

LOCAL B

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Eagan

Caponi hosts Japanese drumming, insiders' party

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Caponi — meet Mu Daiko.

On Sunday, Eagan's Caponi Art Park will host a touch of Japanese culture (in the form of Taiko drummers) preceded by a whole lot of Eagan (in the form of a private party for art park insiders).

The 60-acre art park, on Diffley Road east of Pilot Knob Road, will put on its annual invitation-only mingler for parks supporters Sunday afternoon. It will be followed by a public performance featuring the Minneapolis-based drumming group Mu Daiko at 6:30 p.m. The suggested donation is \$2.

Among the insiders expected to attend is 87-year-old Tony Caponi, who has lived on the park grounds since 1950. Caponi, a professional sculptor and retired art teacher from Macalester College, shaped much of the park's

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> Caponi Art

land and roadways using a Bobcat.

"That's the only way this place could have been created," Caponi said. "This place is an extension of my backyard. ... It's an outgrowth of my way of living. I live here. I moved here before it was Eagan."

On Friday, Caponi was on his riding mower, trimming grass by the amphitheater. Dozens of sculptures dot the landscaping, and free performances are offered regularly in two park locations.

"Because I'm a sculptor, I like to think that I'm sculpting this park," he said. "It's a

very functional place. The concept is something that is being neglected today. We concentrate on beautiful objects ... not realizing those values change."

The Caponi Art Park and Learning Center opened in 1987 with tours and planned activities for school groups. A nonprofit corporation formed in 1992 with the aim of preserving the land and creating an artist-in-residence program.

The park is primarily funded by donations, grants and in-kind contributions, though Eagan and Dakota County collaborated with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to acquire preservation agreements.

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