by category. The guide is available in libraries, public schools, and local stores. Their web address is www.thegreenguide.org.

I am an active community member, Board Chair of the Midtown Restorative Justice program and a Loft member. Please email me at sured8@yahoo.com with comments or story ideas.

on your yard, where it naturally belongs. By making a rain garden you help improve water quality in streams, rivers and lakes. It also adds beauty to our landscapes when we use beautiful native perennial plants and it adds habitat for native birds and butterflies.

I believe that most of us would say that big industry is the cause of water pollution, but that is not the case. The EPA has researched us, and has determined that 50% of the pollution in lakes, rivers and streams comes from homeowners. It comes from yard care, yard waste and chemicals used on lawns and for household activities.

But you say, “How can we account for 50% of this mess?” When it rains, we get runoff from roofs, parking lots, streets and lawns – instead of soaking into the soil like it used to before we got here (development). This water along with everything it picks up along the way, ends up in our sewers and ditches that pour into streams, rivers and lakes. The

salt from roads, pet waste, lawn fertilizer, gas spills, oil and many other things will all get washed into our waters.

When you create a rain garden on your small part of the earth, you become part of the solution by helping keep the rain where it naturally belongs.

Now dig that shallow hole and start to contribute to the solution by planting some of the plants from this list: Milkweed, Liatris, New England Aster, Goldenrod, Black Eyed Susan, Indian Grass, Red Maple, Astilbe, Coneflower, Ferns, Joe Pye Weed, Switchgrass and many native Minnesotan plants.

This partial list can help us save our lakes, rivers and streams “One Rain Garden at a Time”. Remember two things, depressions and “wet feet”. We'll put a stop to that runoff!

Johnny Jones, Jr. is a Corcoran resident who has a home based business selling plants. He can be contacted at plantmaster345@aol.com or 612-724-4817

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