

## Reflecting on 2024

Another year has nearly passed, and most things considered, it was a good year.

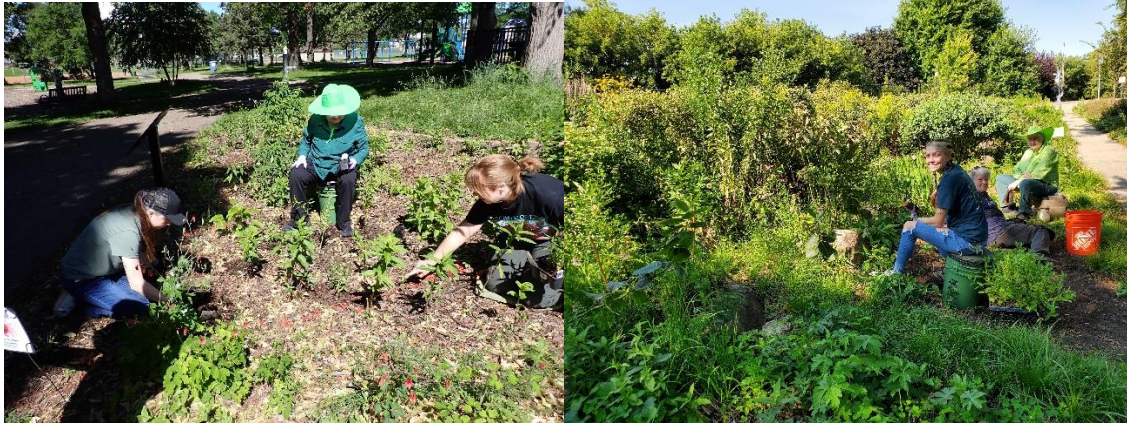
**Family.** Our immediate family is well and is keeping very busy with family, friends, work, and organizations. Lila's cousins Diane and Gail visited in July. Our hearts and thoughts are with them as Diane deals with cancer.



**Volunteering.** Lila served on the neighborhood organization board and helped navigate an administrative merger. She actively canvased and posted flyers to get out the vote. Lila worked with neighbors to prepare a proposal to create a new mural in our local park. I continue to serve on the Southeast Seniors Board of Directors and am currently serving as Chair. Southeast Seniors supports older adults so they can remain in their homes with an enhanced quality of life. I also served as a proposal reviewer, nationally and internationally, and as a consultant on NSF and other projects.

**Native Prairie Pollinator Gardens:** Due to the huge amount of rainfall in the Spring, SE Como community pollinator gardens thrived and required a lot of maintenance. Lila organized and coordinated weekly gardening maintenance events. Native plants that would ordinarily be two feet or less high, towered to over four feet. Lila helped organize "Art in the Gardens" events to help feature the gardens.





Longtime friend and colleague Rocio Chavela visited in June, and we enjoyed the pollinator gardens and catching up over meals.



**Financial Alignment with Inclusive Teaching Excellence (FAITE).** I've been part of a Working Group in the Accelerating Systemic Change in Undergraduate STEM Education Network (ASCN) for many years. On February 20-22, 2024, academic change agents like me), chief financial/business officers, learning analytics experts, and academic leaders met at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to discuss a charge to align financial and academic decision making. Participants came to consensus on the benefits of integrative

decision-making that involved co-leadership from academic, student success, and financial “sides” of the academic enterprise.



<https://mailchi.mp/de951ababc27/financial-alignment-with-inclusive-teaching-effectiveness-faute-workshop-brief?e=6700c3ba42>

**Nature Walks and St. Croix River Canoe Trip.** Throughout the year Lila and I and sometimes family and friends went out for walks in nature in nearby parks. Mid-June I did a 5-day canoe trip on the upper St. Croix river with family and friends. It was remarkably remote. We saw one other person in four days. The weather was mostly beautiful; however, it rained the night before our last day.





**Museum Visits.** We strive to visit a museum with family and/or friends about once per month. Here are some pictures from the Cafesjian glass art museum.



**ASEE Conference.** Late June I attended the American Society for Engineering Education conference in Portland, OR. It was great to catch up with longtime friends and meet new folks. One highlight was that I was one of 25 people elected to the ASEE Hall of Fame.



**Bicycling.** I was invited to join a weekly bicycling group and really enjoyed bicycling with them. Part of the ride was a standing tradition of stopping for coffee. Riding with the Tuesday group as well as lots of other rides added up to 1100 miles of bicycling this summer.



**Wednesday Coffee Club.** For the past year or so I've been meeting with a group of retired neighbors each week for coffee. Our men's group engages in delightful and far-reaching conversations.

**Reading.** One of the joys of retirement is that we have more time to read, although my stack of unread books somehow grows. We have two little Free Libraries that are regularly frequented by neighbors. Lila puts out new children's books for Halloween.



Lila reads a couple books every week and when she has finished them, she sometimes gives them to me, but usually puts them in the Little Libraries. We have great neighbors and are happy to share tools. We help one another out with snow clearing with a shared snowblower.

Of the many books I read this year, I highly recommend Robin Wall Kimmerer's "Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World." Many of the messages resonate deeply with me and I think they provide some ideas and hope for the future. For example, here are a couple excerpts:

“Serviceberry, or Shadbush as I learned it, provides a model of interdependence and coevolution that is the heart of ecological economics. Serviceberry teaches us another way to understand relationships and exchange. A Serviceberry economy as our model prompts the opportunity for articulation of the value of gratitude and reciprocity as essential foundations for an economy.” Reciprocity—not scarcity. Page 74.

In a gift economy, wealth is understood as having enough to share, and the practice for dealing with abundance is to give it away. In fact, status is determined not by how much one accumulates, but by how much one gives away. The currency in a gift economy is relationship, which is expressed as gratitude, as interdependence and the ongoing cycles of reciprocity. A gift economy nurtures the community bonds that enhance mutual well-being; the economic unit is “we” rather than “I,” as all flourishing is mutual. Page 32.