

# Northeaster

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## Shoreham roundhouse gone



Shoreham roundhouse, July 31, 2019.  
(Photo courtesy of Charlene Roise)

by Margo Ashmore

About two decades after establishing that they have the right to tear down Minneapolis' last railroad roundhouse, July 30, CP Rail's contractors started clearing Shoreham Yard of an era when trains were king.

Today, the operation at Shoreham, 2800 Central Ave. NE, is "intermodal," transferring shipping containers full of goods between trains and trucks, trucks and trains. That requires paved surfaces, and paving requires stormwater management on site.

With much of the site's past pollution cleaned up, there is still some monitoring and remediation going on. In March this year the rail company met with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to review their plans for eventual redevelopment on the East Side, resulting in approval June 17 of their Remedial Action Plan.

Though CP's public relations rep Andy Cummings said CP first discussed the expansion plan with the city in October 2018 it apparently wasn't obvious that "eventual" meant "roundhouse demolition July 2019." Cummings said they "met with First Ward Council Member Reich and his staff on June 12 to discuss the proposal in detail."

In what Reich described as a "sucker punch," the railroad communicated with his office in late July that they were to start

demolition shortly and stated all the legal reasons that they did not have to seek permission or permits. He sought legal advice and hoped to get a strong proposal together to keep the roundhouse. Reich said the Friday before the Tuesday, July 30 roundhouse teardown, CP basically said, "we're not sending a request, we're telling you." (See related history, page 4.)

Archival photographers documented the site July 31. Charlene Roise of Hess, Roise and Company said, "We worked from north to south, and after we had finished with the north section (the newest part of the roundhouse), they started demolishing that."

Reich said he met with Veit, the contractor, on site to identify some artifacts to put aside for a possible interpretive site: bricks, doors, beams, plus fire hoses and other items indicating that people worked there.

This latest adaptation of the overall 230-acre Shoreham site will include re-grading 28.2 acres of the yards, excavating 79,000 cubic yards of dirt for the pond and from the areas to be paved. Some of the soil would go to landfills and some elsewhere on site. A building housing "pump and treat" groundwater cleanup equipment would be rebuilt at the southeast corner. The stormwater pond would be near the northwestern edge of St. Anthony cemetery.

Cummings emailed a statement: "In an effort to meet the needs of businesses in the region, CP is planning to expand capacity at its Minneapolis intermodal terminal...The facility is currently operating at capacity. The expansion will occur entirely on CP's existing footprint, with no land acquisition. Shoreham has been a railroad facility for more than a century, and CP is performing this upgrade to meet the demands of the 21st century Upper Midwestern economy."

"The expansion includes the demolition of the roundhouse facility. While CP recognizes and appreciates the role the roundhouse and its workers played in the company's history, the building is in a dilapidated, unsafe condition, making it unsuitable for preservation or reuse...."

"Railroad projects like the Shoreham expansion are subject to federal regulation, and local and state units of government cannot regulate rail transportation. CP is talking directly with the City of Minneapolis about this project."

Reich said he believes the Remedial Action Plan is still in play, and the city does not agree with how CP proposes to cap the monitoring well sites. Cummings told the Northeaster "CP is working directly with

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## Exploring insects in our yards with Elden Megow

by Karen Kraco

If you pass six-year-old Elden Megow in front of his house in the summer, you might see him surrounded by his younger sister, a neighbor toddler or two, and a few adults gathered around a tree, watching a cicada crawling out of its exoskeleton. Or all the kids might be on their hands and knees, turning over rocks.

Elden's a pretty quiet guy but is clearly the one leading the explorations. He's the one pointing out and picking up the bugs. If you're lucky enough to engage him in conversation, be prepared for him stopping mid-sentence when a dragonfly lands on a nearby plant or an insect shows up underfoot.

Elden's spreading his love of insects through his Northeast neighborhood and beyond, teaching young friends about bugs, visiting neighbors' gardens and spurring friends and his parents' colleagues to look for (and often bring him) cool insect finds.

He agreed to hang out with me once a week, to teach me and our readers about the creatures in our yards.

Over the course of two months, Elden gave me a tour of insect hot spots on the Megow property and within a block of his house, turning over rocks to find grubs and pill bugs, digging in the dirt and inspecting trees to find cicadas, checking out the spiders (and shells from their molts) in their outdoor toy box and his sister's playhouse. We inspected neighbors' trees and gardens, and wandered down to the wildflower garden at the school down the street.

One of the first sites we visited together was a maple tree. The bark was full of holes and crawling with about a dozen wasps. I was a little hesitant to get too close, but he picked one off the tree and held it out so I could get a better look. I did my best not to pull back, in spite of his reassurance that they don't sting.

Ichneumon wasps are parasitic wasps. There are thousands of species of ichneumons, but the ones on the tree were the long-tailed giant ichneumon wasp, and the black giant ichneumon wasp. Giant is an apt descriptor: the first thing you notice about them are the 4-inch needle-like appendages on the females, which one might think are stingers but are really ovipositors used to deposit their eggs.

Their story is complicated: the female ichneumon drills small holes in the tree until it finds the tunnels of the wood-boring larvae of another type of wasp, the pigeon tremex horntail wasp.

Not only does the ichneumon lay the eggs in the tunnels, but it stings the larva with a chemical that paralyzes it. When the ichneumon larvae hatch, they feed on the horntail wasp larvae's tissues, then pupate and lay dormant until the next summer.

The whole family is in on Elden's "bugging" as mom April calls it. She discovered the iNaturalist app (created by the National Geographic Society and the California Academy of Sciences) that will identify insects or plants based on submitted photos; other app users view your submissions and confirm the ID or suggest other possibilities.



Elden in pursuit of a dragonfly that he hoped to observe more closely.

(Photo by Karen Kraco)

The app also will send you to iNaturalist.org, for more information about the species.

When Elden finds an insect that he might want to observe for a while, April looks it up to identify it and see if they can provide what the insect eats, and then later encourages him to release him into the right habitat.

Sometimes she insists on a release, like with the nursery web spider, an inch-long arachnid that Elden's father Andy's

colleague had passed on to Elden. It lived in a terrarium in their house for a few days, but then one morning they found the spider holding a round, white egg sac, bigger than its body, in its mouth. Time for it to go back to the wild, April decided. "Baby spiders. Not in the house," she said.

They walked over to the wildflower garden at the school down the street where Elden donned his bug-handling gloves and

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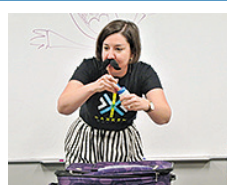
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# Observing, questioning are his main modes



Top left: Elden Megow, his sister Greta, and neighbors Logan Pipp and mom Jamie Pipp, checking out a cicada emerging from its exoskeleton. (Photo provided by April Megow)

Bottom left: Elden and his mom April Megow prepare to release a nursery web spider (which is sitting on the seed head of a spent flower). Nursery web spiders hold their egg sac in their mouth until the eggs are ready to hatch. Then the spider constructs a tent around the egg sac and stands guard while the eggs hatch and the new spiders develop. The egg sac appeared overnight, which prompted a quick release from the terrarium and back into the wild.

Middle left: Close-up of the nursery web spider.

Top right: A giant ichneumon wasp drills a hole into the bark of a maple tree with its four-inch-long ovipositor.

One of Elden's monarch caterpillars. This year, the family raised and released 13 monarchs they picked off local milkweed. April says it's important to follow the guidelines for caring for monarchs at [monarchguide.org](http://monarchguide.org), so as not to harm them or their ability to migrate.

Elden compares a newly emerged cicada to its shed nymph exoskeleton. By the time a nymph becomes an adult cicada, two to 17 years have passed, most of that time spent underground.

(Photos by Karen Kraco)



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released it, pausing for a few minutes to observe it on his finger before letting it crawl with its egg sac into the grasses. If all went as it should have, the nursery web spider would have carried around the eggs until they are ready to hatch, at which point she would have enclosed them in a tent and stood guard as the young spiders hatched and developed.

In addition to the gardening gloves Elden uses to handle potentially harmful insects, he has accumulated a variety of nets, collecting boxes and containers, terrariums, and a mesh enclosure designed for metamorphosing caterpillars. Their family, including two-year-old Greta, released a total of 13 monarchs from caterpillars picked off local milkweed, with Elden accurately predicting the day of the first to emerge from its cocoon.

They occasionally buy cool bugs, too. He has four beetles that live in a terrarium, mainly hanging out under rocks: a blue death feigning beetle, a black death feigning beetle, a woolly darkwing beetle, and an ironclad beetle. This summer they also ordered a luna moth caterpillar, which unfortunately didn't survive.

Elden knows a lot about insects -

names and facts, including very practical ones. ("They don't work," he said about a neighbor's Japanese beetle trap. "They just attract them.") Those things seem less important to him, though, than the firsthand experience of exploring and observing.

In the wildflower garden, Elden spotted foam on some of the plants. I looked it up, and after we learned that the foam is protection made by the nymph of a spittlebug, he dug into the foam with a stick until he found the yellow-green, squishy-bodied nymph. That day we had been noticing a lot of what we at first called leaf-hoppers — small springy insects about a quarter-of-an-inch long — and we learned that they were the adult spittlebugs, also called froghoppers.

He is constantly asking questions about what he finds and sometimes finds ways to test what he's wondering. As he examined bright yellow aphids on a milkweed plant, he suddenly ran over to another milkweed plant, picked off a red milkweed beetle he had been watching earlier, and placed it on the aphids to see if the beetle might eat them. (It was hard to tell if it did.) A few minutes later, while further inspecting the milkweed plant, he wondered out loud, "How do the pods grow so fast?"

For a while Elden had his sights set on being an entomologist when he gets older, but lately he's wondering if he might want to be a teacher, April said. He's certainly off to a good start for either profession, having become the neighborhood bug ambassador.

Some of the kids on the block are fearful of insects, April said, but by the time they finish making the bug-searching rounds with Elden they are right there with him, turning over rocks (but still letting him be the one to pick up their finds).

Neighbors are always bringing over bugs. One day, when April was working from home, there was a persistent door-knocker. She eventually answered it to find a boy, sent over by his mom, with a red milkweed beetle for Elden.

Neighbor Gene Johnson follows Elden's insect adventures, in person and on April's social media accounts, and contributes to his collection. He found a large green silk moth caterpillar two weeks ago, which developed a cocoon in Elden's enclosure.

"He teaches us to keep looking. He totally increased my interest in looking for insects, especially caterpillars, and in planting milkweeds and other insect-friendly plants," said Johnson.



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