

# October

Photo © Patricia Bour-Schilla/ mural by Scott Murphy, woolydog@yahoo.com



October

## University Ave

“Pho all the way around,”  
The leather jacket boy says  
While the girls compare nail polish.  
The steaming bowls  
With plump shrimp swimming  
Between the transparent noodles  
And beef slices arrive. Then  
The click of chopsticks,  
The happy slurp from spoons.

Loren Niemi

OCTOBER

➔ The Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Capitol grounds in Saint Paul is dedicated on September 26, 1992

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26 Monday	
27 Tuesday	Pax Conversational Salon, Madhatters, 6:30 p.m. <a href="http://justcomm.org/pax-salon">http://justcomm.org/pax-salon</a>
28 Wednesday	
29 Thursday	Swing Night at Wabasha Caves, 6:15 p.m. lesson Rosh Hashanah <a href="http://www.wabashastreetcaves.com">www.wabashastreetcaves.com</a>
3 September 29: Amerigo Brioschi, sculptor, was born today in 1908.	

Photo © Tom Conlon



Hamline University School of Law and Hamline Apartments at 734 Snelling Avenue

30 Friday	Como Memorial Japanese Garden closes
1 Saturday International Day for Older Persons	Saint Paul Farmers' Market Twin Cities in Motion 10K, 5K, and Family Events Old-time music jam, The EDGE Coffee House, 9 a.m.
2 Sunday	Saint Paul Farmers' Market

October

# Warriors

Hannah Jacobson

It was my first year at St. Anthony Park Elementary, and my first year living in Saint Paul. During recess, I would sit in the spider tree and watch a large group of kids. I was too far away to hear what they were saying, and even though I wanted to know what they were doing, I was too shy to say a word. After about two months, at the beginning of recess, I walked up to one of the girls who was playing. Her name was Lia. I'd seen her in class, and she was pretty nice. So I asked her, "Lia, what are you playing?"

"Warriors," was her reply.

"Can I play?" I asked her.

"Stay right here and I'll go check."

She turned and walked away. I was tempted to run after her, but I did as I was told and stayed put. She came back a few minutes later with another girl. This girl was tall, with short, stringy blond hair. Lia said, "Here she is," and gestured at me. The girl stared at me, lost in thought.

Finally, she pointed at me and said, "Cougarkit." Before I could ask what she meant, Lia had taken me over to a small group of bushes. I have loved Warriors ever since that day.

# Potato Zen

Deborah Torraine

I was happy as a pig in dirt. No, I wasn't lined up for slaughter, nor birthing piglets, or rolling in the mud. But I was rootin' and diggin' in the earth. When Manny came upon me that cool Minnesota summer day, I was sitting near waist high in black dirt with sweet potatoes between my legs. Musta been a sight, 'cause Manny just laughed aloud and shook his head.

Manny and his woman, Walterene, had come up from Georgia to help me and some other women put together a kind of African Women's Farming Collective. But no way had I planned to be digging in the dirt planting sweet potatoes in the middle of the DNR's—that's the Department of Natural Resource's—latest land reclamation project. East Saint Paul's Gateway Garden turned out to be a sweet little spot, set along a bike path that borders highway 35E, but I didn't care. I did not want to participate in this part of the farming. I wanted to help talk about it, and eat from it, or maybe distribute the produce.

The funny thing is that now that the hundred-and-something slips had formed their little tubers—that's what they call the potato itself—the tubers, all snug and plump and red waiting for me to harvest, I felt like a mama with her babies. Maybe gardening is a little like giving birth to piglets. Praise God I don't have to nurse the darn things!

I put kneepads on over my pants so I could dig without my knees getting too sore. By the time I got halfway through our little eight-by-twelve plot, my body was feeling right as rain. I thought I would be sore the next day, but I wasn't. Matter of fact, I was not sore for a whole week, and pains that I had been complaining of all year mysteriously left my vessel. I was full of energy, talking back to people and running my mouth like a young girl. I'm a big woman and I often suffer from lower back pain. For days after being in that potato pit and up to my waist in rich earth, I felt wonderful!

No one ever told me dirt could do all that for a body! Sitting on that potato hill with my feet resting, covered with the dark moist earth and wondering if this was what it is like to turn to dust when you die, it made sense to me that what is in the earth is also what is in me. Right then and there, I figured we were one. Me and the earth were akin to each other. Sounds kinda Zen, don't it?

Zen or not, I do not fancy myself returning to the potato pit this year. The work is hard and dirty. I am grateful and satisfied, however, to recollect that if I must go back to the earth to make a living, that I can live pain free for a few days. And there is nothing like a sweet potato pie made from fresh food you done grown yourself. Eat, live, and thrive!

- ⇒ A century ago, Frank Boyd started his labor-organizing career trying to persuade Saint Paul African Americans to join a national movement of Pullman Porters.

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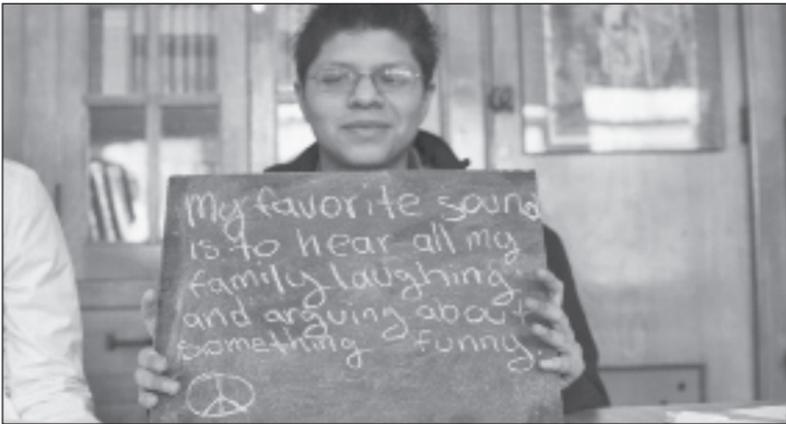
3 Monday Poetry Slam, Artists' Quarter, 8 p.m.  
World Habitat Day [www.artistsquarter.com](http://www.artistsquarter.com)

3 October 3: Dave Winfield, member of the Baseball Hall of Fame, was born today in 1951.

4 Tuesday Pax Conversational Salon, Madhatters, 6:30 p.m.  
<http://justcomm.org/pax-salon>

5 Wednesday  
World Teacher's Day Verse and Converse poetry reading at Nina's,  
hosted by Todd Boss, 6:30 p.m.,  
[www.toddbosspoet.com](http://www.toddbosspoet.com)

6 Thursday Storytelling, Coffee Grounds, 6:15 p.m.  
[www.thecoffeegrounds.net](http://www.thecoffeegrounds.net)  
Swing Night at Wabasha Caves, 6:15 p.m. lesson  
[www.wabashastreetcaves.com](http://www.wabashastreetcaves.com)



Photographer Wing Young Huie explores our urban lives in The University Avenue Project

### 7 Friday

3 October 7: Olivia Irvine Dodge, philanthropist and nature center creator, was born today in 1918.

### 8 Saturday Yom Kippur

Saint Paul Farmers' Market  
Fall Flower Show begins  
Challenging Aging 5K  
Old-time music jam, The EDGE Coffee House, 9 a.m.

### 9 Sunday

Saint Paul Farmers' Market

# The East Side Smells Like Home

Kindra L. Molin

**M**y father and I were driving to the new home I had just purchased on Saint Paul's East Side, when my dad took a deep breath and said, "Do you smell that?" I took a long sniff of the air in the car. It smelled of coffee and wet newspaper—nothing all that special for a damp October day. "I don't smell anything" I answered.

"You don't smell that?" he asked again. I took another breath, trying harder this time to pick up on whatever he was getting at. I shrugged; I smelled nothing at all unusual. "That's the East Side," he said with a satisfied grin. "This is where we're from. It's good to be home."

My dad was right, the East Side has always been home for my family, and it did feel good to be here once again. Five blocks from my house, a piece of my personal history spans a waterway that empties into Lake Phalen: Both of the stone bridges there were constructed by my great-grandfather, Herbert Molin Sr. He was, at the time, working for his father, John G. Molin, a Swedish immigrant and founder of Molin Concrete Products. Later, Molin Concrete would go on to lay many of the sidewalks in and around Saint Paul, stamping my last name into each one of them. Saint Paul is similarly stamped into my heart.

Every time I walk across those stone bridges by Lake Phalen, I think about the kind of East Side my great-grandfather helped to build. Then, the East Side was home to immigrants and blue-collar, hardworking Minnesotans, a place that people were proud to be from, with fiercely loyal residents who understood the importance of being neighborly, of looking out for one another. And I've been happy to discover, in the five years since I bought that house, that the same can be said for the East Side now. My immediate neighbors are Mexican American, Hmong American, and Native American. They are hardworking Minnesotans who look out for me, the single, thirty-something woman who is always mowing the lawn and shoveling the snow. They see me come and go, they wave to me as I pull into my garage after work. Sometimes, one of my neighbors has even shoveled my sidewalk. This was my family's East Side generations ago, and this is my East Side today.

The East Side has never had a reputation for being high class. It has never been the center of cutting-edge culture or sophisticated taste. But the next time you are on the East Side, I hope you try to see it the way I live it. It is a community of people who are working hard and looking out for each other in true Minnesota fashion. And if you're so inclined, take a deep breath. That scent you are catching is the smell of home.

# everything is here

Nora Murphy

on the hill where  
the Indian Mounds stand  
still—

still marveling  
as the mad  
spring river floods,  
still warding off  
the winter winds  
in woolen blankets,  
still smiling as  
the summer toddler  
falls to the grass,  
still praying when  
old ones pass  
away—

away to the  
world between worlds  
this one—  
the hill—  
where sky meets  
water, where  
mounds meet  
the shore

- The Women's City Club opens its new building at 305 St. Peter Street with a gala reception for members on October 15, 1931. Designed by local architect Magnus Jemne, the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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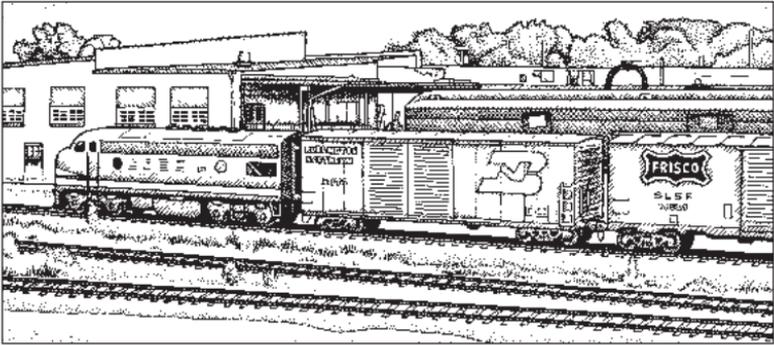
10 Monday Saint Paul Almanac Lowertown Reading Jam  
World Mental Health Day

11 Tuesday Pax Conversational Salon, Madhatters, 6:30 p.m.  
Indigenous People's Day <http://justcomm.org/pax-salon>  
World Food Day

12 Wednesday  
International Day for Natural  
Disaster Reduction

13 Thursday Swing Night at Wabasha Caves, 6:15 p.m. lesson  
[www.wabashastreetcaves.com](http://www.wabashastreetcaves.com)

3 October 13: Edwin Lundie, master draftsman and architect, was born today in 1886.



Train at Jackson Street Roundhouse located at 193 Pennsylvania Avenue East

14 Friday

15 Saturday

Saint Paul Farmers' Market

MELSA 5K

Old-time music jam, The EDGE Coffee House, 9 a.m.

Argentine Tango, Black Dog Cafe, 8 p.m.

3 October 15: Ruth Tanbara, Japanese American activist, was born today in 1907.

16 Sunday

Saint Paul Farmers' Market

Minnesota RollerGirls (Bout)

3 October 16: Carl Brookins, mystery writer, was born today in 1932.

# My Ministry Call

Min. Danny Givens Jr.

One Sunday morning during a men's worship service, God's power was flowing throughout the church like a power line in Las Vegas. Something struck me hard. I quickly lifted my hands in praise alongside my grandfather and soon felt something fit into my body as if I were a coverall.

At age eleven I had that unexplainable encounter. At the time, I was attending River of Life Christian Center located in the heart of Saint Paul on Selby and Chatsworth. It really didn't matter to me about this church's history, or the fact that it was a cutting-edge nondenominational church. My priority was being mischievous. So what if this church was founded by Pastors Arnold and Betty Williams, or that it evolved from the landmark church New Hope Baptist—founded by Reverend Kneily Williams, the father of Pastor Arnold. None of that meant anything to me. What mattered to me was getting what I wanted, when I wanted, and by any means necessary.

After the service, I still felt a rush of fear—even greater than the fear of the consequences that would ultimately result from my foolish crimes, selling drugs, being in a gang, or lying in my own blood knowing death was keeping close watch for the right time to slip in and snatch my last breath.

When my grandfather and I arrived home, I confided this unusual feeling that I had encountered in church to my grandmother. She immediately began leaping for joy and shouting, "Hallelujah! My grandson was filled with the Holy Ghost! He is now an anointed Man of God. He is going to be a preacher!"

I did not want to disrespect my grandmother, so I just let her pray over me and relish her moment. Not only was she greatly loved by her family, but she was (and still is) a pillar in the community. Everyone in the Selby-Dale Community knew Sister Mary Peoples, "The Prayer Warrior." I found her prophecy amusing, because the last thing in the world I wanted to be was anybody's preacher. No way! Instead, I proceeded to grow up by acting out in the streets, not growing in the Holy Spirit. I ran the gamut, until, finally, the walls of prison fell upon me, and death hung around me like a bad smell.

At age eighteen, after being shot by a police officer during my own attempt to rob a nightclub, I cried out for mercy, but found no relief.



Minister Danny Givens Jr.

It would be six years behind prison walls before that same fiery explosion would track me down and rip through my soul as it had ten years prior at my grandfather's side. But when it did, this time, I knew clearly what had happened. This time what should have been fear melted into calm. My sobbing was not from pain, but instead tears of joy. Although I was physically locked behind metal bars, never had I ever experienced a greater sense of freedom.

While in prison, I spent six years spreading the Gospel. That same electric spirit I felt when I was eleven, in the cutting-edge church on Selby and Chatsworth, is now plugged into the conduit of my soul. Recently, I began ministering to at-risk youth in Saint Paul through Save Our Sons Inc., a great nonprofit organization founded by retired Saint Paul Police Sergeant Melvin Carter Jr.

## OCTOBER

➤ Jim Younger, formerly of the James-Younger Gang, kills himself in Saint Paul on October 19, 1902. He is said to have been despondent over the restrictions of his parole.



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17 Monday

International Day for the Eradication  
of Poverty

18 Tuesday

Pax Conversational Salon, Madhatters, 6:30 p.m.

<http://justcomm.org/pax-salon>

Carol Connolly hosts Readings by Writers,  
University Club, 7:30 p.m., [www.publicartstpaul.org](http://www.publicartstpaul.org)

3 October 18: Walter Porky White, Ojibwe spiritual leader, was born today in 1919.

19 Wednesday

20 Thursday

Swing Night at Wabasha Caves, 6:15 p.m. lesson

[www.wabashastreetcaves.com](http://www.wabashastreetcaves.com)



Mychael Wright at his coffee shop, Golden Thyme Coffee Café

21 Friday

22 Saturday

Saint Paul Farmers' Market

Zoo Boo

CNHSA A Boo Run Run Run

Old-time music jam, The EDGE Coffee House, 9 a.m.

23 Sunday

Saint Paul Farmers' Market

Zoo Boo

# The Man Across the River

Alexander J. Theoharides

Once, drawn by the wings of whim, I left  
My home in Linden Hills to visit the man across  
The river. We took our coffee in paper cups and walked  
Along Snelling Avenue—past the Black  
Sea Restaurant and the Mirror of Korea.  
Of course there was the rain and the car tires  
Churning through the muddied puddles.  
Of course there was the old woman on the corner of Minnehaha,  
Smoking a Marlboro as she waited for the bus.  
Of course there were bits of glass pressed into the concrete  
Sidewalk, disguised as a mosaic.  
We pretended not to notice. We spoke of other lands,  
Other people, other lives we knew we would never lead.  
We avoided the rain beneath a cloth awning.  
“This broken life don’t make much sense,”  
The man told me. I smiled and told him the same. Then I closed my  
wings  
And made my way home.

October

# Peace in Harmony

created by various artists

James McKenzie

Photo © Patricia Bour-Schilla



Peace in Harmony mural, 66 East Rose Avenue

**M**urals are famously ephemeral. Sun fades their colors; ice and rain work their damage; surfaces crack, chip, and peel; buildings themselves rise and fall. Being public art, they sometimes generate controversy too: people object on aesthetic, political, social, or other grounds.

The mural created by youth participating in Arlington Recreation Center's 2008 Home, Hip-Hop, and Hope project embodies all of these challenges—including ephemerality, since it's not too long before the building will be torn down to make way for a newer, better one. The fifty Kidventure children and teens (ages eight to fourteen) had hardly finished their summer-long project when some neighbors objected to it and nearly succeeded in having the city paint over it, settling, temporarily, for its being covered with tarps until a community meeting decided the mural's fate.

As with many murals, especially collaborative ones, a wide variety of images adorn the wall. A particularly objectionable part to some was the six-story building in flames at the far end of the piece, black smoke pouring out of it, hovering over several other buildings, including a jail, which, for the young artists, makes the equally tall building at the other end, labeled COLLEGE—in sunlight and under white puffs of clouds—all the more hopeful. These kids, one sees, know just how valuable a good, complete education is. Peace in Harmony they labeled it, as part of the compromise that emerged from that meeting. There is no yin without yang.

October

## OCTOBER

➤ The October 28, 1898, Central High vs. Mechanic Arts battle in Saint Paul is the fifth oldest recorded high school football game in Minnesota history, and the first of the Saint Paul City Conference.

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24 Monday

United Nations Day

World Development Information Day

3 October 24: Harvey Mackay, businessman and best-selling author, was born today in 1932.

25 Tuesday

Pax Conversational Salon, Madhatters, 6:30 p.m.  
<http://justcomm.org/pax-salon>

26 Wednesday

Fall  
Sometimes we have to let them go,  
let the leaves fall.  
Under bare limbs  
we stand surrounded  
by the beauty  
of everything  
we've lost.  
Julia Klatt Singer

27 Thursday

Swing Night at Wabasha Caves, 6:15 p.m. lesson  
[www.wabashastreetcaves.com](http://www.wabashastreetcaves.com)



Saint Paul skyline from Indian Mounds Park with a tree silhouette in the foreground

28 Friday

Fourth Friday at the Movies  
Zoo Boo

3 October 28: F. Jay Haynes, photographer, was born today in 1853.

29 Saturday

Saint Paul Farmers' Market  
Dia de los Muertos Family Fiesta  
Zoo Boo  
Halloween Fearless 5K and 1.5 Mile Fun Run  
Old-time music jam, The EDGE Coffee House, 9 a.m.

30 Sunday

Saint Paul Farmers' Market  
Great Pumpkin Festival  
Zoo Boo

3 October 30: Mahmoud El-Kati, African American historian, educator, and community activist, was born today in 1935.

# A Community Builder in the Heart of Saint Paul

Uri-Biia Si-Asar

“ Don’t hold back, live your life to the fullest. For example, take the words out of your vocabulary such as: I can’t, I should of, if I could I would—negative words that take us hostage. Go for the gusto, have self-confidence. Try whatever you want, live your dreams and aspirations to the fullest. Be positive. Be positive and respectful to other people.”

These are some of Nieeta Presley’s mantras. She is the executive director of Aurora/St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation (ASANDC). Located in the heart of Saint Paul on University Avenue, and serving the Summit/University, Aurora/St. Anthony, and Frogtown neighborhoods, ASANDC builds affirming relationships among people in the community by advocating for and organizing to address community housing and economic development issues. Ms. Presley has been working there for about ten years.

ASANDC has been around for almost thirty years; it was formed as a community watch and crime prevention group. Their building was remodeled in May 2007 because ASANDC belongs to the community and they wanted it to be more community friendly. Board Chair Leetta Douglas designed it, and local business Booker Construction did the remodeling. Leetta Douglas is an elementary teacher at Maxwell and an interior designer and architect.

When asked about the hardships in working at ASANDC, Ms. Presley replied, “Fundraising.” Many funders don’t always see the importance of small businesses—they often compare small businesses to big businesses. Nevertheless, small businesses are more committed to their local communities. Also, funders often don’t understand the difference between social and community development—community development is more technical and difficult than social development and takes more time to see results. Most funders provide money for social development; ASANDC focuses on community development.

On the other hand, Ms. Presley likes how ASANDC is a grassroots organization—it was founded by citizens who wanted to change their community. It’s a very welcoming place. A little bit of everything goes on at ASANDC; some days they may have events involving political elections, and the next day they may have a community BBQ.



Nieeta Presley at her desk at the Aurora St. Anthony  
Neighborhood Development Corporation

Ms. Presley is understandably proud of several of ASANDC's programs, such as MCASA, which encourages and supports people to become first-time homeowners. A partnership with Model Cities, this project targets minorities and other people who normally have trouble owning houses.

Next are ASANDC's various collaborations that are creating much-needed affordable housing on University Avenue, such as the University Dale Apartments, completed in partnership with Legacy Management and Development Inc., which provided affordable housing over the Rondo Community Outreach Library and was awarded Best Mixed-Use Project by Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal in 2005. In addition, ASANDC is a partner in the nearby Frogtown Square mixed-use development, expected to be completed in late 2010, providing affordable senior housing above commercial business space.

Ms. Presley is also proud of ASANDC's leadership programs. Got Voice? Got Power! (GVGP) was created "To educate, organize, and mobilize the power of Ward One residents into a political voice that can be heard throughout the city of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, and the state of Minnesota," explains the organization's website ([www.aurorastanthony.org](http://www.aurorastanthony.org)). And the Power of One Plus One educates people in the neighborhood on how to become grassroots leaders, "to build power for themselves and their neighbors," and thus develop future leaders and keep the many successful ASANDC programs thriving.

Ms. Presley credits her family (parents and grandparents) and early employers for making her who she is. Those people nurtured and encouraged

her as a youth—her mother made her volunteer until it was ingrained into her. Her faith also shaped who she is today.

Born and raised in Saint Paul, she lived for a time in Washington, D.C., but came back to Saint Paul. When she was young, she used to go to Chicago to visit her family, and found that everyone there was worried and felt unsafe. In Saint Paul, everything felt safe and well-knit, even though there were areas she couldn't go to because she was Black. But there were feelings of connection and belonging in the community. One of her favorite things about Saint Paul is that it is "Saint Paul small"—you can meet anybody, and if you keep talking to them, you will find everyone is connected to each other somehow, some way. It's easy to see how the work of women like Nieeta Presley strengthens those community connections that make Saint Paul such a great place to live.



Fiona and me

## Molly and Me—Rescuing Fiona

Paul Bartlett

In the fall of 2009, Linda and I shared two of our saddest and happiest days in forty years of marriage. In September, our beloved little Scottish terrier, Lucy Lu, suddenly died.

Because her death was so unexpected, we were unprepared for the sudden grief. We still had our dear little Westie, Molly, but sorely missed “the girls.” It was Lucy and Molly—in tandem—that completed our empty-nester family. As our grief subsided, we opened our hearts and home to Fiona, a sweet little Scottie discarded by an Indiana puppy mill, where she had been part of the breeding stock. She was rescued by Memory of Monroe Scottie Rescue, a Minnesota-based Scottish terrier rescue group. Now, I’ve seen frightened little dogs before, but this disheveled canine looked like a refugee from a doggie death camp. Her rescuers are in our hearts and minds every day for giving us the privilege of adopting Fiona. To say we love our little “Fi” is an understatement.

Fiona was a frightened and despondent little dog. Her puppy mill trauma was evident. She just sat in front of our couch, without making a sound. She was afraid of us, particularly me. She would allow us to pet her but always in trepidation. When she walked, she looked like a four-legged “slinkie.” She kept her back down, her belly nearly touching the floor, not wanting to draw attention to herself. Her ears were down, her tail between her legs. We were matched with Fiona because I’m retired, home during the day, and anxious to be Fiona’s “stay-at-home dad.” For

the next several weeks, the three us—Molly, Fiona, and myself—worked on Fi’s socialization. Molly was invaluable. Not only did she introduce Fi to her canine buddies at Mears Park, but she taught Fi how to be a dog, how to play. And Fiona learned that not all humans are to be feared. While we have opened our home to many four-legged friends, none were sweeter than Fiona.

I’m not going to lie and say that her socialization was fast or easy. It wasn’t. For days, she would not approach us or respond when called. She would sit with us but only when picked up. Fiona did not play or bark; she was unresponsive.

It’s been a long process, but today, this sweet dog bears little resemblance to the frightened little gal that entered our lives. Now, Fiona is calm and confident. Her ears and tail stand erect. She loves to herd her humans and Molly, loves other people, and truly enjoys romping with the other Mears Park dogs. She has evolved into a true Scottie, with all of the “I am the center of the universe” attitude that this proud breed exhibits. Her temperament is remarkable. While no longer silent, she does not growl or bark in anger, reserving her yips for joyful play. She and Molly have not had a single spat—pretty remarkable for two terriers. Fiona settles sibling disputes with a peaceful calmness.

At the Memory of Monroe annual picnic/fundraiser, the little Scottie who has made the greatest progress since adoption is awarded the “June Bug Spirit Award” (named after a dear rescued little gal from Eau Claire, Wisconsin). Our Fi won the 2009 award. I wrote in my 2009 Saint Paul Almanac story (“A Mears Park Adventure”) that I could frequently be seen walking Molly and Lucy Lu in Mears Park. While the canines have changed, our love and affection have not. Our beloved Lucy Lu has passed the mantle to Fiona. And if you see us strolling through Mears Park, please stop and say “hello.”

Four little Scotties were rescued from that puppy mill hell; all were traumatized. My sweet little Fi was the eldest and sickest of the group. Due to her age and condition, she was the last adopted out. Fi is truly one of God’s most precious little creatures; providence waited patiently to merge our life paths.