

## CONTRIBUTORS' BIOGRAPHIES

**Margaret Anzevino** is the youngest of four daughters. She was actually born in the house on Beaumont Street. The first time she left it was when she went away to college. Margaret spent most of her thirty-nine years in education in the Roseville School District, first as a business teacher and then as a librarian. She loves traveling, reading, knitting, and politics. She left the house on Beaumont Street in 1995 when her mother died. She continued going back to the neighborhood until her church, St. Ambrose Church, closed. She still loves to drive down that street and relive the memories.

**Sasha Aslanian** is a lifelong Saint Paul resident, although she will admit to being born in Minneapolis. She now lives on Saint Paul's West Side with her husband and two daughters. She enjoys walking over the Wabasha Street Bridge to her job as a documentary radio producer at Minnesota Public Radio.

**Mary Kay Bailey**, part-time consultant and full-time mom, moved her family to Midway for the trains, parks, and yummy food. She is author of the blog *live.eat.play.twincities*.

**Paul and Linda Bartlett** moved from Green Bay to Eagan in 1996, discovered Lowertown a year later, and were hooked. They spent weekends frequenting the Farmers' Market and art galleries. Then epiphany struck: they dumped their suburban lifestyle and headed north. Look for them around Mears Park: they're the couple walking their Westie (Molly) and Scottie (Lucy).

**Michelle Myers Berg** is the fifth of eight children. She was raised by her parents, Paul and Arlene, and a whole host of fascinating people who roamed the streets of her Merriam Park neighborhood in the seventies. An actress, she has a BFA from the U of M-Minneapolis and completed her studies at American Conservatory Theatre. She lives in Saint Paul with her husband, Raymond, and their three children.

**Gunilla Bjorkman-Bobb**, who grew up in Finland and for some years called Denmark and Sweden home, moved to the United States in 1978. After being suburbanites, Gunilla, her husband, Gary, and their dog, Salla, now live on Saint Paul's Railroad Island. The gritty East Side neighborhood makes this family happy. The Bobbs can often be seen biking on Payne Avenue with Salla strapped in her basket, ears flapping in the wind. Or you'll see them in Swede Hollow Park, Salla optimistically in hot pursuit of deer or fox or hoping that the birds someday will forget how to fly.

**Patricia Bour-Schilla** has lived in Saint Paul all her life. She enjoys being with friends and family and spends her free time bicycling, hiking, and photographing. Her best friend is her partner, Larry.

**Mary Legato Brownell**, who grew up in Saint Paul, now lives just outside of Philadelphia and teaches in a nearby independent school. She's received study seminar grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Leeway Foundation, Mid-Atlantic Arts Council, and Pennsylvania Council of the Arts. She has been published in *American Poetry Review*, *Pivot*, *Comstock Review*, *GSU*, *Margje*, *Wind*, *InkPot*, and other journals. She was awarded first honors by WB Yeats Society of NY, finalist and honorable mention by the *Comstock Review*, "Discovery"/*The Nation* 2006, and others.

**Tom Conlon**, a Macalester-Groveland native, has served on the Saint Paul School Board since 1992 and continues as its lone Republican member (and Saint Paul's only Republican elected official). He enjoys organizing authentic North Carolina barbecues at Gibb's Farm each spring and making near-annual trips to Germany each winter to ride and photograph railroad lines, a hobby since childhood. Each season, he is the announcer for Central High School's home basketball games and track meets. He loves local history and wants to see traditional Saint Paul

landmarks and neighborhoods preserved. The *Saint Paul Almanac* gives him a way to capture those things he loves most about Saint Paul.

**Carol Connolly**, Saint Paul's first poet laureate, was appointed by Mayor Chris Coleman. Her family has lived in Saint Paul for six generations. She has been a political candidate, political and human rights activist, journalist, and poet. Her book of poems *Payments Due*, now in its fifth printing, was published by Minnesota Villages and Voices, a small press founded by poet Meridel LeSueur. Currently, Carol is a columnist for *Minnesota Law & Politics*, and for nine years, she has curated and hosted the monthly Readings by Writers series at University Club Saint Paul—one of a dozen venues in the Carol Connolly Reading Series named for her and now sponsored by Intermedia Arts. Each year, this series brings nearly 300 writers and poets to over 5,000 audience members.

**Cynthia Davidson Bend** is a budding young author of eighty-three years. Writing has enhanced her glamour, making her a three-time cover girl. Not since childhood, when she hit the front page of the *Saint Paul Dispatch* in the fond embrace of a circus boa constrictor, has she achieved such fame. So don't give up, you beauties: life begins at eighty. Read more: [www.cynthiabend.dgi.bz](http://www.cynthiabend.dgi.bz).

**Chelsea DeArmond** lives in Saint Paul's historic Railroad Island neighborhood, where she loves to spend lots of time reading and writing on her front porch and walking in parks. She is studying to be a librarian at St. Kate's.

**Anita Dualeh** is a freelance writer and English as a Second Language consultant. She enjoys cooking food from around the world and has collected recipes from Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Mongolia while living in each of these places. She is currently working on her repertoire of Somali cuisine.

**Badeh Dualeh** is a counselor. He is married and has a son. Though he has adjusted to winters in Minnesota, his favorite season is spring. Whenever he is in downtown Saint Paul, he likes to have a cup of coffee at Mickey's Dinner.

**Teri J. Dwyer** has been a fitness enthusiast all her life. She's been lucky enough to parlay her recreation passion into a great excuse to not grow up. As a freelance sports and health & fitness writer, she's made a career out of going outside to play.

**Tina Dybvik** boards the bus in Lowertown. Her work has appeared in *The Lake Country Journal* and *The Bear Deluxe Magazine*, and she occasionally sounds off in the *Downtown St. Paul Voice*. Visit her website at [www.TinaDybvik.net](http://www.TinaDybvik.net).

**Mahmoud El-Kati** is a teacher and a writer. He is an active member of our Twin Cities community. He creates, works with, or supports a number of grassroots efforts, programs, and institutions throughout his immediate community. He finds it especially challenging as well as rewarding to work with and among the young. He believes that a clearer and more thoughtful understanding of history and an appreciation of the real meaning of culture make us wiser and mentally healthy human beings. He believes that the myth of "race" is at the core of American values and spoils nearly every virtue the nation claims. He believes an education that respects all human life is the key to a just society and that education is the enemy of the ignorance that springs from racism.

**Abdulaziz Farah** studies English at MORE Multicultural School in Saint Paul. He hales from Ethiopia.

**Daniel Gabriel's** new short story collection, *Tales from the Tinker's Dam*, has nothing to do with Saint Paul. Though he has worked for COMPAS for over 20 years—both as roster artist and as director for the Arts Education and Arts in Health Care programs—he denies any conflict of interest.

**Tom Goldstein** is a graduate of Carleton College and the William Mitchell College of Law. He grew up outside Washington, DC, but has called Saint Paul home since 1984. He is publisher and editor of the baseball journal *Elysian Fields Quarterly* and a member of the Saint Paul School Board. He also co-founded the annual Saint Paul Gus Macker Three-on-Three Tournament and spent five wonderful years coaching at Midway Little League. This past spring, twenty years after graduating from law school, he finally took—and passed—the Minnesota bar exam on his first try, showing that everybody gets lucky once in a while.

**Heidi Grosch**, as a new American immigrant to Norway, has renewed respect for the work of Neighborhood House. She performed as Constance Currie for public television and a Neighborhood House anniversary celebration and co-authored a script with EPOCH Productions about Constance Currie and her brother, Edward. She now writes for educational and children's markets.

**Jan Zita Grover** lives in the Tilsner Artists' Cooperative in Lowertown Saint Paul, where she spins, knits, writes, and works at Mississippi Market on Selby.

**Patricia Hampl** is a true daughter of Saint Paul—born here, resident here, fed by the place. She is the author of several critically acclaimed memoirs, including the recent *The Florist's Daughter* (2007), and is the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship. You can learn more about her at [www.patriciahampl.com](http://www.patriciahampl.com).

**Phebe Hanson** has been keeping a diary since she was ten, writing poems since she was forty-seven, and e-mailing since she was sixty-nine. She is a Bush Literary Fellow who has published two books of poetry (*Sacred Hearts* and *Why Still Dance*), and co-authored a travel-friendship memoir, *Not So Fast*, with Joan Murphy Pride. Currently she is working on a book of poems about her mother, who died at age thirty-one, when Phebe was eight. Phebe is the proud mother of three grown children, nine grandchildren, and the great-grandmother of two.

**Barbara Haselbeck** grew up in Saint Paul and returned to live here about eight years ago, after her children were grown. She works as an editor in Minneapolis.

**Margaret Hasse**, winner of a National Endowment for the Arts Poetry Fellowship, among other literary honors, lives with her husband and two sons in the Tangletown area of Saint Paul. Her latest collection of poems is *Milk and Tides* (Nodin Press, 2008). Margaret's poems have been set to music and put in concrete in Saint Paul sidewalks. She hopes her poems will also appear on billboards, as skywriting, and stamped on the back of bowling shirts.

**Mike Hazard** is a multimedia artist who lives in Lowertown near the Farmers' Market. The poems here are from his series *Cornucopia*.

**Donal Heffernan**, a Saint Paulite for many years, figures the city takes planning to get lost in, which makes it one of his favorite places. A poet and writer as well as a baseball fan, he has written for the Tampa Bay Devil Rays, *FAN Magazine NYC*, and the Saint Paul Saints.

**Dwight Hobbes** has written for *Essence*, *Reader's Digest*, *Washington Post*, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, *Mpls/St. Paul, MN Law & Politics*, *Twin Cities Daily Planet*, and *Insight News*, where he writes the opinion column "Something I Said" and is lead arts critic. His plays are *Shelter*, *Dues*, *You Can't Always Sometimes Never Tell*, and *In the Midst*.

**Jennifer Holder** is a freelance writer regularly contributing to the *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder* and the *Twin Cities Daily Planet*. Born in Jamaica, she lived in New York and California before settling in Saint Paul. Her book *A Black American in China: My Year of Teaching English in Zhejiang Province* is available.

**Snow Htoo** came to Saint Paul in June 2007 after living in a refugee camp in Thailand. She doesn't know how her parents chose her name, but certainly they never expected she would one day play in the snow with her children during the winter. Snow would like to get a job and continue studying English. She studies Functional Work English with the Minnesota Literacy Council.

**Matt Jackson** is thirty and has lived in Saint Paul his whole life. He owns rental property and so has a lot of free time. He spends it eating pho on University, drinking beer on Selby, and reading in the sun on Grand Avenue, accompanied by a cup of Earl Grey. Drop by and say hello.

**Drew Johnson** is a software engineer, homebrewer, and roller derby fan. Under the name "Garrison Killer," Drew writes the game recaps for the MNRG. He lives on Dayton's Bluff with his wife, Sherry, and their son.

**Pat Kahnke** is a freelance writer, an international slow-pitch softball instructor, and the pastor of Saint Paul Fellowship Church in Frogtown.

**Deborah Keenan** is the author of seven collections of poetry, including *Good Heart* and *Willow Room, Green Door*. She is the co-editor, with Roseann Lloyd, of *Looking for Home: Women Writing about Exile*, which won an American Book Award in 1991. Among other awards, Keenan has received two Bush Foundation Fellowships, an NEA Fellowship, and the Loft-McKnight Poet of Distinction Award. She has four children and is a professor and faculty advisor in the Graduate Liberal Studies School at Hamline University. Keenan lives and works in Saint Paul.

**Garrison Keillor** is the host and writer of *A Prairie Home Companion*, the author of many books, including the Lake Wobegon novels and *Daddy's Girl*, and the editor of *Good Poems* and *Good Poems for Hard Times*. His most recent publications are *Pontoon* and *Liberty*. His syndicated column, "The Old Scout," is seen in papers coast to coast. A member of the Academy of American Arts and Letters, he lives in Saint Paul.

**Bob Knutson** is an eater: Serlin's pies; trail lunches in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness with bug juice (o.j.), raisins, and peanut butter on crackers; shore lunches with just-caught walleye; red velvet chocolate cake; ribs at Cherokee Steak House; and, a little out of the way, Sachertorte in Vienna.

**T. R. Lacy** was born in Minneapolis, 1943; BA, St. Olaf College. Retired English, speech, and journalism teacher. Editor, graphic artist, photojournalist, and poet. Founding editor of the *Elliot Park Surveyor* (Minneapolis) and the *Community Development Review* for the City of Minneapolis. Primary concerns/interests: all arts; "contemporary" liberté, égalité, fraternité; the commonweal and environmental sustainability; lifelong learning and serenity, etc. Currently residing in Minneapolis, focusing on poetry, photography, reading, and on *Jan*, his dear companion for sixteen years.

**Andrea Taylor Langworthy** admits she's not above stealing words from her husband's mouth for her *Rosemount Town Pages* newspaper column. One, about having lunch with her former husband, placed first in the *Chicken Soup for the Divorced Soul* contest. She also writes a monthly profile for *Minnesota Good Age* newspaper. Find her at [andrealangworthy@frontiernet.net](mailto:andrealangworthy@frontiernet.net).

**Michelle Leon** is finishing her degree in creative writing at Metropolitan State University. She loves writing, animals, cooking, gardening, things that are fun, and living in Saint Paul! Back in the day, she played in the band Babes in Toyland—yes, she will tell all about it, if you buy her a beer.

**Tiffany Lee** is a fourteen-year-old freshman. She loves to text on her phone and talk for hours after nine. She does nothing but sit around, babysit her little brother and her niece, and do chores. When possible, she writes poems and daydreams about one day flying with birds and tracking people down like a hawk. Otherwise, she's home being a complete bum.

**Kathryn Lindaas's** family settled in West Saint Paul after nine months of hotel luxury on United Airlines' dime. Despite a fierce loyalty to United and Saint Paul, Kathy went over to the other side when she moved to Minneapolis and her career path put her on Northwest Airlines' payroll.

**Charles Locks** has written and lectured on Cass Gilbert. He is the author of the novel *Greater Trouble in the Lesser Antilles*.

**Saul Lu** was born in Burma but because of government oppression fled to the refugee camps in Thailand and then came to the United States. He studies English at MORE Multicultural School in Saint Paul. Both he and his wife are employed at BIX Produce, alternating first and second shifts so they can also care for their children. His family likes going to Lake McCarron and other parks to swim, play soccer, and go sliding in winter. His favorite foods are his wife's home-cooked meals of pork or chicken with rice and vegetables. He loves bananas, grapes, and a variety of other fruits.

**Najla M.** is from Yemen. She's a student at Hubbs Center and is preparing for college. She has been living in Saint Paul for two years, and this is her second writing submission for the *Saint Paul Almanac*. She's so happy to join all the other writers in this beautiful book, which has many interesting subjects. Thanks for giving her the chance to join all of you again.

**William S. McDowell II** describes himself as a Black, thirty-six-year-old father of five, born in Kankakee, Illinois. He moved to Saint Paul in July 2000 and attended school at the MLC Learning Center in Rondo Library in 2008. He doesn't have his GED yet, but he still writes about his lifestyle in order to encourage those who are in the same boat he's rowing in.

**Ronee McHendrik** is mother/grandmother of ten—all of whom are, of course, fabulous. In addition to past publications as a biomedical research scientist, Ronee is currently writing a self-help book, *Don't Change, Just Bitch!* She is bogged down in the chapter "How to Relax and Enjoy Being a Procrastinator."

**James McKenzie**, after thirty-four years in the University of North Dakota English Department, eight of them directing UND's annual Writers Conference, volunteers at the Center for Victims of Torture and wears out shoes at an alarming pace in Saint Paul's Mac-Groveland, Merriam Park, and Highland Park neighborhoods.

**Arthur C. McWatt** taught for thirty-three years in the secondary schools of Saint Paul. He received his MA from the University of Minnesota in 1969. He has been writing about African American history for more than thirty years. He hopes to have his manuscript, *Crusaders for Justice: 1885 to 1985*, published in the future. Arthur and his wife, Katie, are the parents of four adult children and seven grandchildren. He's a lifelong resident of Saint Paul.

**Lou "The Photo Guy" Michaels** dreams of taking the perfect shot. He lives in Saint Paul and runs around each day taking photos. He's been photographing professionally for forty years. Contact Lou at [lou@louthephotoguy.com](mailto:lou@louthephotoguy.com) or at [www.louthephotoguy.com](http://www.louthephotoguy.com).

**R. Allen Miner** lives west of the river and has been getting lost trying to find his way around Saint Paul for over thirty years. He's done somewhat better since his daughter and her family moved to the Highland Park area three years ago. Grandchildren are a great learning experience.

**Jim Moore** is the author of six collections of poetry, including *Lightning at Dinner*, *The Freedom of History*, and *The Long Experience of Love*. His poems have appeared in many magazines and anthologies, including *American Poetry Review*, *The Nation*, *The New Yorker*, *Paris Review*, *Threepenny Review*, and *Pushcart Prize Anthology*. Moore has received many awards and fellowships. He teaches at Hamline University, the Colorado College, and online through the University of Minnesota Split Rock Arts Program. He is married to the photographer JoAnn Verburg. They live in Saint Paul and Spoleto, Italy.

**Phyllis Moore**, soon to be a world-famous science fiction and fantasy novelist, is the official biographer of precocious Danny Kress. Phyllis also writes for an online publication, [www.triond.com](http://www.triond.com).

**José Moreno** is a custodian in a Saint Paul middle school. He is licensed as a boiler engineer. Recently he started a small cleaning business with his wife. He has been involved in the Minnesota Community developing prevention programs for tobacco, HIV, and arthritis. He is part of a team making a thirty-minute Spanish video on HIV prevention that will be aired on Minnesota Public Television. Jose is very involved in the Episcopal Church, where he teaches classes on baptism and first communion. He loves spending time with his wife and daughter at Harriet Island, feeding the ducks and eating on the boat restaurant.

**Nora Murphy** lives in Saint Paul, the river town where she was born. She is the author of several children's history books, co-author of *Twelve Branches: Stories from Saint Paul* (Coffee House Press, 2003) and the forthcoming *Knitting the Threads of Time* (New World Library, 2009).

**Su mya Naing** is a Saint Paul Public School student. She is in ninth grade.

**Suzanne Nielsen** has never had an address outside of Minnesota a day in her life. It wasn't until recently, when phone numbers advanced to ten digits, that she thought of herself as an important contributor to a system held accountable. This is when she became a notary public. She carries her stamp with her at all times, with the Boy Scout motto on the tip of her tongue: *Be Prepared*.

**Judith Niemi** is an Iron Ranger by birth (Eveleth) and habit, and a long-time freelance editor, writer, and wilderness guide. She'll edit anything, writes mostly about travel and wilderness places. When not home in Saint Paul, she is probably teaching writing, canoeing, or animal tracking in northern Minnesota, Iceland, or the Peruvian Amazon. [judith@womeninthewilderness.org](mailto:judith@womeninthewilderness.org).

**Kimberly Nightingale** has been accused of telling stories. She fantasizes about a Saint Paul with streetcars once again running down Grand, Selby, St. Clair, Payne, Maryland, Snelling, West Seventh, and more. The streetcars gleam. There's no diesel exhaust. Everybody is meeting everybody. Kimberly gets crabby if she doesn't hear live music regularly. You can find her at a concert near you.

**Patrick O'Dougherty** is a Carlson Heritage Wall author at the University of Minnesota. In the fall season, he works in the haunted houses where he plays lead coffin. Is that you, coffin? He is also a writer leader in Progressive causes.

**Sandra Opokua** is a Saint Paul Public School student in ninth grade. She is originally from Ghana, West Africa.

**Eva Palma-Zuniga** is a Chilean journalist and a freelance writer. She was the Spanish acquisitions editor at Llewellyn Worldwide, editor of *La Prensa de Minnesota*, and writer for *Viceversa Magazine*. She also worked for the Resource Center of the Americas. She has received the "Chile con mis ojos" award twice for her short stories, which have been shown on a Chilean TV station.

**Gordon Parks** (1912–2006) was a photographer, filmmaker, writer, and poet who blazed an incredible path of artistic brilliance. He was born in Kansas and moved to Saint Paul when he was fifteen years old. After working as a porter, against all odds he made a name for himself as a fashion photographer in Saint Paul and later became a photographer and reporter for *Life* magazine, famous for his gritty photo essays about the grinding effects of poverty in the United States and abroad. He wrote several books, poetry, and screenplays. He wrote and directed *The Learning Tree* (1969) and *Shaft* (1971). His work won many awards.

**Alexs Pate's** debut novel, *Losing Absalom*, received a Minnesota Book Award and was named Best First Novel by the Black Caucus of the American Library Association. Other novels include the *New York Times* bestseller *Amistad*, *Finding Makeba*, *The Multicultiboho Sideshow* (winner of a 2000 Minnesota Book Award), and *West of Rehoboth*. Pate is assistant professor of African-American and African Studies at the University of Minnesota. He taught creative writing and literature in Saint Paul at Macalester College in the 1990s. Pate lives in Minneapolis.

**Melinda Pha** is a Saint Paul Public School student. She is in ninth grade.

**Mary Jean Port** teaches writing at The Loft Literary Center. A late bloomer, she wed in her forties and likes to say she married her first and second husband at the same time. She lives in that other city with her husband, stepdaughter, and the idea of someday getting a Golden Retriever.

**Kristine Price** is a writing major at Metro State University and a frequent contributor to *Wright County Journal Press* and *Drummer* as a features writer. When not fighting for computer time with her teen at home, she is working on a memoir of her life in Saint Paul.

**Brad Richason** exhibits his unbalanced mental state by running vast distances for no rational justification and engaging in even greater lunacy as a Twin Cities-based freelance author. He can often be seen running along the Mississippi with his two chief collaborators, his wonderful wife, Missy, and Roscoe, the mischievous Golden Retriever.

**Tou SaiKo Lee** is a Spoken Word Poet born from a refugee camp in Thailand; he reflects his experiences, struggles, and vibrant Hmong culture through his writing. He creates an ICE box where creativity melts off the sides and adapts into the shapes of whatever surface it lands on.

**Abram Sauer** is not Jewish. He only mentions this as once, or sixty-two times, he has been assumed to be, which he isn't. His first novel, *Madison Zaftig*, will be available later. Its first word is *The*. Abram lives in a tri-state area and welcomes writing projects. Contact him at [abesauer@yahoo.com](mailto:abesauer@yahoo.com). Check out his website at [www.madisonzaftig.com](http://www.madisonzaftig.com).

**Larry Schilla** was born on the levee and played on the Mississippi River and bluffs most of his childhood and still does by hiking and biking. He plans on living on the West End of Saint Paul for a long time to come.

**Andy Singer** is a four-armed, six-eyed alien with large horns and powerful jaws. In 1965, he came from the planet Neptor to observe the earth and make small drawings of everything he saw. His multiple arms have enabled him to be very prolific and his multiple eyes have enabled him to see things that most humans are unaware of. If you see him riding his bicycle around Saint Paul, don't be intimidated by his appearance. He's really quite friendly. You can see more of his drawings and cartoons at [www.andysinger.com](http://www.andysinger.com).

**Linda Straley** grew up on the East Side of Saint Paul. After college, she moved to Arizona and for a time lived in Indiana and Florida. Minnesota is her home now. Growing up, she loved spending time with her grandparents because they always made her feel special. She would

constantly pick their brains about family history, which led her maternal grandfather to give her a Scandinavian nickname that translated means “question box”—still fits to this day.

**Michael Teffera** was born and raised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He’s been here in Minnesota for two years. He graduated in Business Management from Addis Ababa University and worked in the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia for five years. Now he works at Wells Fargo Bank. He has three hobbies: writing short stories and poems, watching movies, and riding his bicycle.

**See Thao** is a Saint Paul Public Schools student. He is in ninth grade.

**David Tilsen** is still living in a rich fantasy world surrounded by family, friends, dogs, and squirrels. He doesn’t particularly like the squirrels.

**Drew Tilsen** is the ultimate grease monkey doctor. You can almost always find Drew at his automotive repair shop Magics Automotive located at 237 Richmond, one block from West Seventh and St. Clair. He says a doctor has it easy with only one make and two models.

**Ken Tilsen (aka Mandamus)** Can be found at a protest or at one of his seventeen (and counting) great-grandchildren’s birthday parties. Ken believes in *habeas corpus* for all people, including Americans and non-Americans, native peoples, immigrants, activists, farmers, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

**Steve Trimble** lives in the Dayton’s Bluff neighborhood near Indian Mounds Park. He has taught at the college level and specializes in researching and writing the story of the Twin Cities and Minnesota. He serves on the editorial board of the Ramsey County Historical Society and the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission. This year he has a new book—*Historic Photos of St. Paul*—and a backyard full of heirloom tomatoes.

**Gaoiaong Vang**, Gao for short, is fourteen years old. Regular, hilarious teenage Hmong girl hoping one day she can roam the world with the dinosaurs. Yeah . . . She loves long walks on the beach and bogo dancing, *not*. She enjoys herself and she enjoys hanging out with the world. That’s all.

**Diego Vázquez, Jr.** writes poems to flowers, birds, rocks, rivers, salmon, and people too! Vázquez wrote stories in *Twelve Branches*, and his novels include *Growing through the Ugly* and *The Fat-Brush Painter*. You might meet him in your school through a COMPAS residency. He is proud to have his poem stuck in cement.

**Julian Welna** is a thirteen-year-old Saint Paul native in eighth grade at Highland Junior High School. He loves the outdoors and enjoys fly fishing, writing, poetry, hunting, boating, swimming, and shooting clay target sports.

**Lia Yang** moved from Vietnam to the U.S. in 1993. After spending five years in San Diego, where it’s nice and warm, she moved to Saint Paul where, she says, “it is not.” Despite the weather, she loves to spend time outdoors in her big vegetable garden, and really enjoys walking everywhere she can. With five children and many, many grandchildren to visit, she puts in a lot of miles. Lia studies English at the Hmong American Partnership.

**Kao Kalia Yang** was born in Thailand’s Ban Vinai Refugee Camp in 1980, and she immigrated to Saint Paul when she was six years old. A graduate of Carleton College and Columbia University, Yang is the co-founder of Words Wanted, an agency dedicated to helping immigrants with writing, translating, and business services. Visit her web site at [www.kaokaliayang.com](http://www.kaokaliayang.com).

**Nhia Xiong** is a Saint Paul Public School student. She is in ninth grade.