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the TIMBERJAY

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ELY WINTER FESTIVAL

Chilly classroom

Snow sculpture school features lessons in cold art

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – Ely's next generation of artists got a crash course in snow sculpting as part of the kick-off to the 2020 Ely Winter Festival this past week. The ten-day festival runs through Feb. 16.

For the first time, professional sculptors are mentoring several local high school and Vermilion Community College art students, along with VCC's interim



art instructor, on snow carving.

"This is yet another way to help promote our festival and celebrate this wonderful season,"

See...ELY pg. 10



Students recreated this wolf model in a block of snow in Ely's Whiteside Park. photo by K. Vandervort

STATE LEGISLATURE

Bakk ousted as Senate DFL leader

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL - Just days before the start of a new legislative session, Iron Range political clout took a hit Saturday when influential District 3 Sen. Tom Bakk, of Cook, was ousted as the leader of Senate DFLers.

After six hours of closed-door deliberations, Susan Kent of Woodbury, a Twin Cities suburb, was elected to replace Bakk, ending his nine-year run as leader of the DFL caucus.

Caucus members, including Bakk, were uniformly tight-lipped after the marathon session, declining to comment on internal

See...LEADER pg. 9



Tom Bakk

WINTER GAMES



SCOUTS TEST OUTDOOR SKILLS

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

COOK — In an epic conflict Saturday at the former Cook school, pitting "ninjas" against "screaming weasels" and "loons," a group of female "dragons" from Cherry had the right combination of skills and teamwork to emerge victorious.

The event was the annual Scouts BSA Klondike Derby, a test of outdoor skills and teamwork hosted by Cook

Cook Troop 128 hosts Klondike Derby

Cherry patrol members Joey Jude, Wyatt Kane, and James Stafholt guide their Klondike sled toward their next skills test last Saturday at the Klondike Derby in Cook. photo by D. Colburn

Scout Troop 128. As 2019 champion, Cook served as host of the event and did not compete against whimsically named Scout patrols from Cherry, Eveleth, Hibbing, and Virginia.

"Because we're hosting, our

kids are all working in the stations," Cook Scoutmaster Rock Gillson said. "Austin (Durbin) is inside with Mario Kart, Kory (Zallar) is out with

See...SCOUTS pg. 11

HEALTHCARE

Townships seek changes in ambulance subsidies

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Last month, city officials in Tower asked townships to provide their input on potential revisions to a contract under which townships help subsidize the purchase of ambulances for the city-run emergency service. It turns out, city officials may not like what they hear.

The shift by the Tower Area Ambulance Service (TAAS) to a 24-hour, paid on-call service financed mostly by non-emergency inter-hospital transfers, has prompted some area townships to push for a piece of the action. They're not seeking payments from the proceeds of those transfers. Instead, according to a framework developed by officials in Eagles Nest Township, they want a portion of the revenue generated from transfers dedicated to an escrow account that

See...AMBULANCE pg. 10

AWARDS SEASON

Timberjay brings home the gold at Minnesota Newspaper convention

REGIONAL — The Timberjay was among the top award winners at last week's annual Minnesota Newspaper Association convention held in Brooklyn Park.

The Timberjay won a total of 12 awards, including first place for General Excellence in its size category and six other first-place awards. That included first-place



honors in Typography and Design, Editorial Page as a Whole, Hard News,

Sports Feature Story, and Advertising Excellence.

Timberjay Publisher Marshall Helmberger also won both first and second place in Investigative Reporting, winning the top

award for the Timberjay's examination of a questionable hiring decision at the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation. "This article did everything a

good investigation should: identify a problem, explain what is wrong, elicit outrage and— most importantly— lead to a positive

See...MNA pg. 11



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COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

Hockey Day in Soudan get underway on Saturday, Feb. 8 at 11 a.m.

SOUDAN- Everyone is invited to attend this year's Hockey Day in Soudan on Saturday, Feb. 8 starting at 11 a.m. at the Soudan Skating Rink.

Boot hockey games will be played from 12 noon - 2 p.m. Players are asked to come with their own teams.

The premier event, the Tower vs. Soudan game, will be played at 2 p.m. Teams will be picked prior to the start of the game. Players do not have to live in Tower or Soudan to play.

Food and beverages will served by Good Ol' Days. A 50/50 raffle will be held. The last three years, the raffle raised enough to purchase a new sound system for the warming shack. This year, organizers are raising money to purchase a pre-owned ice-smoothing unit.

Chimpy will sponsor a children's skating party on Sunday, Feb. 9 from 12 noon - 2 p.m.

Ruby's Pantry on Feb. 13 in Cook

COOK- The next Ruby's Pantry food distribution will be on Thursday, Feb. 13 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at the old Cook School. Registration begins at 3 p.m. A \$20 cash donation at the door buys an abundance of food. Volunteers are asked to please arrive at 3 p.m. Please bring your own containers. Starting in March, all registration must be done online at rubyspantry.com prior to distribution. Ruby's Pantry is sponsored by St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Alango. For more information, contact Amy Viita at 218-666-2220.

DNR Supervisor Tom Rusch to present at MN Deer Hunters Association meeting, Feb. 12

MT IRON- DNR Area Wildlife Supervisor Tom Rusch oversees more than 4,770 square miles of Northeastern Minnesota, of which 75 percent is open to public hunting. He will speak about the deer in the areas he supervises at 6:30 p.m. in the Mt. Iron Community Center on Wednesday, Feb. 12. His presentation, which is open to the public, will include a question and answer period. A short business meeting of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, Sturgeon River Chapter will follow.

2020 Census hiring event, Feb. 12 at Cook Library

COOK- Help your community by working for the U.S. Census Bureau. The U.S. Census Bureau is currently hiring for the 2020 Census. Open interviews will be held at the Cook Public Library on Wednesday, Feb. 12 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pay starts at \$24/hour.

The count happens every 10 years and influences how more than \$675 billion from more than 100 federal programs are distributed to states and localities each year. Here's some of what the census numbers effect: Medicaid, school lunch programs, community development grants, road and school construction, medical services, and business locations. For more information, visit 2020census.gov/jobs.

Voyageurs National Park hosts Sullivan Bay snowshoe hike

INT'L FALLS- Join Park Ranger Hailey Burley on a 1.5-mile round trip guided snowshoe hike at the Sullivan Bay Trail on Sunday, Feb. 9. Meet at the trailhead off Meadow Rd. near the Ash River Visitor Center. This free event will go from 1 - 3 p.m. Bring your own snowshoes or borrow a pair from the Rainy Lake Visitor Center by making a reservation in advance no later than Friday, Feb. 7, by calling 218-286-5258. The hike is recommended for ages five and up.

Ely Community Health Center

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NORTHERN PROGRESSIVES

Congressional candidate Quinn Nystrom to speak at Crescent Bar on Feb. 11

COOK- Quinn Nystrom, candidate for the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party endorsement for U.S. Representative from Minnesota's 8th Congressional District, will be the featured speaker at a special meeting of Northern Progressives on Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 6:30 p.m. at the Crescent Bar and Grill at 9257 Olson Rd. in Cook. The meeting is open to the public.

Nystrom is challenging first-term incumbent Pete Stauber for the 8th District seat. She is a fourth-generation resident of Minnesota's Crow Wing County.

At 28 years old, Nystrom became the youngest person - and only woman at the time - to serve on the Baxter City Council. While serving on the city council she was the council liaison to the Community Behavioral Health Hospital and

worked with local law enforcement to crack down on sex trafficking.

Nystrom has been advocating on healthcare issues, especially affordable prescription drug coverage, since she was in grade school. She has become well known as an advocate for persons living with diabetes, and lobbied last year for a bill in the state legislature to make insulin more affordable and accessible to everyone.

When that bill died in the Republican-controlled Senate, Nystrom helped organize a series of well-publicized car and bus caravans to purchase insulin in Canada, where insulin is much cheaper, and available over the counter.

For more information about this event or about Northern Progressives, contact Leah Rogne at 218-787-2212 or leah.rogne@gmail.com.



Quinn Nystrom

Community Sustainability Initiative grants available

REGIONAL- The Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability works to support and encourage sustainability projects within our communities. Organizations, students, groups, churches or businesses that have a project idea to advance the health and sustainability of Iron Range communities, but need funding to support it, are encouraged to apply for the Community Sustainability Initiative (CSI). Members of the IRPS Board of Directors and the Earth Fest Planning Team review and discuss all proposals. The top four proposals will win \$500 to implement their projects. In addition, a \$200 People's Choice Award is voted on by attendees at the annual Earth Fest, held this year on Saturday,

April 25 in Mt. Iron.

Contest applications are due by Sunday, April 5. This year is focused on "Energizing the Future," with an emphasis on building more local sustainable energy projects, such as solar and wind power. You'll also be able to learn how last year's CSI winners put their awards to work for sustainability in their community.

The Community Sustainability Initiative is intended to provide the opportunity for people in Northeastern Minnesota to take action on one or more of the three areas of sustainability: the local economy, the community, and the environment. Think creatively, these three areas of sustainability are open to many different ways

to be innovative and unique with a proposed project. Proposals may be for a standalone project, or one that is part of a larger goal. Visit the IRPS website at www.irpsmn.org/csi to submit your proposal. If you have questions about the contest, or would like to submit your proposal in writing, please contact Janna Goerdt at fatchickenfarm@gmail.com.

The CSI contest is supported by the IRPS Silent Auction, which takes place each year at Earth Fest. Participants place bids on goods and services generously donated by local individuals, businesses and organizations.

Kristen Vake to speak at Sisu Heritage annual meeting, Feb. 23

EMBARRASS- Sisu Heritage, Inc. will hold its annual meeting at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 23 at Embarrass Town Hall. The featured speaker is Kristen Vake, anchor, reporter and producer at CBS 3 News in Duluth. Vake will speak about her experience growing up on the Iron Range, the importance of mining in her life, and her Eye on Mining report on CBS 3.

In addition to this wonderful speaker, the annual meeting is an opportunity

to hear the president's report and financial report, approve new board members, learn about 2020's upcoming events and projects, socialize with fellow Sisu members over coffee and - and even win a door prize.

Sisu members are encouraged to attend. All community members are invited to join them for the afternoon. The meeting is a chance to learn about the historical preservation work Sisu Heritage is doing and how to support



it. Memberships are just \$10 per year.

Embarrass Town Hall

is located at 7503 Levander Rd. Call 218-984-3024 with any questions.

ELY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Northwoods Business Incubator classes beginning

ELY- The Ely Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce a new program designed to support the business community, entrepreneurs, and those seeking to start a business. The goal of the Northwoods

Business Incubator is to develop, maintain and expand connections with area resources and make those resources available to the business community.

Monthly meetings are scheduled starting next week and running through April. Meetings will break for the summer season and resume in

October. Meeting topics will include workforce solutions, business development classes, business resources and tours of area businesses.

Those seeking support and resources outside of the monthly meetings are welcome to stop in at the Chamber. Resource information is available and free

of charge.

Upcoming meetings

Feb. 20: 9 a.m. at Frandsen Bank and Trust, Ely: Sandi Larson from the Entrepreneur Fund will be discussing the Women's Business Alliance and a variety of Entrepreneur Fund programs. Joining Sandi will be the Ely-area contacts for the EF.

March 19: Curt Walczak from the Northeast MN SBDC will lead a class on Creating DIY Websites and SEO for Small Businesses.

April 16: Betsy Olivanti from Northeast MN SBDC will lead a class on Developing Financial Projections.

If your business is interested in hosting or participating in a Northwoods Business Incubator meeting, please contact the Chamber office at 218-365-6123 or director@ely.org. Seating is limited, so please RSVP for the sessions.

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3-4 & 6-7PM \$10/PERSON

TIMBERJAY NEWS

David Colburn joins Timberjay staff

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER - “At heart, I’m a never-ending learner,” said David Colburn, the *Timberjay’s* newly-hired news editor, who started work this week. “Small town journalism is a wonderful way in which to engage that passion.”

Colburn will be covering news and sports in Cook and Orr, as well as a wide range of regional news.

Colburn grew up in a small town in Kansas, and has lived and worked both in the Midwest and on the West Coast, most recently in Missoula, Mont.

“I was introduced to the newspaper business in my Kansas hometown as a high school intern,” he said. “And I returned to that hometown in 2014 to work as news editor for three weekly newspapers.”

Besides the newspaper business, Colburn has spent a lot of his career in early childhood education, running Head Start programs, teaching early childhood education and child development, and supervising student teachers. He taught early childhood education at the college level in Kansas, Chicago, and St. Louis.

But after returning to journalism in 2014, he feels he has found his calling. And moving to

northern Minnesota, in the winter, has not dampened that enthusiasm.

“I’m excited about what I’ve discovered so far in my week living in Minnesota,” he said. “For their size, all the towns in this area are more vibrant than rural towns I’ve encountered in Kansas.”

Colburn has already made friends and is planning on making quite a few more.

“All the people have been incredibly welcoming,” he said. “It feels like an excellent fit.”

Colburn is now prepared for the winter weather, after visiting Ely and outfitting himself with a Wintergreen jacket and Steger mukluks, and he is

ready for adventures in the outdoors.

“I love nature photography,” he said.

Colburn, who cut his teeth in journalism as a sportswriter, is also excited to cover local high school sports, including the North Woods Grizzlies.

“High school sports is competition at its purest,” he said. “The enthusiasm of the players and fans is something that’s really appealing.”

Colburn has already seen the Grizzly girls in action and met their coach and is hoping that the teams play well into the tournament season.



David Colburn, the new Cook/Orr Editor, joined the Timberjay staff this past week.
photo by J. Summit

CITY OF ELY

Council approves Ely utility rate hikes

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY- Council members here approved a 2020 water, sewer and electricity rate hike recommendation from the Ely Utilities Commission at their meeting on Tuesday night. Utility customers will be able to sound off on the increases at a public hearing scheduled for 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 18.

EUC customers will be charged a 50-cent increase in the monthly fixed fee for water service, and a one-dollar increase in the monthly fixed fee for sewer service in the coming year. In

addition, electricity usage rates will increase by one percent.

In a memo to the council, Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski said the commission continues to ensure that operating fund balances are sufficient to avoid the need to make major rate increases. “We look at the long term rather than year-to-year,” he said.

“Our intent for each enterprise fund is to be at a break-even position, not including depreciation, so that we can be assured reserves are available in the case of unexpected expenditures,”

Langowski said. “In addition, a break-even outcome allows the EUC to receive the best possible bond market rates when it comes time to accomplish larger projects that require long-term debt service.”

For the water utility, a one dollar fixed fee increase last year allowed the cash balance to remain steady, according to Langowski. “However, looking ahead to 2020, we plan to complete required maintenance to the water tower and are forecasting increases in fixed and variable costs,” he said. “These costs

leave the fund about \$20,000 short of breaking even in 2020. The recommendation is the fixed fee rate be increased by 50 cents to recover most of the deficit.” The fixed fee for water will increase from \$15.25 to \$15.75 per month.

Likewise, the sewer utility will see a fixed fee increase from \$15.20 to \$16.20 per month. That rate was not adjusted in 2019. “Throughout the year, we developed and implemented a mercury minimization plan (MMP), as required by the Minnesota Pollution Control

Agency, designed to meet our mercury permit discharge limit that requires the execution of a pilot plant at the Waste Water Treatment Plant,” Langowski said. “We were looking at being about \$35,000 short of breaking even in 2020, so we recommend the one-dollar fixed fee increase to recover most of that deficit.”

For the electric utility, the one-percent increase recommendation is mainly due to the debt service on a meter replacement project. “Looking ahead to 2020,

See UTILITIES...pg. 5

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OPINION

“CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW...
ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM
OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS;”

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

Editorial

Small town papers

Technological change threatens the future of news in rural America

Small town newspapers have been an integral part of American life for centuries, which is why it's easy to think that they'll always be there.

Yet, like their big city cousins, small-town and rural papers are grappling with the slow erosion of a subscriber base that is aging by the day and an up-and-coming generation that obtains virtually all of its information, and considerable misinformation, from the Internet. It's now easy to imagine the day in the not too distant future when printing presses across the country finally grind to a halt, like so many past victims of technological change.

The question then becomes: Who will cover the news, especially in small communities?

While some of the largest newspapers in the country have had success navigating to the web, they still rely on their print product for the vast majority of their revenue. For small town papers, Internet sales, for both online subscriptions and online advertising, currently amount to less than five percent of their total sales on average. With a very active website, we do somewhat better than that here at the *Timberjay*. Even so, the bottom line is that every small town newspaper is dependent on their print product to survive. If and when print newspapers disappear, local news coverage in small town America could well go with it.

Think of what that would mean in your own community. When people lack basic information about the place where they live, how do they engage in the democratic process? How do they find out that their city council is planning to hike their water bill, or that the school district is being led down the primrose path toward a major new facilities project that will take a big whack at their pocketbooks? Who will they rely on to uncover mismanagement or corruption at city hall? It's no surprise that one recent study documented that where newspapers fold, the cost of government goes up. The disappearance of the public's watchdog won't come without consequence.

But it's not just the loss of reporting on government. For centuries, small towns across America relied on their local newspaper to inform them about all aspects of their community. It's where they read about and see photos of their local sports team or learn about the latest offering from the local community theater. It's where they discover what's happening at their local schools, church-

es, or civic organizations, and when the potholes on their street are scheduled to be filled. It's where they turn for the menu for senior dining, or to learn a little bit more about the lives of their neighbors. It's where they turn to see a picture of the new baby born in town last week, or the photo of a long-time friend or neighbor who has reached the end of their time here on Earth.

These are things that matter to a community. They are the ties that bind.

If you think social media will replace newspapers, think again. While there is some reliable information available on Facebook or Twitter, it's only when such posts are linked to a story from a credible news organization, usually a newspaper. Other than that, social media is the modern version of getting your news from local barroom banter.

In the vast majority of cases, the people who put out small town newspapers across the country are dedicated to their craft and understand the importance of checking their facts before going to press. They also recognize the continuous fight that's necessary to preserve access to those facts. Newspapers and related organizations, such as the Minnesota Newspaper Association, are instrumental in the fight to maintain public access to information. Those fights are never easy. While there are many in government who remain dedicated to transparency, there are always some who push relentlessly for the right to keep government information from the public. And it's not just government officials. As our readers know too well, it is also big corporations that stand to benefit from government decisions that would love to keep their machinations secret. Without the organized efforts of newspapers consistently pushing back against such efforts, our rights to public access would quickly erode.

Random people sounding off on Facebook won't have the resources or the clout to effectively push back against those who would undermine our collective rights to government records.

So, what's the solution? We wish we had an answer, because the stakes here are high. The founding fathers recognized that a democratic form of government was not possible without an informed electorate, which is why they put freedom of the press at the very top of the Bill of Rights. But what will those rights matter the day the presses stop running?



Letters from Readers

Return corporate power to the original intent

“In the beginning,” U.S. states chartered corporations for public benefit to build roads and canals. Laws set strict limits on corporate charters that could be revoked if the public was harmed. Directors who abused their authority were held accountable. The Revolution overthrew English rule, but also fought corporate extraction of wealth, resources and control of trade at the expense of the colonies.

In 1819, the U.S. Supreme Court limited states' rights to revoke corporate charters and in the next two centuries the court “created in their own image” these fictional persons. Corporations were allowed to become conglomerates for control of resources, worker and community rights. These engines of wealth and inequality turned our national treasure into massive private fortunes.

Political and economic power shifted from community-based enterprise to distant, absentee overlords. Private wealth bought politicians, hired goon squads to deny worker rights, and propaganda spewed a gospel to sanctify the virtues of corporate capitalism. Opposition was demonized and crushed. “Free market” fable and fantasy became a religion of myth and magic.

Rule of law holds a natural person legally responsible for wrongdoing, but corporate personhood enjoys limited liability and is rarely held responsible for criminal acts and public harm. This places them above the law. The 14th amendment (1868) granted freed slaves equal protection of the law, but the courts perverted its meaning for corporate benefit, not for what was intended.

Corporate rights expand while their responsibility shrinks and the sovereign rights of citizens are diminished and degraded. Global corporate power far exceeds that of most nations in the world. Next, they will claim divine right as rulers

of the universe. Justice Louis Brandeis admonished, “We can have democracy in this country, or we can have great wealth in the hands of a few, but we can't have both.”

**Harold Honkola
Tower**

There should be room for nonprofits in Ely festivals

As a board member of two Ely nonprofits, I'm very disappointed by the Ely Chamber of Commerce's decision to eliminate nonprofits from the Blueberry and Harvest Moon festivals. This is wrong-headed. Ely's nonprofits are the beating heart of our community. They are a factor when people decide to move to Ely. Ely's nonprofit booths at our festivals represent many wonderful efforts being made by our citizens. Many of them are part of our city's economic development as well. Isn't the Chamber all about economic development?

By cutting out the Ely Winter Festival, the Chamber is shooting itself in the foot. The Winter Festival, of which I'm a board member, brings tens of thousands of visitors to Ely in the dead of winter and showcases our arts and culture. At our booth at the Blueberry Festival, we always connect with hundreds of people who say they'll come back in February. We have rack cards, our lovely pins and T-shirts, and hand-crafted mugs for sale. These sales help our nonprofit raise essential funds. Ely's largest arts festival, the Ely Winter Festival and Ely ArtWalk, should not be blocked from participating in our premier Blueberry/Arts Festival.

I still do not understand the justification that the Chamber distributed. I think there's more room in the park than the Chamber has indicated. And yes, nonprofits pay less to be members and to have booths, but really, what's a few hundred dollars? Let nonprofits participate!

**Carol Orban
Ely**

Can the Constitution protect us from climate change?

The ninth amendment of the U.S. Bill of Rights states that listing specific rights of individuals in the Constitution does not mean that people do not have other rights that have not been included. Question? Do citizens have a right to clean air and water?

This amendment anticipated situations that the framers of the Constitution understood they could not anticipate. A prime example is the degradation of climate due, to a large extent, to emissions from fossil fuels into the atmosphere, referred to as greenhouse emissions.

President Lyndon Johnson's scientific advisory committee on environmental pollution warned that by the year 2000, humanity's greenhouse emissions would “modify the heat balance of the atmosphere to such an extent that marked changes in climate ... could occur.”

Subsequently, it has been argued in court that there is evidence that fossil fuel companies know the damage that their products do and actively seek to direct public debate elsewhere.

Do the fossil fuel companies bear any monetary liability for their significant contribution to the costly effects of global warming causing floods, droughts, wind, fires, fine particle pollution? Are the previous litigations and settlements of the tobacco, lead paint, asbestos and black lung cases precedents for monetary settlements? Or are the taxpayers “on the hook” for the costs resulting from pollution causing public health issues and for the costs of the reconstruction of infrastructure and land reclamation?

The question is do citizens have a right to clean air and water that enables them to compel fossil fuel emitters to convert to renewable, non-polluting sources of energy?

**Gerry Snyder
Ely**

Iowa shows technology no fix for election process

Technology and elections have proven to be a bad combination.

We saw that play out once again on Monday night, when the breakdown of a smartphone app that Iowa Democrats thought would allow party officials to quickly and easily report the results of their pres-



**MARSHALL
HELMBERGER**

idential caucuses, predictably melted down into a festering pile of goo.

After months of campaigning and tens of millions of dollars expended by more than a dozen candidates, the only definitive answer to come from Iowa was that party officials there either don't know how to hire

a credible technology firm, or don't know how to operate their smartphones. Or, more likely, both.

While something resembling results of the caucuses eventually made its way into the public sphere, the Monday night meltdown inevitably lessened the impact of the news and, once again, left voters who had made the effort to participate feeling disenfranchised and disheartened through no fault of their own. Will we ever know the true

results of the Iowa Democratic caucuses? Who knows? For all the time and money spent in the state, it will ultimately be New Hampshire that, hopefully, offers a more definitive take on the race come Tuesday. So, in the end, no one will likely even remember what happened in Iowa. They had their 15 minutes of fame and upchucked on stage in front of the television cameras. Clearly, it's time to move on.

In the meantime, I can only hope it prompts a little

soul-searching about the many ways that our love affair with high-tech has undermined confidence in our electoral processes. In every case, it's the quest for quick results that leads to the kind of muddled mess we experienced in Iowa this week.

And it isn't just electronic voting systems that we've somehow managed to foul up. Who can forget the bizarre “butterfly ballot” from Palm Beach

See **CAUCUS...**pg. 5

COMMENTARY

Look locally for solutions to climate crisis

by STEPHANIE HEMPHILL
Contributor

The news can get pretty discouraging these days. We all know people who refuse to pay attention to it because it's bad for their mental health. But if you tune in to what's happening right around you, you can find reasons to feel downright hopeful. Recently we had the chance to visit a factory producing solar panels, and to hear about grassroots clean energy projects popping up all over northeastern Minnesota.

The "we" was a group of about two dozen people from Duluth and the Iron Range. We were participating in an event on Jan. 7 called Let There Be Light: Solar Initiatives Close to Home. The event was organized by two ecumenical, interfaith groups in the Northland, Congregations Caring for the Earth and Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light. The day began with the tour of the Heliene solar factory in Mt. Iron and ended with a lunch and speakers' panel hosted at Messiah Lutheran Church. (Messiah is the birthplace of the Iron Range Earth Fest, the largest annual

sustainability event in northern Minnesota).

The Heliene plant is a brightly lit, ultra-clean building that hums with machinery and people turning out solar panels that are in demand around the country. The creation of a five-layer sandwich of glass, solar cells, electrical components, and framing requires a clean setting; workers wear gloves and headgear to keep contaminants out. About eighty workers supervise precision machines from Europe and China—including a giant robot arm that quickly assembles thin solar wafers on a glass panel roughly three feet by five feet. More automation is coming, which will enable the company to add another dozen workers and weekend shifts. They turn out nearly a thousand solar panels a day, for a total of 120 megawatts in a year. That's enough to power about 15,000 homes.

Some of those panels will be installed this summer on the roof of the Whole Foods Co-op store in Duluth's Denfeld neighborhood. Executive Director Sarah Hannigan told our group that the 65-kilowatt array will be the largest in Duluth. The

project grows naturally from one of the co-op's core values, concern for community. The co-op has arranged with the American Indian Community Housing Organization, indigenous-owned solar installer Solar Bear, and solar developer IPS Solar to recruit and train twenty local people to install the panels. Clean energy jobs like solar installation are among the fastest growing employment categories in Minnesota.

Many of us would like to use renewable energy, but we don't have a house with the best solar potential, or we're renters, or we can't afford our own systems. People are coming up with creative ways to sidestep these challenges.

In Grand Rapids, a long process of citizen-led planning will culminate this year in construction of a one-megawatt community solar garden. Bill Schnell of the Itasca Clean Energy Team describes it as a large solar array, centrally located, tied to the electrical grid, and using a subscription model to encourage broad participation. A project like this offers economies of scale, simplicity

for subscribers, and in this case, higher financial return because the array will be paired with a battery storage system. The city-owned power company will be able to store the electricity it generates and sell it onto the grid when the price is higher. Over the 25-year life of the project, the system is expected to save the city at least four million dollars.

Another creative approach is SUN (Solar United Neighbors), a group-buy program used by activists on the Iron Range. Families join together to choose a solar installer to install renewable energy equipment in their homes. The group buy makes it more affordable for all.

Another local group, Lake Superior Solar Finance LLC, has created a new way for ordinary people to invest in big solar projects. It's a bit like a Kickstarter campaign, but instead of making a donation to a project and getting a T-shirt, people can invest in solar energy and get a financial return. The first project is raising money now for a solar garden for the Red Lake Indian community. The minimum investment is \$1,000, and the guaranteed rate of return is 2.5 percent, with

money back in five to six years.

Our day offered participants hope in more than one form. In addition to inspiring us with the scope and variety of solar energy initiatives in northeastern Minnesota, people from Duluth and the Range together discovered our shared commitments to our common future. And that's where hope begins.

Stephanie Hemphill, of Duluth, is a retired environmental reporter for Minnesota Public Radio and co-editor of the online magazine www.agatamag.com. Bret Pence, of Duluth, is the Greater Minnesota Director of Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light. Kristin Foster, of Cook, is a retired pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who served for three decades as pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church. She chairs the steering committee of Congregations Caring for the Earth. She is also board chair of the Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability and co-chair of the EcoFaith Network Leadership Team of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod.

CAUCUS...Continued from page 4

County, Florida, that prompted thousands of little old Jewish ladies to mistakenly vote for Pat Buchanan? Or the dimpled or hanging chads that befuddled election officials in Florida for days? It seems that there are always those looking to improve on the basic ballot, rarely with success.

The Florida election mess in 2000 prompted another technological "fix" as federal and state governments spent billions on a variety of fancy voting equipment, including touch screen machines, many without any paper backup. You just touch a screen and hope it records the vote you wanted. To many, this seemed like a disaster in the making, one that became frighteningly real in 2016 when we

learned that Russian hackers had been working to punch through fire walls meant to protect voting results from remote manipulation. All our billions, in other words, bought us nothing but more potential trouble. They may not have succeeded in 2016, but what about this year?

Don't get me wrong—technology has its place in our elections. But I like that old school technology—a paper ballot and a number two pencil. That's technology that everyone knows how to use and that provides the ultimate backup whenever questions arise.

Monday night's disaster was a classic failure of imagination. The tech guys who designed the app were undoubtedly young and smart (or maybe just arrogant?),

but they apparently missed the fact that many of those who were supposed to use their creation were retirees who may know how to make a call or snap a photo on their smartphones, but little else. The new system was clearly not adequately tested and their supposed "fail-safe," which involved calling the state party headquarters for instructions, simply jammed the phone lines. The help line left everyone helpless.

It was made worse by the fact that Iowans have taken a caucus process already known as complex and turned it into an indecipherable cluster. For years, here in Minnesota, caucus-goers received a simple presidential ballot and a pencil. We marked the box next to the candidate we

preferred, the votes were tallied and phoned in, and we typically had most results in time for the ten-o'clock news. And if there were ever any questions, the ballots were there for everyone to review.

I'm not even going to try to explain the details of the process used in Iowa because I'm not sure I understand it. In general, there's a "standing caucus," where people assemble in different parts of the room based on their initial candidate preferences. Those who supported candidates who didn't reach a 15-percent "viability threshold" needed to move somewhere else for the second tally and, based on that final tally, "state delegate equivalents" are determined... by somebody.

Iowa should scrap this whole sorry mess if they expect anyone is going to allow them a first bite at the presidential apple ever again.

In either case, forget the smartphone app that left everyone in the lurch. It wasn't necessary and it wasn't helpful. By relying on an untested technology, party officials essentially wrecked the first contest of the Democratic presidential primary. By the time the supposed results were announced, the media glare had shifted to New England, so they barely mattered.

This is no way to pick a president.

UTILITIES...Continued from page 3

we will have an increase in purchased power from our provider, Minnesota Power, by just over one percent," he said. "Our proposed increase is less than what we're seeing in our wholesale price increase."

According to estimates provided by the EUC, the typical utility bill for a small home during the summer will see an increase from \$101.14 in 2016 to \$118.74 per month this year, and a winter increase from \$139.56 to \$160.67 per month, with the proposed 2020 rate increases.

Legal newspaper

Council members designated the *Ely Echo* as the city's legal newspaper for 2020. As required by the city's charter, the council must award the contract to the lowest responsible bid received.

The *Ely Timberjay* submitted a rate of \$0.1609 per lower case alphabet for legal advertising, which was less than the *Echo's* bid of \$0.1826 per lower case alphabet.

The *Ely Timberjay's* bid for display advertising was also substantially lower, at \$2.65 per column

inch, than the \$3.88 per column inch submitted by the *Echo*.

But the *Echo's* bid misstated the actual cost of its quoted rates to make them appear substantially less expensive than reality.

The city had requested the cost of a three column-inch display ad, for example. Based on the *Timberjay's* quoted display rate, the cost of the ad would have been \$7.95, which is determined by multiplying the three column inches by the \$2.65 per column inch quote.

But when calculating their own cost, the *Echo* multiplied its \$3.88 column inch rate by just 1.5 column inches, not the three column inches for the full ad, to reach their sample quote of \$5.82.

"For years, we've seen these kinds of discrepancies from the *Echo* when it comes to bidding on city legals," said *Timberjay* publisher Marshall Helmberger on Wednesday. "This is exactly why we stopped bidding on the city's publishing in the past." Helmberger had explained the *Echo's* sleight of hand to Langowski last week, so the issue was not unfamiliar to city officials.

Council member Paul Kess asked about the disparity. "The *Timberjay* was clearly the low bidder for the legal print ads, but the *Echo* was lower in the sample ads," he said.

But at least some on the council seemed willing to overlook the clear discrepancy.

"It looks like the *Ely Echo* has the lowest bid, correct?" asked council member Jerome Debeltz in making a motion to accept the lowest bid. "That's my motion, then."

"Our requirement is to choose the lowest responsible bidder," said City Attorney Kelly Klun. "Relative to pricing, I would assume that when it comes to what an exact ad or what the minutes would cost, we would lean toward the actual cost when comparing apples to apples. I'm sure an argument could be made that the lower case alphabet is another form of measurement, but when you think of cost and compare the two samples, it appears the *Echo* is the lowest responsible bidder."

Mayor Chuck Novak noted the disparity in the rates received last year from the two newspapers. In 2019, the *Timberjay*

submitted a bid that was approximately half the bid submitted by the *Echo*. Despite adamant pushback from the *Echo*, the council ultimately took the lowest bid, saving taxpayers thousands of dollars for legal publishing in 2019. "We are still in a lot better shape (in the cost to taxpayers) than prior to last year," Novak said.

Other business

In other action, the council:

➤ Agreed to delay a change in city ordinance language to increase the legal tobacco purchase age to 21 until the federal and state mandates are in effect.

➤ Approved the staff and council to attend the 2020 Legislative Conference in St. Paul, March 18-19.

➤ Scheduled the Local Board of Appeal

and Equalization meeting for 5 p.m. Thursday, on April 16.

➤ Approved a recommendation from the Sanitation Committee to set meeting times for the 4:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

➤ Approved a temporary liquor license for consumption and display for the Ely Folk School on Wednesday, Feb. 12.



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ON THE RUN, ON THE ICE

Rookie musher places 12th in Beargrease 120

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- Most of Ashley Thaemert's sled dog team had never run a race before, but they proved themselves worthy athletes during the Beargrease 120, a shortened version of the Beargrease Marathon held Jan. 26 and 27 along the North Shore of Lake Superior. Thaemert's team finished in 12th place, with an average speed of 9.4 miles per hour in the race. A total of 27 teams finished the 120-mile race this year.

This was the first time Thaemert has done a distance race, though at 24 years of age, she has plenty of experience as a sled dog handler, including her work on the 2019 film, "The Great Alaskan Race." the film featured six of her dogs and retold the story of how a team of sled dogs brought critically-needed medical supplies to Nome, Alaska, in the early 1900s, saving the lives of countless children.

Thaemert's Rhythmpaws Kennel, in rural Tower, has over two dozen dogs, mostly larger sled dogs used for hauling freight for trips into the Boundary Waters. But she has nine smaller, faster dogs, some from racing kennels, that she decided to train and race this winter.

"I put close to 900 miles on the racing team so far this year," she said.

The dogs were more than ready for the 120-mile challenge.

"The next day it was like

they hadn't even run at all," she said. "They were all crazy to get out and run."

Thaemert, though, was ready for a few days rest, after spending about 36 hours awake during the race.

"Just about everything that could have gone wrong, went wrong right before the race," she said.

"My truck broke down," she said, which meant she would need to rent a truck to get the trailer with the dogs down to Duluth, an expense that wasn't in her budget.

Thaemert works as a waitress at the Vermilion Club. Her boss, Greg "Arch" Archibald, came through with a generous offer and lent his truck for the weekend, solving that problem. But then, the furnace at her house went out, and she had to get it repaired before she left, so the person staying at her home and caring for her other dogs would stay warm.

"I had so much help from family and friends," she said.

The race itself included some bad luck. One of her lead dogs injured his leg at the midpoint of the race. Race organizers had expressed concerns about the condition of the track, as well as the warm temperatures during the day. While the course itself was packed down, it was soft in places, and the snow on either side was deep and soft.

"Nine-year-old Zephyr was running on the side of the trail and his leg fell into some sort of hole," she said.

Her dog was clearly hurt,



Ashley Thaemert on the trail at the Beargrease.

photo by P. Wettering/ pameladawnphotography.smugmug.com

and Thaemert was about midway between two checkpoints. She put him into her sled and carried him to the next checkpoint, where her team had a required rest stop of over five hours. Vets and her team handlers then cared for her dog's broken leg, and she rested the rest of her team and moved another dog into the lead position.

Her team handlers included her partner, Mike Tam, her 17-year-old sister, Carissa Thaemert, and one of Mike's co-workers.

"There is so much preparation involved in a race like the Beargrease," she said.

Thaemert's racing was funded by business sponsors

P12 Films, Kondos Outdoors, Vermilion Club, Hawkinson Construction, The Timberjay, Running Bear Healing Center, and TA Services LLC, and individual sponsors Ted and Cathy Golbuff, Kat Smith, Susan Edseth, and Lara and Matt McDonald.

She is competing in a new race, the Klondike Derby in Minnetonka, this weekend, and then the WolfTrack Classic in Ely later this month. Both races are shorter, one-day events.

"These races are more like fun runs," she said. For the longer race, she had to really keep the dogs moving slower than they wanted for the first half, so they wouldn't "burn out." For

the shorter races, the dogs can run as fast as they are comfortable going.

Other area Beargrease competitors included veterinarian John Fisher of Cook, veterinarian Jen Freking from the Ely Vet Clinic, and another racing newcomer, Ryan Miller of Cook. Miller spent a lot of time training alongside Thaemert's team, and came in close behind her, in 14th place.

"The Great Alaskan Race" movie is available to rent online from amazon.com. You can read more about Thaemert's work on the movie at <http://timberjay.com/stories/sled-dog-movie-stars,15385?>



Chimpy Skating Party fun: clockwise from top left: Janna Goerdts puts skates on her boys Milo and Jasper. Jolene Herberg and Sheldon Majerle served up hot and cold treats for the skaters. Kalee Bjorgo helps her daughter Zaija balance on her new skates. Ivy and Lily Russell snack on some ice cream in the warming shack. Hockey fun out on the rink. photos by J. Summit



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ENVIRONMENTAL

SERVICES

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<div><div>Northwoods Transfer Station</div><div>9384 Hwy 21 N., Ely/Babbitt</div><div>Winter Hours</div><div>Mon, Thu, Fri, Sat: 8am-3pm</div><div>Tue: 9:30am-3pm</div><div>Wed: 11am-5pm</div></div>	<div><div>Cook Transfer Station</div><div>2134 S. Beatty Rd., Cook</div><div>Hours</div><div>Mon: 10am-6pm</div><div>Tues thru Sat: 9am-3:30pm</div></div>
<div><div>County 77 Canister Site</div><div>2038 County Rd. 77, Greenwood Twp</div><div>Winter Hours</div><div>Thurs, Sun: noon-5pm</div></div>	<div><div>Soudan Canister Site</div><div>5160 Hwy 169, Soudan</div><div>Hours</div><div>Mon, Wed, Sat, Sun</div><div>8am-5pm</div></div>
<div><div>Embarrass Canister Site</div><div>7530 Koski Rd., Embarrass</div><div>Hours</div><div>Sat: 12:30-4:30pm</div><div>Thu: 10am-5pm</div></div>	<div><div>Aurora Transfer Station</div><div>5910 Hwy 135 N., Aurora</div><div>Hours</div><div>Mon, Thurs, Fri: 8am-4pm</div><div>Tue, Wed: 10am-4pm</div><div>Sat: 8am-noon</div></div>
<div><div>Household Hazardous Waste Facility</div><div>5345 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia</div><div>Hours</div><div>Tues and Sat: 8am-1pm</div></div>	<div><div>Regional Landfill</div><div>5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia</div><div>Hours</div><div>Mon-Fri: 8am-4:30pm</div><div>Sat: 8am-3:30pm</div></div>

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th

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Office hours 8-4:30 Monday through Friday

www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle



COMMUNITY NOTICES

Shrove Tuesday meal on Feb. 25 at St. James

TOWER- In September 1992, Rev. Richard Blood accepted the call to minister at St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower. In 1994, Rev. Blood and St. James Session agreed that Vacation Bible School was badly needed in the area, and that it would take a sizeable amount of money to accomplish the project. A fundraiser was needed. The idea was brought up to have a pancake and sausage meal, and that it would fit well to have the first one be on Shrove Tuesday in 1995. Traditionally, on Shrove Tuesday, families clear the refrigerator of fats in preparation for fasting during Lent. That first meal was very well received by the local Tower-Soudan community, and it has been served every year since. This year is the 25th anniversary and St. James thanks everyone who has made the project such a success.

This year’s Shrove Tuesday meal will be served on Tuesday, Feb. 25 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St. James, for a freewill donation. Take-outs are available. Proceeds will be divided equally between Chimpy’s skating parties and the VBS sponsored jointly by St. James and Immanuel Lutheran.

St. Martin’s Mardi Gras celebration on Feb. 21

TOWER- St. Martin’s Catholic Church in Tower will once again be hosting a Mardi Gras celebration on Friday, Feb. 21. Fun for the whole family begins at 5 p.m. and goes until 8 p.m. It’s an open house style event – come when you want and stay as long as you want.

Drawings will be held throughout the evening – 6:15 p.m., 6:45 p.m., 7:15 p.m., and 7:45 p.m. You must be present to win one of the door prizes. A prize will be given for the best costume. Kids each receive one free drawing ticket, adults pay \$1 for each ticket.

There will be a kids’ activity area to keep them busy and occupied. An art project for all children will be done at 6:30 p.m., followed with a Cupcake Walk at 6:50 p.m. The piñata will be back again this year – breaking of the piñata is scheduled for 7 p.m. Each child receives a treat bag at the door.

Bingo will return again – be-

ginning at 6:45 p.m. Cost for bingo is \$5 for 10 games. New this year is a Cribbage Tournament. Cribbage will be played in teams of two; each player pays \$10 to enter, winning team takes home half of the pot. For this event we ask that you sign up with Maryann (753-4310).

There will be a cash bar for adult beverages and lots of food. Some of the items you will find on the menu: jambalaya, chili, a variety of meatballs and wings, Mardi Gras meringues, meat cheese tray with crackers, and more.

The cost is a freewill offering. We hope that you will join us for this feast before Lent.

Volunteers needed for Tower-Soudan Fourth of July events

TOWER-SOUDAN- The Tower-Soudan Lake Vermilion Events Board needs new volunteers. Many of the faithful volunteers, many of whom have worked for 20-plus years, have decided to hang up their volunteer hats to enjoy the day with their own families. We understand this, and appreciate all of the years they have put in to help make this single day the best we can for all of you.

Volunteers are needed for these events:

➤ **Parade line-up help** (2-3 people needed) Involves getting all parade floats/entries ready to make their way down Main Street at the Civic Center parking lot. Time frame is 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

➤ **Kiddie Parade help** (3-4 people needed). Involves judging and line-up of kids parade entries and starting off parade. Time frame is 9:30 - 11:15 a.m.

➤ **Kids sawdust scramble and races** (4-6 people needed) Involves distributing coins in sawdust scramble, announcing races, line judges, winners name recorders, prize distribution. Time frame 1 - 3 p.m.

We cannot make our 4th of July celebration happen without our volunteers. Please keep our wonderful traditions going in Tower-Soudan.

To volunteer, please contact Julie Johnson by text or phone at 218-750-7242.

You do not need to be a Tower-Soudan resident, nor a member of our board to volunteer.

If you are willing to help in any way, please contact us.

Red Hat Belles meet on Feb. 20

TOWER- The Northern Red Hat Belles will meet on Thursday, Feb. 20 at 12 noon at the Tower Café. The group will order off the menu. Please RSVP by Monday, Feb. 17 to Kathy at 218-753-2530. New members and guests are always welcomed.

Tower-Soudan Civic Club to meet Feb. 19

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Civic Club will meet on Wednesday, Feb. 19 at Sulu’s. Sulu’s will host a dinner to begin at 5:30 p.m. The cost of the dinner will be \$20. Please contact Linda Haugen for reservations. The program will begin at 6:30 p.m., and our speaker will be Jill Aubin from Mt. Iron. Jill will be speaking about her many adventures and hiking the Appalachian Trail. Please come join us, all are welcome to attend the dinner, program, or both.

Chimpy’s Skating Parties on Sunday, Monday

SOUDAN- Chimpy’s Skating Parties are now underway. Stop by the Soudan Skating Rink on Sunday, Feb. 9 from 12 - 2 p.m., and Monday, Feb. 10 from 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

The rink will be in use on Saturday, Feb. 8 for the annual Hockey Day in Soudan event.

This week’s parties are sponsored by Linda Wiire, Fred Ode, A & W Company, Chuck and Nancy Tekautz.

These community family-friendly events welcome skaters of all ages. The warming shack has loaner skates in most sizes and boot skaters are also welcome. Adult volunteers are needed to help supervise skaters outdoors as well as to help serve the hot food indoors.

The skating rink warming shack is open daily, weekdays from 4 p.m. until closing, and weekends from 11 a.m. to closing. The rink will be closed due to inclement weather, and will be posted in such instances.

AEOA Senior Dining Menu

TOWER- Vermilion Country School and AEOA sponsor a senior dining site at the charter school in Tower. All meals include salad bar, fruit, choice of beverage, and dessert.

Reservations are appreciated the day before, or morning of, but walk-ins are always welcome. Take-outs are available. Seniors age 60 and older who have registered for the program and their partners qualify for special pricing of \$4 per meal, but all ages are welcome at the regular rate of \$5.75. There are no income guidelines.

Meals are served from 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. on days when the charter school is open. Call the school at 218-300-1447 for reservations, or call AEOA at 1-800-662-5711 ext. 7323 for the one-time registration process.

Homebound seniors can sign up for meal delivery. To register for Meals on Wheels, or for more information, please call AEOA Senior Nutrition at 218-735-6899.

Week of Feb. 10
Monday- Grilled Cheese, Tomato Soup
Tuesday- Enchiladas, Vegetable
Wednesday- Popcorn Shrimp, Tater Tots, Green Beans in Cheese Sauce, Bread Stick
Thursday- Breaded Pork, Mashed Potatoes, Country Gravy, Dinner Roll, Vegetable
Friday- Chicken Philly Sandwich, Steamed Broccoli

Week of Feb. 10

Monday

TOPS - Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tower, at 9 a.m.

Embarrass Al-Anon Family Group- Hope Lutheran Church, 5088 Hwy. 21, 6 p.m.

Tuesday

Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5:30 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is Feb. 18.

Greenwood Fire Dept.- Meetings on the first (business meeting) and third (drill) Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Wednesday

Tower AA- Open Basics- 7 p.m. at St. James Presbyterian Church. Questions, call 753-2332.

Thursday

AA Meeting- Lake Vermilion 12x12 (Open). 6:30 p.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tower, use the rear side door entrance.

Vermilion Country School Board- Meetings posted online at vermilioncountry.org.

Vermilion Country School 2nd Quarter Honor Roll



A Honor Roll

Caleb Ramponi
Talyn Hedin
Emilie Wojcik
Alex Dorman
Jaicee Krings
Mariah Mitchell
Kyla Stellmach
Alyssa Pratt
Danica Starkman

B Honor Roll

Brody Anderson
Annakeiah Chavez
Preston Tyndall-Robich
Leah Anderson
Connor Hanson
Todd Zibrowski
Jacob Dorman

Northeast Range 2nd Quarter Honor Roll

A Honor Roll

Grade 12

Jolie Langevin
Shelby Nelson
Lara Poderzay

Grade 11

Ariel Kalinowski
Oskar Koivisto
Alexia Lightfeather
Phoebe Morgan
Ethan Zaitz
James Zupancich

Grade 10

Audrey Anderson
Erin Backe
Rylee Dusich
Joscelyn LaSart
Rylan Poppenhagen
Hannah Reichensperger

Grade 9

Kassidy Turner

Grade 8

Aubree Gerlovich
Hailey Lindquist

Grade 7

Noah Backe
Greyson Reichensperger
Danica Sundblad

B Honor Roll

Grade 12

Brody Anderson
Robert Daugherty
Charles Fritz
Tracker Koivisto
Jason Skube
Casey Zahnow

Grade 11

Elijah Anderson
Anne Barich
Christopher Ferguson
Kaleb Kappes-Bliss
Gracie Sperling

Grade 10

Aili Bee
Wyatt Gorsma
Amara Lampton
Thia Lossing
Alysia Miller
Ryan Milton
Natalie Nelmark
Calvin Winger

Grade 9

Connor Berhow
Zoey Cameron
Mariah DeJoode

Layne Kaufenberg

Logan Meskill
Jennie Nelson
Jonathan Zaitz

Grade 8

Natalie Backe
Abby Koivisto
Allie Larson
Ruby Milton
Wesley Sandy

Grade 7

Joshua Burton
Kyle Kratz
Aubree Minier
Chelsey Nelmark
Maizy Sundblad
Lydia Wright

Bookmobile Schedule

Wednesday, Feb. 26; March 18

Bois Forte Boys/Girls Club	11:00-11:30 a.m.
Greenwood Town Hall	12:00-12:30 p.m.
Soudan Fire Hall	1:45-3:00 p.m.
Tower Civic Center	3:15-4:15 p.m.
Embarrass, Four Corners	5:15-6:00 p.m.

For further information, call the Arrowhead Library System at 218-741-3840 or www.arrowhead.lib.mn.us

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the *TIMBERJAY*

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Moving? Questions about your subscription? Call the Tower office at (218) 753-2950.

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Libraries

Ely library

Hours: Monday — Friday,
10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Saturdays — 8 a.m. to noon
Closed on Sundays
Phone: 365-5140

Babbitt library

Monday Noon-6 pm
Tuesday Noon-6 pm
Wednesday Noon-6 pm
Thursday Noon-6 pm
Friday Noon-5 pm
Phone: 827-3345

Support groups

AA - Alcoholics Anonymous
AA - 7 p.m. Mondays, and 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays, First Lutheran Church, 915 E. Camp St., Ely
WOMEN'S AA - Noon Mondays, St. Anthony Church basement, Ely
BABBITT AA - 7 p.m. Tuesdays, Woodland Presbyterian Church
AL-ANON - Sundays 8-9 p.m. at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely.
For persons who encounter alcoholism in a relative or friend.
BABBITT AL-ANON Thursdays, 7 p.m. at Woodland Presbyterian Church.
CO-DEPENDENTS' 12-step support group, noon Fridays, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Ely.
ELY FOOD SHELF - Third Wednesday each month, 15 W. Conan St.
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION GED - Study materials and pre-test available. Tower by appointment.
Call 365-3359, 827-3232, or 1-800-662-5711.

Tuesday Group

ELY - The upcoming Tuesday Group schedule is listed below. All talks are at 12 noon on Tuesday at the Grand Ely Lodge.
Feb. 11 - Quinn Nystrom - DFL Eighth District Congressional Candidate

Ely Free Clinic

ELY - The Ely Community Health Center is open every Thursday evening from 5:30-7 p.m. in the AFU Building, 111 S 4th Ave. E.
For more information, call 218-365-5678, or visit their website, www.elycommunityhealth.org.

Game night

ELY - Smear tournaments are held the first and third Mondays, and cribbage tournaments are held the second and fourth Mondays at the Ely Senior Center, 27 S First Ave E, starting at 6 p.m.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2020

artists carve white blocks
sudden snow transformations
visual fantasy



Vermilion Community College's Ironman and Ironwomen basketball teams honored staff and faculty last week prior to their games. Each student-athlete chose one faculty/staff member that helped make his/her life at VCC extraordinary. The faculty/staff were acknowledged for their dedication and help and given certificates from the student-athletes.
For the Ironwomen, above, from left are, front row, Alexis Hughes and Justin Burum, and back row, Justin Kosik, Ellie Hintze, Shannan Harding, Shawna Butler, Alanna Sjoberg, Marja Nelson, Timothy Loney, Jade Evans. John Terwilliger, Lauren Huchel, Terri Sutton, Deb Morris.
For the Ironmen, below, front row, Taray Graves, and back row from left, Devarius Davis, Curtis Bell III, Marja Nelson, Tre Nins, Abbey Blake, Ty Edmond, Dachaun Davis, Justin Kosik, Terrence Ballom, Devonne Tramble, Kelly Klun, Will Helms, Austin Funk, Dylan Willis, Nicki Kosik.



SUPPORTING THE ARTS

Gardner Trust spring grants deadline is March 17

ELY - The application deadline for the Donald G. Gardner Humanities Trust spring grant program is Tuesday, March 17.

Artists and groups can apply for grants in the following categories:

- Individual Artist Grants encourage developing and established artists with funding of up to \$1,000 to take advantage of an impending, concrete opportunity.
- Organization Project Grants support activities in the fine arts and for the Ely Public Library. Grant support is intended to make it possible for organizations to present or produce a fine arts activity.
- Youth Grants are awarded to Ely school students in grades 6-12 who have an interest in and demonstrate high motivation in the fine arts. The youth grants of up to \$750 can be used for workshops, classes, lessons or mentorships.

Youth Grant applicants need to schedule a grant review meeting with Trust Director Keiko Williams. "This meeting is intended to help the individual youth make their applications as compelling and well written as possible," she said. Youth Grant applicants must call or email Keiko by Friday, Feb. 21 to schedule their meeting.

- Scholarships are available for graduates of Ely Memorial High School who are in their third or fourth year of college studies or in graduate school. Trust scholarships are awarded to students majoring in one of the disciplines of fine arts or library science.
- Operational Funding Grants fund high quality, established Ely area organizations that produce, or present fine arts activities or provide services to artists.

Individuals and organizations that would like to have a draft application reviewed should try to contact Williams by early March. The office is open for anyone who would like to stop by, usually 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday or by appointment.

Grant forms and eligibility requirements are available on the Gardner Humanities Trust website at www.gardnertrust.org. Those without internet access can contact Keiko by phone at 218-365-2639 or email at info@gardnertrust.org to have an application mailed to them.

The deadline for applications is noon on Tuesday, March 17. Completed applications can be mailed to the Trust office at P.O. Box 720, Ely, MN 55731, or dropped off at the Ely City Hall, Clerk's Office, at 209 E. Chapman Street.



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YOUTH SKI LEAGUE



The Ely Chapter of the Minnesota Youth Ski League meets every Sunday at Hidden Valley Recreational Area. Above, Shannon Barber-Meyers adjusts mittens for daughter, Etta Meyer. At left, Fletcher Chopp is all smiles in his 'yeti' hat. Below, emcee Todd Hohenstein leads the group through warm-ups and stretching. photos by K. Vandervort

LIVING UP NORTH



Late-winter ice fishing for brook trout in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is just one of many winter activities enjoyed by Ely residents and visitors.
photo courtesy of Michael Dvorak, Minnesota DNR

ELY WINTER FESTIVAL

Northwoods Medallion hunts starts today

ELY - The fourth annual Ely Northwoods Medallion Hunt begins Friday, Feb. 7. This annual event, hosted by Ely Chamber of Commerce Events and Promotions Committee, is part of the 2020 Ely Winter Festival.

There will be a total of ten clues released at 10 a.m. each day, starting Feb. 7, with the final clue posted Feb. 16, to lead hunters to the medallion.

The clues will be posted at the Chamber of Commerce building at 1600 E. Sheridan St., on their website page (www.



ely.org/medallionhunt), on the Ely Chamber of Commerce Facebook page and at participating Ely businesses. WELY will also read the clue during their morning show.

The first one to find the medallion will win \$500 in Ely Chamber

Bucks.

But there are more chances to win. Each participating Ely business will also have Northwoods Medallion Hunt commemorative wooden nickels. For every ten wooden nickels turned in at the Chamber of Commerce, participants will receive an entry form for a drawing for four prizes: first place - \$100 Chamber Bucks, second place - \$75 Chamber Bucks, third place - \$50 Chamber Bucks and fourth place - \$25 Chamber Bucks.

No purchase is neces-

sary. Visit participating merchants often to collect a coin - one coin per person at each business per day. There is no limit to the amount of days one can visit each store, so one can collect wooden nickels galore to turn in for an entry form for the drawings.

All wooden nickels must be redeemed at the Chamber office by 5 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 17.

For more information about this event, visit www.ely.org/medallion-hunt.

Charlie Parr performs tonight at Ely Boathouse Brewpub for Great Nordic Beardfest

ELY - That facial hair spectacle known as the Great Nordic Beardfest returns to the Boathouse Brewpub and Restaurant on Friday, Feb. 7.

Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. and competition gets underway at 7 p.m. Live music, featuring Black River Revue and Charlie Parr, begins at 8:30 p.m.

Admission to the event is \$10, or \$5 for those with an Ely Winter Festival 2020 pin.

Beard competition categories include first, second and third places in Full Beard Natural six-minus, Full Beard Natural six-plus, Freestyle, Mustache, and Bearded Ladies.

Individual awards will be presented in several categories, including Best Beard in Town and Best Mustache in Town (locals only); Best in Show; Greybeard; Farthest Traveler; Ladies Choice; Best Costume; and Judges Choice.



AROUND TOWN

AAUW Ely branch will meet Tuesday

ELY - The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Ely branch meeting will be held Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 6 p.m. in room CC 110 at Vermilion Community College.

A brief social time is set for 5:45 p.m. prior to the meeting. The public is invited.

The program, "An Evening with Female Billionaire Entrepreneurs" will center around a group discussion based on "Dear Female Founders" and the MPR broadcast, "How I Built This."

"Dear Female Founders" is 66 letters of advice from women entrepreneurs. Members and other attendees are encouraged to read the letters or listen to the broadcast in preparation for the meeting.

Senior Center seeks donations

ELY - The Ely Senior Citizen Center is seeking donations to remodel their 40-year-old kitchen and dining area.

They are a nonprofit organization, and many community organizations and groups use the building. AEOA meals are served Monday through Friday and meals are delivered to the home-bound by the AEOA bus.

Donations can be sent to the Ely Area Senior Center, 27 S 1st Ave E, Ely, MN 55731 or to Ely Senior Citizen Building Fund C/O Frandsen Bank, 102 E Sheridan St., Ely, MN 55731.

Contact Terri Muhvich at 218-365-4305 for more information.

Have coffee with a cop

ELY - Join members of the Ely Police Department at the Front Porch Coffee and Tea Co. on Wednesdays at 9 a.m. for Coffee with a Cop.

The program was started as a community-police initiative to build relationships between law enforcement and the community they serve. "This event will provide a way to meet a police officer from the Ely Police Department in an informal and relaxed setting," said Chief John Lahtonen.

Feel free to stop by, grab a cup of coffee and have a chat with the police officer, who will have discussion topics on hand for those who just want to listen.

Learn to make Dorothy's root beer

ELY - Learn how to make root beer like Dorothy Molter did. This event, scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 9, from 10-11 a.m. at the Dorothy Molter Museum, 2002 E. Sheridan St. features a guided program through the Winter Cabin focused on Dorothy's root beer history, free time to look in other cabins, and root beer supplies to make 32 ounces of root beer to take home.

The cost is \$10 per person, ages eight-plus. Pre-registration is required. Call 218-365-4451 or email info@rootbeerlady.com.

Dress for the weather and temperature as the historic cabins are drafty and unheated.



Area Solid Waste Facility site hours

Northwoods Transfer Station
9384 Hwy 21 N., Ely/Babbitt
Winter Hours
Mon, Thu, Fri, Sat: 8am-3pm
Tue: 9:30am-3pm
Wed: 11am-5pm

Aurora Transfer Station
5910 Hwy 135 N., Aurora
Hours
Mon, Thurs, Fri: 8am-4pm
Tue, Wed: 10am-4pm
Sat: 8am-noon

Embarrass Canister Site
7530 Koski Rd., Embarrass
Hours
Sat: 12:30-4:30pm
Thu: 10am-5pm

Soudan Canister Site
5160 Hwy 169, Soudan
Hours
Mon, Wed, Sat, Sun:
8am-5pm

Household Hazardous Waste Facility
5345 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia
Hours
Tues and Sat: 8am-1pm

Regional Landfill
5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia
Hours
Mon-Fri: 8am-4:30pm
Sat: 8am-3:30pm

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th

St. Louis County Environmental Services Department
1-800-450-9278
Office hours 8-4:30 Monday through Friday
www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle



Higher Education

Ely student honored at Mines school

RAPID CITY, S.D.- Charles Dammann, of Ely, was named to the Dean's List for the fall 2019 semester at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

In order to merit a spot on the Dean's List, students must earn a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for the semester.

Yesterday's news, this week

from the archives of

THE ELY MINER

Courtesy of the Ely-Winton Historical Society

February 6, 1920

Flu hospital established

The board of health of this city is taking no chances with the flu cases that so far have showed up in a mild nature. Last year the epidemic was checked when a hospital was established where proper treatment was given.

Before the establishment of the hospital however, we had 60 deaths, and while several died at the emergency hospital, there were cases that secured too hard a foothold before given the necessary attention and service which can be given at a centralized place with trained nurses and proper treatment.

Health Officer Parker and City Nurse Keable, upon the first signs of the epidemic last week, took steps at once for the establishment of an emergency hospital and several patients were moved there at once. Fourteen beds were placed in the Community Center and arrangements made for more should the occasion demand. By Saturday night, there were seven patients and more came early this week. Some of the first ones entering were discharged during the week. All of the first patients were men, several having come from the Swallow and Hopkins camps north of here. To assist her in caring for patients, Miss Keable engaged Ray Coffey for days and Clara Chinn for nights.

Tuesday the first lady patient was taken to the hospital and Mrs. Frank Jenko was engaged to assist the regular nurse. Since that time, several others have been received and Mrs. A. Knutson is also employed as a nurse.

Gust Hill died Saturday evening at his home on Chandler of pneumonia following an attack of the flu. He is survived by his widow and three children. He has been a resident of this city for many years. The funeral took place Monday and was private, according to the rules laid down by the state board of health.

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JOHN BEARGREASE

Fisher and Miller gave their best at Beargrease Marathon

by Stephanie Ukkola
Staff Writer

REGIONAL- Two Cook residents and their teams gave their best efforts at the John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon on Jan. 26 and 27. Ryan Miller and his Underdog Sled Dogs came in 14th in the 120-mile mid-distance race and John Fisher and his Meander Mountain Huskies attempted the full 300-mile marathon but did not finish after getting lost along the way.

Ryan Miller and the Underdogs were rookies this year, competing in the Beargrease for the first time. This was their second race ever, the first being the Wolf-Track Classic in Ely last year. Ryan and his wife Kaysee, along with their kids, moved to northern Minnesota in 2016 and got into mushing shortly thereafter. “It was a lot of fun; the conditions were pretty good but it was a little hot for the dogs and the thirty-degree temps made the trails a little soft. We made a few rookie mistakes but plan on doing it again next year,” said Miller. Underdog Sled Dogs were

sponsored by J & H Contracting of Angola.

John Fisher and the Meander Mountain Huskies have been racing since 1989, first competing in the Beargrease 120. Though Fisher and his wife Robin are well-seasoned, it’s been awhile since they’ve raced competitively. This year’s Beargrease was a comeback from a 16-year hiatus, with an all-new team of dogs. Fisher missed the trail markers twice because of heavy falling snow. “We went on about a 25 to 30-mile detour,” he said. Because of the extra miles, and the likelihood they wouldn’t make the 12-hour cutoff after the first finishers, Fisher decided to call it quits a little over halfway, at Poplar Lake. “I didn’t have huge expectations, but I wanted to do the marathon to get the dogs some experience. We’ll try again next year.”

John has participated in the Beargrease several times, and other races such as the Red River Classic, the Gunflint Mail Run, the UP 200, and the Percy DeWolfe in Dawson City, Yukon, Canada. John and Robin have been a part of the Beargrease



Veterinary team in the past and operate the Vermilion Veterinary Clinic in Cook. Business ownership has prevented them from racing consistently over the past fifteen years but the couple has taken their dogs for many trips to the BWCA, done training runs, and the occa-

sional race. John and the Meander Mountain Huskies were supported by Northwest Mining Company in Fairbanks, Alaska and Vermilion Veterinary Clinic in Cook.



Left: John Fisher and the Meander Mountain Huskies didn't finish the race but the team gave their best! Right: Ryan Miller and the Underdogs Sled Dogs completed their first Beargrease 120 race.
photos by P. Wettering

NORTH WOODS SCHOOL

What does a School Resource Officer do?



JOHN VUKMANICH

In my four years at North Woods, we have had three School Resource Officers, otherwise known as SROs. Our current SRO, John Barrett, came on board this year when former SRO Brock Kick relocated to Cherry. Previous SRO Matt Krueger took a job in a different department, and I thank both of them for their work at North Woods. I decided on this topic for my article this week as Mr. Jirik, our Dean of Students, and SRO Barrett recently attended a School Resource Officer/School Safety conference, and we hope to have some good information on the latest trends and ideas in school safety. More to come on that in a later article.

When our school district began the agreement with St. Louis County, there were many questions about the role of the SRO. Not all district residents were in agreement that a law enforcement officer should be in a public school. In addition, law enforcement has been thrust into the national media spotlight, and not always in a fashion that is representative of the majority of those who work in the profession. Understandably, there was confusion about the role of the SRO. As a school administrator, it is my opinion that there is no question whatsoever of the benefit of having an SRO in our building.

By the way, North Woods now has an SRO present almost full time. Our former model was that we shared the SRO 50/50 with another school in our district. Currently we have coverage four days per week. I appreciate this, as we never can predict when we will need assistance.

Back to the benefits and questions. There was



North Woods School Resource Officer John Barrett. submitted photo

a concern that the SRO would be handling school discipline. He does not. School staff are still 100 percent responsible for handling discipline and consequences. The SRO becomes involved when the issue involves activity that is actually illegal, and not just a violation of

a school’s behavior policy. Examples of items that the SRO would become involved with are:

- Student traffic issues. A student may need a reminder on safe driving or license requirements.
- Chemical violations. A student who makes a poor choice to use tobacco or an e-cigarette, for example, has violated a school rule as well as a state statute.
- Fighting or physically acting-out. If there is a physical altercation or a student who is acting in an unsafe fashion, the SRO may assist and possibly help families work through any legal questions.

- Vandalism. The SRO works with the school and county to handle property damage due to vandalism.
- Harassment and bullying. The SRO is trained in conflict resolution and will sometimes step in to help resolve student harassment, bullying, and conflict issues.
- School Safety. Ultimately, we are all much safer at school having a trained officer in our building who is experienced in public safety and has the ability to help keep our students and staff as safe as possible.
- Family support. Sometimes our SRO assists students and families in securing help from other agencies and facilities.
- Event supervision. SRO Barrett recently helped chaperone our Turnabout dance. It makes me feel much more at ease knowing that he is present at activities such as these, especially in the winter when the weather can change on a dime.
- School searches. Our SRO works with his fellow deputies to set up occasional K-9 searches. The K-9 is trained to smell illegal substances. The purpose of these is to ensure our families that we take our responsibility to prevent chemicals and illegal substances from coming into our school building.
- Attendance. School attendance is important for school

success. On occasion, the SRO will check on a student who has been missing school and hopefully will help to improve the issue, whether the student or the family needs support.

- Public relations. When our SRO mingles with kids and talks with them, he is building relationships with our students who will someday be the adults in our communities. It is very important that the school, law enforcement, and community have positive relations to support each other in raising our kids.

The public needs to know that our school resource officer handles situations with students in a kind, educational manner. He takes his role as a mentor seriously. The object of the SRO program is certainly not to “bust” kids for mistakes. Officer Barrett is an integral part of the team at North Woods where it is our goal to help all of our kids become the best young adults they can be. Some students need no extra help, and others need a lot of support in place. I appreciate very much the support of the SRO, the St. Louis County Board of Commissioners, and ISD 2142 School Board on our SRO program. It is a beneficial and necessary part of our school. If you would like to have a conversation with Officer Barrett, please reach out to me at school and we can make sure that you have a chance to meet him and get any assistance that you may need.



Area Solid Waste Facility site hours

Ash River Trail Canister Site 11391 Ash River Trail Winter Hours Sat: 12:30pm–4:30pm	Kabetogama Lake Canister Site 10150 Gamma Rd Winter Hours Wed: noon–4pm Sat: 8am–noon	Sturgeon Canister Site 8380 Hwy 73 Hours Sun: 10am–4pm
Orr Canister Site 4038 Hwy 53 Winter Hours Tue, Thu: 9am–noon Sat: 8am–noon	Portage Canister Site 6992 Crane Lake Rd. Winter Hours Tue, Sat: 1pm–4:30pm	County 77 Canister Site 2038 County Rd. 77 Winter Hours Thurs, Sun: noon–5pm
Cook Transfer Station 2134 S. Beatty Rd. Hours Mon: 10am–6pm Tues thru Sat: 9am–3:30pm	Regional Landfill 5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia Hours Mon–Fri: 8am–4:30pm Sat: 8am–3:30pm	St. Louis County Environmental Services Department 1-800-450-9278 Office hours 8-4:30 Monday through Friday www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle
Household Hazardous Waste Facilities 5345 Regional Landfill Rd., Virginia Tue, Sat: 8am–1pm	3994 Landfill Rd, Hibbing Sat: 8am–1pm	

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th



Bookmobile Schedule

Thursdays: Feb. 13; March 5 & 26	
Nett Lake Community Center	9:30 - 1:15
Crane Lake Ranger Station	11:15 - 12:00
Orr Lake Country ReMax Bldg	1:45 - 2:30
Kabetogama Town Hall	3:15 - 3:45

For further information, call the Arrowhead Library System at 218-741-3840 or www.arrowhead.lib.mn.us

**Read It
HERE**

CITY OF COOK

Cook hires new deputy clerk

by David Colburn
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- Cook residents stopping by the city offices will see a new face, as city council members selected Kris Maki as the city’s new deputy clerk/treasurer at their regular meeting on Jan. 23.

Maki brings 13 years of experience as accounting clerk for the city of Eveleth to her position, which she said is easing her transition to Cook.

“The cities of Cook and Eveleth use the same software system,” Maki said, “so I’m able to connect a lot of it. But there is also a lot of stuff that’s a learning curve for me.”

Maki plans to commute from Eveleth for a few years. She and her husband, Dan, own a house on Lake Vermilion and expect to move there after their daughter Delaney, a high school freshman, graduates.

“It’s worth it, and it’s time for a change,” Maki said. “Even though there would be a drive for a few years, I decided to take it.”

Maki’s predecessor, Stephanie Beaudry, has stayed on to help train her replacement, city administrator Theresa Martinson said.

“We’re going to have a good transition period,” Martinson said. “We appreciate all of Stephanie’s hard work and dedication and her assistance during this time.”

Council members formally accepted two grant awards for upgrades to the community center – a \$63,400 award from IRRR and a \$25,000 Community Development Block Grant. The funds will be used for door upgrades, building a ramp and sidewalks, and interior and exterior signage, and possibly to pave the parking lot, Martinson said.

Other business

In other business, the council:

➤ Received notification from the Federal Aviation Administration that the Cook airport is once again open for night operation after the city cleared some tree obstructions. Ownership of a hangar was transferred from Dave Witt to Tim Green.

➤ Approved a gambling permit for Wings & Things, a fundraising event set for April 18 at the Cook VFW to benefit Friends of the Park.

➤ Discussed strategies to promote the upcoming 2020 Census. “We’re going to produce a flyer for people on the benefits of the census and how it helps the city financially,” Martinson said. Holding educational and kick-off events at the library for the census were also mentioned.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Dehn of Orr earns Bachelor's of Nursing

ORR- Bobbie Dehn of Orr has earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Western Governors University (WGU). The online, nonprofit university has graduated over 167,000 students from across the country since its inception in 1997.

WGU has recognized 5,617 undergraduate and 4,302 graduate degree recipients, who have completed their degrees since Oct. 2. Their areas of study include business, K-12 education, information technology, and health professions, including nursing. The average time to graduation for those earning a bachelor’s degree was two years, two months, while the average time to degree for graduate programs was one year, six months. The average age for those who graduated is 38 years old.

Readers and Rappers meets Feb. 11

COOK- The Readers and Rappers Book Club will meet on Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 1 p.m. at the Homestead Apartments

community room in Cook. Mickey Maki will moderate the book, "The Second Mountain," by David Brooks. Alberta Whitenack will be the hostess.

The book discussion lasts approximately one hour, followed by a social time. New members are always welcome; just bring your love for reading books. The book selection for March is "The Woman in the Window" by A.J. Finn.

Sarah Maki’s “Surface Work” opening reception, Feb. 7

COOK- Sarah Maki, February’s exhibiting artist, will open her showcase “Surface Work” with a public reception on Friday, Feb. 7 from 5 to 7 p.m. Maki, who grew up in Cook, will have her art on display at NWFA from Thursday, Feb. 6 to Friday, Feb. 28.

NWFA Board of Directors to meet, Feb. 18

COOK- The NWFA Board of Directors will meet at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 18 at the gallery. Meetings usually last

about two hours. Tenth anniversary planning, Spring Art Expo, and the annual photo contest will be on the agenda.

Original drama, “Piercing the Snow,” showing Feb. 22-23

COOK- First Baptist Church of Cook’s “Bleak Mid-Winter Players” have discovered a cure for the long Cook winter - preparing a feast and drama for the community. In the pursuit of memorizing lines, sewing costumes, drumming up 10th-century recipes, and pounding out a new stage set, toe-biting cold or cap-stealing winds become mere petty nuisances. It is a huge blessing for the team to once again be able to present a drama event to the community.

There will be three performances of the original drama, “Piercing the Snow,” which is a tale of two brothers. The first will be a dinner theatre at the Cook Community Center beginning at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 22. The second will also be at the Cook Community Center, but it will be just the drama performance with a

snack intermission on Sunday, Feb. 23 at 3 p.m. The snack performance will again be performed at the Gilbert Community Center on Saturday, Feb. 29 at 4 p.m.

This year, the play is a historical biography from 10th-century Bohemia. You will be the King’s guests at the Prague Castle. We invite guests to attend in period attire, but costumes are not necessary to attend.

Tickets for the dinner theatre are \$10 per person or \$30 per family. Tickets for the other two performances are \$3 per person. We recommend buying or reserving your tickets ahead of time as performances, especially the dinner theatre, could sell out. Please stop by or call the First Baptist Church office at 218-666-5979 for any further details and to reserve or buy your tickets.

NWFA art groups

COOK- The NWFA Gallery is open Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and is located at 210 S River St. in Cook. Stop in to view the gallery or attend one of our

regular art groups listed below. For more information, visit the website at nwfamn.org or email at nwfamn.org@gmail.com.

Open Studio Art takes place every Saturday at the NWFA gallery from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. All artists and would-be artists are welcome to share the time and space. All are welcome with no registration or membership required.

The Woodcarving Group meets on Thursdays from 6-8 p.m. All skill levels are welcome to attend and participate. No registration required. Some tools are available to practice with. Call Howard at 218-741-7941 to verify.

The NWFA Winter Writers Group will meet on Saturday, Feb. 8 from 1 to 3 p.m. The group meets on the second Saturday at the NWFA Gallery with volunteer educator Dr. Ellie Larmouth. All interested persons may attend. Just drop in.

Events at Cook Public Library

Adults

Tuesday, Feb. 11: Alzheimer’s Caregiver Support Group, 12 p.m., presented by Scenic Rivers Clinic

Tuesday, Feb. 11: Friends of the Cook Public Library Meeting, 5 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 20: Movie: Death on the Nile, 6 p.m. Watch the 2004 movie of Agatha Christie’s Death on the Nile, 98 minutes. Popcorn and water provided by Friends of the Cook Public Library.

Thursday, March 5: One Book, One Community: “Death on the Nile” by Agatha Christie. There is plenty of time to read the book and join us at the library for a book discussion at 5 p.m.

Teens (7-12 grades)

Friday, Feb. 21: Teen Escape Room, 6 p.m. All teens are welcome to “escape” from the library. Food provided by Friends of the Cook Public Library

Elementary

Thursday, Feb. 13: LEGO Challenge, 4 p.m. Elementary students are invited to design a creation from 35 LEGO pieces that will hold a marble and won’t break when dropped from different height levels. LEGOS will be provided. A snack will be provided by Friends of the Cook Public Library.

Preschool

Story Time, Fridays at 10:30 a.m.

Feb. 7: Off We Go to Mexico

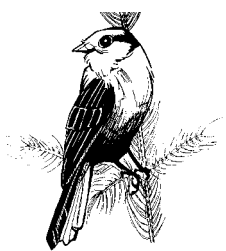
Feb. 14: Planets and Stars

Feb. 21: Little Monsters

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BREITUNG TOWNSHIP

To Zamboni or not to Zamboni: That is the question

by STEPHANIE UKKOLA
Staff Writer

SOUDAN- The town board here was divided over accepting a Zamboni ice resurfer for the Soudan Skating Rink, at their meeting this Tuesday.

Township supervisor Greg Dostert has been working with local community members to find a used Zamboni and raise funds for its purchase.

Dostert showed the board a picture of a used 1975 Zamboni that his son, Nate Dostert, found for sale online for \$5,900, located in Shawano, Wis. The Zamboni is propane powered with a Volkswagen Industrial Engine, a 160-gallon water tank, 125 cubic feet snow capacity, a 77-inch blade, and also includes a spare tire.

Greg Dostert was able to raise the total amount needed to purchase the Zamboni with commitments from his business, IBI Construction; his son's business Vermilion Storage; Rolando's Construction; Frandsen Bank; the Tower-Soudan Athletic

Association (TSAA); Beans Sundahl; and Dan Wiire.

"It would be a very positive thing for our communities," said Dostert. "It would make the rink safer and more level. Kids have gotten hurt recently by tripping in divots in the ice." He said the rink is very popular on weekends. Chimp's Skating Parties regularly bring in thirty or more kids each Saturday and Sunday, plus their parents.

Chairman Tim Tomsich was clearly opposed to taking the Zamboni, "It's not going to get done," he said. "If someone wants to buy it and get a certificate of insurance, OK. I don't think we need it. I don't think we need to store it." Tomsich pointed out that Dostert had sought out hockey boards and netting for the baseball field two years ago that still haven't been installed and that the baseball scoreboard that Dostert got was improperly installed the first time, fell, and needed to be replaced after an insurance claim.

Dostert apologized, "I know I've let you down, Tim."

Following a period of silence, Dostert attempted to make a motion to take possession of the community-purchased Zamboni, but the motion failed for lack of a second.

Supervisor Chuck Tekautz brought up the other costs that would be associated with the Zamboni. "If it comes free, we still have to store it," he said. There was also talk among the board about who would drive it, fuel costs, unexpected maintenance costs, regular maintenance including a yearly \$50 blade sharpening, insurance, and the fact that it would have to be driven from its proposed storage place, the Surface Building, down to the rink, which would be nearly a mile round trip. Tekautz said, "I'm not for it, all I can see is an expense; we can table it and see how many people are for it." Tekautz made a motion to table the Zamboni issue to the next meeting, Tuesday, Feb. 25 at noon and Dostert seconded it.



Other business

In other actions, the board:

► Appointed the absentee ballot board and election judges for 2020.

► Discussed the request of a resident of Merganser Road, a newly-named road off of Echo Point Road, that the township plow the road. Maintenance director Dale Swanson said that the resident believes that because the road is now named, it should be plowed by the township. Swanson spoke with county officials who said the road had to be named for emergency

services because it had more than three addresses. Despite gaining a name, the road is still considered a private road, not a township road, and therefore will not be plowed.

► Tabled the purchase of window coverings for a second time, in order to get more information from the vendors.

► Paid a \$30,514 invoice to Lenci Enterprises for the community center construction.

► The next township meeting will be Tuesday, Feb. 25 at noon, with the Board of Audit to follow.

Great Decisions 2020 video programs sponsored in Ely

ELY- The Ely Field Naturalists is helping the Great Decisions 2020 group get the word out about their upcoming programs. All sessions are free and open to the public.

Great Decisions meetings take place in Classroom 124 at VCC from 4 to 5:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays. These will be foreign policy discussions. Study guides are available to purchase at the Front Porch for \$35 each. There are two copies at the library that you can read there. Each session has between six and nine pages of information to read along with questions to guide the discussion. Participants are not required to attend all sessions and may select those topics of interest. On Thursday, Feb. 13 there will be a discussion on India and Pakistan led by Barbara Crossette. On Thursday, Feb. 27 there will be a discussion on Red Sea Security led by David Shinn. On Thursday, March 12 there will be a discussion on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking led by Ronald Weitzer. On Thursday, March 26 there will be a discussion on U.S. Relations with the Northern Triangle led by Michael Shifter and Bruno Binetti.

CBP officers seize drug paraphernalia at Int'l Falls border train crossing

INT'L FALLS- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Office of Field Operations officers at the International Falls Port of Entry targeted a rail container destined to arrive in Ranier. CBP officers inspected the rail container and discovered 42,390 pieces of drug paraphernalia. On Jan. 10, CBP seized the drug paraphernalia with an estimated domestic value of \$467,372. For more information about the work of CBP, please visit www.cbp.gov.

Speakers on Recovery from Mental Illness will present Feb. 11

VIRGINIA- In Our Own Voice (IOOV), a free public education program featuring two speakers sharing their personal stories of living with a mental illness and achieving recovery, will be offered on Tuesday, Feb. 11 from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Mesabi Range College, 1001 W Chestnut St. in Virginia. The program includes a short video and a question and answer period. NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) offers IOOV presentations around the state to improve public awareness of mental illnesses. For more information, contact Patrick at publicawareness@namimn.org or 651-645-2948 ext. 128.

FOND DU LAC COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Beekeeping and More! Symposium, Feb. 15

CLOQUET- Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, in partnership with the Northeast Minnesota Beekeepers Association, is hosting a day-long symposium called "Beekeeping and More!" on Saturday, Feb. 15 for anyone who is interested in learning about beekeeping as a hobby or as a commercial enterprise. The symposium will open at 8:30 a.m. and classes run from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. starting in the college commons. Pre-registration is encouraged. The first Beekeeping and More! workshop was held in 2016 and drew more than 150 beekeepers. Since then, the event has kept growing, making it one of the largest beekeeping workshops in Northern Minnesota.

Session topics include equipment, general troubleshooting, beginning beekeeping, queen rearing and management, wintering bees and bee survival in cold climates, keeping bees healthy, and bee language.

"We are very excited to have some really great speakers," said Courtney Kowalczak, Director of the Environmental Institute at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. "Dr. Connor and Dr. Brown bring a wealth of experience with queen bee rearing and beekeeping in cold climates like ours. Between them, they have published over 30 books and successfully managed over one thousand hives in northern climates."

Dr. Barry Brown is an established beekeeper in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. His experience in keeping and overwintering bees at northern latitudes translates well to the cold, long winters and harsh lows in Minnesota. Brown has served as the President of the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Development Commission and presents regularly on beekeeping in northern climates.

Dr. Larry Connor is an entomologist and author living in Kalamazoo, Mich. Connor founded Wicwas Press, and regularly serves as a monthly columnist for both Bee Culture Magazine and the American Bee Journal.

"The University of Minnesota Bee Squad will share the latest research on bee nutrition and ecology," said Kowalczak. "This will be a great day of learning and information sharing for both novice and experienced beekeepers. There will be plenty of time to meet other beekeepers, ask for advice, get questions answered, and share ideas."

Opening speaker Claire Lande of the Northeastern Minnesota Beekeepers Association will introduce the basics of beekeeping and cover everything a new beekeeper needs to understand. Lande's talk will cover equipment requirements, troubleshooting, developing a timeline for a new beekeeper's first

year of beekeeping, getting stung, and more

Bridget Mendel and Jessica Helgen from the University of Minnesota Bee Squad will present on both how to keep bees healthy through the landscape and disease management and understanding hive languages like pheromone and dance communication.

The fifth annual "Beekeeping and More!" Symposium is presented by Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College through support from a USDA-NIFA grant and in partnership with the Northeastern Minnesota Beekeepers Association. The workshop is part of Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College's Environmental Institute and Extension programs.

Registration is \$20 for Northeastern Beekeepers Association members, and \$25 for non-members. Pre-registration is encouraged, and is available online at www.signmeup.com/133564. Same-day registration will be available as space allows, payment by cash or check only.

For more information, contact Courtney Kowalczak at 218-879-0862 or via email at courtneyk@fdlcc.edu. Additional updates will be posted to the official Environmental Institute at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College Facebook page.

Almost, Maine at the Lyric, Feb. 13 - 16

VIRGINIA- Northern Stage Works, a theater group affiliated with the Lyric Center for the Arts, will present 'Almost, Maine,' a play by John Cariani, Feb. 13 through 16, at the Lyric Annex, 516 Chestnut St. in Virginia. The play is about residents of a small northern Maine town who experience the

life-altering power of the human heart. It is a two-act series of vignettes that take place simultaneously on one winter night.

Tickets for Almost, Maine, are available online at LyricCenter4Arts.com for \$15 or at the door for \$17. Special cabaret seating with champagne and chocolates is available

on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, for \$25 online or \$30 at the door. Performances are at 7 p.m., Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 13-15, and at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 16 at The First Stage Gallery.

Co-director Carol Zakula says, "We invite you into significantly simple moments of ordi-

nary people trying to mend, untwist, and restore relationships."

Cast members are Tavia Melhus, Josie Moe, Marlys Goerdt, Tucker Nelson, Amber Johnson, Liz Bloch, Tom Moe, Sarah Packa, Darby Sauer and Steven Solkela. Mary Lou Conaway and Carol Zakula are co-directors. Production staff includes stage manager Nina Kampf and technical director Pete Pellinen.

Northern Stage Works is a community theatre company that explores performances relevant to our local community and the world. Morphing from the former IRRRP, which was known for its past light opera, radio plays and mystery dinner theater performances, Northern Stage Works hopes to invite new participants excited about being involved in community theater. All auditions are posted. See www.lyriccenteronline.org and the Lyric Center for the Arts Facebook page for more information and announcements.

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HIGHER EDUCATION

Northeast Minnesota colleges plan to merge

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

Declining enrollment cited; no campuses will close

REGIONAL - The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees last week approved plans to merge five community and technical colleges in Northeastern Minnesota. The action paves the way for the Northeast Higher Education District to proceed with comprehensive planning to merge the accreditations of the five schools that make up NHED.

After a two-year planning period the board will vote again on whether to go through with it. The new college organization, if approved, would be in operation by fall of 2022. The current plan would keep all six of the district's college campuses, including Vermilion, Mesabi Range in both Virginia and Eveleth, Hibbing, Itasca, and Rainy River, open for students and classes.

The proposed restructuring is being driven by persistent enrollment declines that have been experienced throughout the Minnesota State

higher education system.

“Restructuring our five colleges into one accredited institution with six campuses will have many long-lasting benefits for our region,” said Michael Raich, interim president of NHED, in a press release. “We will create seamless learning experiences for students across the region, expand academic programming regionally, strengthen regional employer, university, and K-12 partnerships, and improve operational efficiencies. Operating our six campuses under a single accreditation will allow us to leverage the capacity and flexibility of a larger, cohesive college while still maintaining the important individual campus identities that our communities have grown to trust.”

Northeast Higher Education District schools have cooperated since 1999, sharing a president and some other services. Despite those two decades of cooperation, the colleges compete for

students and still operate independently in many areas. They’ve had their own budgets, academic programs, enrollment management systems, accreditation and sports programs.

The five colleges on six campuses have the equivalent of about 2,900 full-time students combined, having lost a third of their tuition-paying enrollment over the past eight years. An increase in the number of high school students taking advantage of post-secondary option has boosted the number of concurrent students, but nowhere near enough to stem the enrollment slide.

The decline in enrollment at NHED schools is outpacing the statewide trend, and that’s a demographic problem that the current restructuring is unlikely to solve. While some parts of Minnesota are experiencing population growth, the northeastern Minnesota counties served by NHED are experiencing either stable or declining populations. That trend is being fueled

by the rapid aging of the existing population combined with minimal in-migration. It’s a demographic pattern that’s being experienced to varying degrees in many rural parts of Minnesota and the U.S. as a whole. In the case of NHED, the enrollment declines are putting some of the schools at a critical point. Rainy River Community College, in International Falls, for example, currently has fewer than 100 students enrolled. Raich said the border country college has done a lot to structure itself for such a limited enrollment.

While VCC enrollment has declined, at just about 12 percent, it’s been a slower slide than most other NHED schools. “While we have fared quite a bit better than some of the other schools, sustained declines in enrollment are never good,” said VCC Provost Shawn Bina. “VCC has typically been more of a destination college, and we attract students from all over the Minnesota and

dozens of other states,” he said. “But a drop from 643 students to 563 students has definitely been felt here.”

Bina said this week that the plan emerged last fall after four years of joint strategic planning. “We have been moving in that direction for a number of years with our shared business office, shared financial aid services, and in other areas. These opportunities help all of us, and the typical student won’t see anything different here at VCC or the other schools,” he said.

The merged schools will get a new name that’s yet to be determined. Raich said each school would get to leverage the strengths of the larger unit while maintaining their “strong community identities.”

Each campus will be allowed to maintain its own identity, especially surrounding unique programs. For instance, campuses may be allowed to retain independent athletic programs so long as it remains financially

viable.

At VCC, Bina envisions minimal changes. “We are the Boundary Waters school and my role is to make sure that stays the same,” he said. “I have been here 26 years and our ethos has always been in natural resources and we will keep that identity. We don’t want to change something that is working.”

Statewide decline

The Minnesota State system, which includes 30 public colleges and seven universities, is in the ninth consecutive year of enrollment declines, which largely have been blamed on a strong economy. “People are making that choice to go to work rather than come to school,” Raich said.

According to state data released last week, just 66 percent of Minnesota’s 2018 high school graduating class enrolled in college the following fall — a drop from 70 percent four years ago.

LEADER...Continued from page 1

deliberations. However, Kent, the first woman to lead the Senate DFL caucus, made a brief statement after the meeting.

“It is my privilege to have been elected as the leader of the Senate DFL caucus,” Kent said. “This is an important year. We have a lot of important issues facing Minnesotans and we are committed to working hard to deliver for those people and our communities and to have a successful election in November.”

Elected to the Senate in 2002 after eight years in the House, Bakk had led the chamber’s DFL caucus since 2011 as both minority and majority leader. His role in shaping the party’s legislative initiatives and direct involvement in end-of-session negotiations with the governor and other legislative leaders helped keep Iron Range issues at the fore of dis-



Susan Kent

cussions in St. Paul.

“In politics, access and power are important,” said Aaron Brown, an Iron Range political writer. “Bakk had that. When you’re not at the table it’s a little more nerve-wracking. Bakk used his leadership position to do what he could to aid in the development of both non-ferrous mines (and) pipelines, which have been controversial. Now he and other local legislators will need to

convince other legislators to take up their issues in negotiations.”

Kent’s ascension to DFL caucus chair reflects broader shifts in the state’s cultural and political landscape, Brown said.

“The outcome of this debate within the DFL caucus was always going to happen at some point,” Brown said. “Most of the Democratic votes are in the metro and suburban parts of the state. Symbolically, seeing Senator Bakk lose his bid to keep his leadership position is one final sign that the loss of clout in greater Minnesota is continuing. And people have strong feelings about that.”

With DFL sights set on recapturing the majority in the Senate in the upcoming November election, Republicans wasted little time trying to turn Bakk’s dismissal to their advantage in a statement issued Monday by Senate major-

ity leader Paul Gazelka.

“I want to speak to the folks on the Range,” said Gazelka. “The Democrats have turned their back on you. I just want it to be crystal clear — when they threw out Tom Bakk as their minority leader, a legend frankly, doing great work for mining, paper mills and all the work up there, and now they have somebody from the Cities, it’s a different day. Republicans have your back up on the Range.”

Brown suggested Bakk’s situation could

have some effect on area legislative races.

“Sen. Bakk and other local legislators have enjoyed some crossover appeal with Trump voters,” he said. “Will that hold up if they don’t have the political power? That could open up the possibility of there being a more competitive race.”

While speculation swirls about the implications of the leadership change in the Senate, House Speaker Melissa Hortman, DFL-Brooklyn Park, issued a statement

Saturday acknowledging Bakk’s contributions.

“In his many years in the Legislature, Sen. Bakk has been a steadfast ally for working people,” she said. “As my partner and leader of the DFL Senate, he has been a trusted resource and friend. He deserves our gratitude and appreciation for his service.”

Minnesota Public Radio contributed reporting for this story. You can hear MPR News at 89.3 in Ely and 92.5 on the Iron Range.

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ELY...Continued from page 1

said Shauna Vega, EWF executive director said. "We are looking to help get our young people in the community involved in our festival and to help them to bring out their inner artist."

The students are working this week to put the finishing touches on their wolf sculpture and to add more detail. "All the students were very enthusiastic to take part in this new program and one VCC student even inquired about getting his own block of snow to put his new skills to the test," she said.

VCC interim art instructor Abbey Blake created a miniature clay model of a wolf to give the students an idea of what the finished product would look like. "I just quickly created this to give the students a three-dimensional model of what we could create," she said.

Blake, who is at VCC for this school year, said she had never used snow as a sculpting medium. "We have an amazing team of students and we are all having fun learning this process," she said. "It is a totally different process than with clay. With snow you have to take away all the material you don't want. Usually with clay, an artist can add bits of material to get to the desired shape. With snow it is mostly a reductive process. On the other hand, snow is a pretty giving material. It is lots of fun being outside in the



Abbey Blake, above, an interim art instructor at Vermilion Community College, explains the snow sculpting process to students at an Ely Winter Festival mentoring program. They created a wolf, right, over several days and nights of work.

park and seeing all the snow sculptures that will soon take shape."

With the help of local artist Wade Pharr, the students gathered at Whiteside Park last week for snow sculpting school. "Start by looking at your block of snow and at what angle the light will hit it," he said. "Each snow block is different and you have to work with the varieties and imperfections in the snow."

He reviewed some of the best tools to use to sculpt the snow and the techniques that work for him to shape the snow into what he is looking for. "You are not just confined to the four sides of the snow. Think outside the box," he said.

The students worked well past sunset for several nights last week and were in the park this week to finish their project.

The highlight of each Winter Festival

is, of course, the International Snow Sculpting Symposium. This year, 13 teams from Minnesota, the Upper Midwest, and Canada will transform their designs into amazing giant sculptures.

"Thousands of people walk through the park throughout the festival," Vega said. "This weekend, visitors will be able to interact with the sculptors, who love talking about their designs. Amateur individuals, families, and groups will carve smaller amateur blocks with judging and prizes awarded on Saturday afternoon."

Tower's Doug Petersen signed on to carve Northern Grounds' snow block next to the building. Nancy Scheibe and her team will again carve Front Porch's traditional rendition of the beautiful Wolf, Bear, Moose EWF pin, designed by Nancy herself. "Check

out the block at the Grand Ely Lodge, being carved by Emma Kari, a recent Ely graduate who designed the 2018 EWF pin," Vega said.

Ten days of fun

The Ely Winter Festival began on Thursday, Feb. 6 and runs through next Sunday, Feb. 16. During those ten days, Ely visitors and residents will have many events and activities to enjoy.

"ArtWalk volunteers filled Ely's storefront windows with beautiful art," Vega said. "The EWF Board of Directors and many volunteers have been working hard to offer new and traditional events that will enhance our enjoyment of winter. An EWF brochure, available at many local businesses, will help art walkers plan their tour, or go to elywinterfestival.com and click on Events."

The Ely Folk School



has again developed dozens of classes to choose from throughout the ten-day festival. "It will be a hub of activity. More classes are being added and can be found at elyfolkschool.org," she said.

Other popular Winter Festival events are the KUBB Tournament in the park and NLAA's Downtown Art Market at Amici's Ceremony Hall on West Sheridan Street.

Live music is a big part of this year's festival, including the Valentine's Day concert with singer-songwriter Courtney Yasmineh, joined by Tim Stouffer, in the recently-restored Society Hall upstairs of Northern Grounds, and the Lumber Jack and Lumber Jill Party with Van and the Free Candies at Piragis Northwoods Company on Saturday, Feb. 15.

A new event was just added Monday. "We

are going to have our first wedding ceremony in the park during this year's Winter Festival," Vega said. "Look for the ceremony to start about 11 a.m. and come congratulate the happy couple."

This year's festival headquarters are located at Northern Grounds Coffee and Wine Bar, at 2 W. Sheridan St. Winter Festival pins, T-shirts, and other items will be available there for sale.

The Ely Winter Festival and the Ely ArtWalk are funded in part by grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council (thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund), the Donald G. Gardner Humanities Trust, the Ely Chamber of Commerce, the city of Ely, and local merchants, organizations and individuals.

AMBULANCE...Continued from page 1

will help finance future ambulance purchases. They also want a business plan showing that current TAAS operations are sustainable along with more financial transparency after revelations that hundreds of thousands of dollars in past TAAS surpluses were spent on other city of Tower operations.

Township officials have complained that the change in TAAS operations is putting many more miles on ambulances than in the recent past. That puts more wear and tear on vehicles, which means replacement comes around sooner. TAAS director Steve Altenburg had proposed doubling

the per-capita subsidy from area townships last year to help cover an anticipated shortfall for ambulance purchases, but township officials have mostly balked at that suggestion, at least until other concerns are addressed.

According to estimates developed by township officials and Virginia EMS director Allen Lewis, the transfers now account for approximately two-thirds of the miles operated by TAAS ambulances. And township officials have, to date, expressed reluctance to increase their contribution to the ambulance replacement fund unless at least a portion of the extra revenue generated by the

transfers is dedicated to the replacement fund. That could prove challenging, however, since the increase in payroll costs as a result of the shift to round-the-clock paid staffing has badly eroded TAAS's operating margins.

While ambulance services are required to respond to emergency calls, non-emergency transfers are optional even though they do generate considerable revenue. Less clear are the costs associated with the transfers. Altenburg insists they are highly profitable for TAAS, but the city's new clerk-treasurer, Victoria Ranua, told the Ambulance Commission last month

that she's seen no cost analysis to support Altenburg's claim.

A proposal that Eagles Nest officials plan to present to the city of Tower would require the city to commit to paying \$4 per transfer mile into the ambulance replacement fund. That could generate about \$80,000 a year to the replacement account, but would almost certainly put TAAS's operational budget well into the red.

The Vermilion Lake Town Board, on Monday, approved comments noting that the township's contribution toward the ambulance service is purely voluntary and that the city has some responsibility

to provide more financial transparency. "It is the city's duty to provide a plan covering projected revenues, costs, expenses, and project vehicle replacement as well as clear and concise historical data covering area ambulance replacement aid, vehicle replacement costs, and vehicle mileage broken down to show miles for medical calls, for transfers, and for other purposes," read the letter approved by the town board this week.

The Vermilion Lake board is also seeking a contribution from transfer revenues to the ambulance replacement fund. "If the transfer revenue is not sufficient to make such a contribution then the transfers are not profitable at the present rate and under the present conditions because they would not be covering their portion of vehicle replacement costs," states the letter. "The transfers would be operating at a loss and the operating plan would be seriously flawed," township officials concluded.

The Vermilion Lake

board is also urging that the city ensure that their purchase of ambulances be handled in a legal and financially responsible manner. That's a point made by Eagles Nest officials, as well, who urged that future ambulances be reviewed and approved by the ambulance commission. Those concerns come after Altenburg greenlighted the selection of an ambulance vendor without the required bidding. When that oversight was exposed, Altenburg issued a quick call for bids but it was too late for some of the potential vendors to respond in time.

Greenwood Township is expected to address the issue at their upcoming meeting, set for Feb. 11. Breitung Township has yet to discuss a potential response to the city. The subsidy contract between the city and the townships expired at the end of 2019. Failure to approve a new contract could cost the TAAS roughly \$45,000 in revenue.

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The "Dragons" patrol from Cherry poses with their Klondike Derby championship trophy. Members of the winning team are, from left, Joley Grangruth, Madeline Larson, Mia Wesley, and Mellisa Larson. photos by D. Colburn



Wyatt Kane of Cherry grimaces as he leads the pack near the finish line of a 120-yard snowshoe race.

SCOUTS...Continued from page 1

fire building, and Steven (Sopoci) is out with first aid."

And on the first anniversary of girls being accepted into Scouting, four girls from Cherry nicknamed the "Dragons" won the competition against 39 other Scouts.

"I didn't think we'd win in a million years," 11-year-old Joley Grangruth said.

"I was waiting for any other team's name and he said ours," Mia Wesley, 12, said.

While Madeline Larson, 12, was equally surprised, the patrol's

senior member, Mellisa Larson, 17, had confidence her patrol would be competitive.

"I knew they knew their stuff," she said. "I was surprised, but I believed in these girls. I knew we had a fighting chance."

Gillson said the inclusion of girls in what was formerly Boy Scouts has helped some troops bolster membership while giving families opportunities to have their children together in a common activity.

"In some areas it's been huge, in other areas it takes time," Gillson said. "It takes time for people

to make that adjustment mentally. We're over 100 years old, and we've never had girls before."

Gillson noted that the United States and Japan were the only two countries where girls hadn't been included in Scouting.

"Every other country in the world has been co-ed since their existence," he said.

Pushing Klondike sleds along snow-packed trails in the school yard, patrols spent Saturday morning encountering scenarios testing their skills in fire building, first aid, and shelter building.

Josh Gillson, a Cook troop alumnus, Eagle Scout, and emergency responder, was responsible for the first-aid scenario, acting as both judge and teacher.

"You have young patrols, some doing this for the first time, and you have older kids who have been to a couple Klondikes. They've done these scenarios before, so they're already ahead of the game," Gillson said. "You let them play the scenario out, and the teaching comes in after. It's that trial by fire—let's see what you know, then once we're done let's re-evaluate."

Competitive activities in the afternoon included dodge ball, Klondike sled racing, snow snake throwing, and snowshoe racing.

A unique feature of this year's derby, traditionally a one-day event, was the addition of a Friday night sleepover and Fortnite online gaming competition. Accommodating a winter sleepover in a closed, cold school building wasn't difficult for volunteers, but getting Internet access for the gaming terminals took some outside help.

"Access Broadband sent technicians out here

and hooked it up temporarily for free," Rock Gillson said.

The Cook troop's idea to provide additional opportunity for Scouts to interact with other troops appeared to be well-received.

"I thought it was really interesting," Mellisa Larson said. "It was like we had two events. I really like it when Scouts get to meet people from all over the place. All the kids got to talk with Scouts from all over and have that camaraderie."

MNA ...Continued from page 1

change," wrote the judges in comments included with their decision. "And it was loaded with great details and facts, such as the midnight posting and the comparison of the two candidates' resumés."

Helmberger also won second place in the competition for the Herman Roe Award, a special award given to the top editorial in the state among all newspapers. Helmberger's winning editorial cited the former Tower City Council's failure to seriously address major errors in the August 2018 primary election, during which nearly 20

percent of the city's voters had their ballots disqualified due to poor election oversight. The *Timberjay* also won in the category of Social Issues Story for its report on the fight by former Tower School cook Marilyn Turnbull to achieve fair pay. Other second-place awards included General Reporting and Editorial Portfolio.

"The consistent strength of the *Timberjay*'s editorial page came through in the MNA's contest this year," said *Timberjay* Publisher Marshall Helmberger, noting that the newspaper won either first or second

place in every editorial category.

The contest's judges consistently lauded the *Timberjay*'s work. "Readers get a lot for their dollar," wrote the judges in their comments on general excellence. "Strong coverage of local government and the schools; many interesting features and best-in-class outdoors coverage. The *Timberjay* offered the most comprehensive coverage of any

of the entries."

Commenting on the *Timberjay*'s editorial page, the judge's called it "well-designed," and enticing. "Editorials waded into the weeds of a topic, such as rural broadband. Letters [from readers] are plentiful, too. Columns add edge and personality."

Even in awarding second place for General Reporting, the judges heaped praise on the *Timberjay*. "This is

another paper that appears to do a very good job for its community. Nice use of typography, decent photography, and excellent writing. If MNA allowed ties, this would have been tied for first."

The *Timberjay* won two separate awards for its story on the falsification of official records at Tower City Hall by the former clerk-treasurer. While the exposé took second in investigative reporting,

it won first place in the category of Hard News. "This thorough investigation is a game-changer," wrote the judges. "The writing and graphics make it easy to understand the apparent scandal." The former clerk-treasurer is facing prosecution for the falsification of official records, which is a violation of Minnesota criminal statutes.

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Watercolor images
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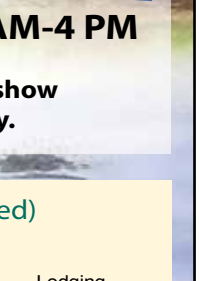
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For more information, visit Sarah's website at www.sarahguyleva.com.

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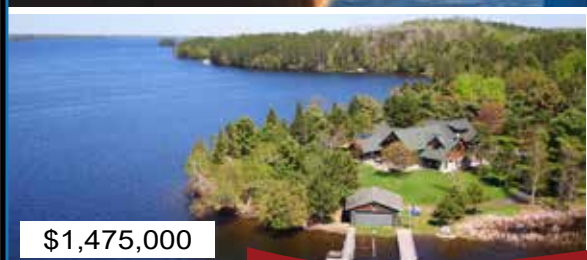
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GIRLS BASKETBALL

Grizzlies hit a rough patch

Rally to top Carlton, but fall to Deer River, Greenway

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP—The Grizzlies girls overcame an early double-digit deficit and a late Carlton rally for a hard-fought 66-61 victory Monday over the visiting Bulldogs.

Sluggish from the outset and hampered by Carlton's full-court press, North Woods was staring at

a 17-5 deficit when Coach Robbie Goggeye called time with 7:37 left in the first half.

"We struggled a little bit," Goggeye said. "Four or five of us are sick here, so our energy is a little low."

When they came back on the court the Grizzlies were a different team.

Two free throws and a basket by Nicole Olson ignited a monster 20-2

Grizzlies run over the next seven minutes, powered by eight points each from Brynn Simpson and Hannah Kinsey. The Grizzlies led 25-20 at the half.

Two quick buckets by senior forward Sasha Strong to open the second half extended the Grizzlies' lead to 29-20. With Simpson hitting 15 of her game-high 25 points after the break, North Woods maintained

Right: North Woods ninth-grader Hannah Kinsey delivers a jump shot during their Monday contest with Carlton.

photo by C. Stone

its lead well into the half, but the Bulldogs refused to buckle.

Carlton reclaimed the lead, 48-45, on a pair of

See NW GIRLS...pg. 2B



NORDIC SKIING

Wolves finish strong at home

Boys skiers take another first, girls finish second

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – The Timberwolves celebrated another one-two finish here on Saturday as they hosted the last regular season meet on their home course at Hidden Valley Ski Area. They were set to compete in the sectional finals on Thursday, after the *Timberjay's* weekly presstime. You can see results from Thursday's sectional competition online at timberjay.com.

The Ely boys team outpaced the other nine schools with 389 points on Saturday. The Duluth East boys finished in second with 374 points and Mesabi East boys team was third with 329 points.

A trifecta of Ely skiers, Jasper Johnson with a time of 12:41.7, Nate Nettifee, at 13:49.0, and Gabriel Pointer, at 13:49.1, finished one, two, three in the 5.2 K pursuit-free-style competition. Johnston also finished first in the 4.9K classic race. His combined time for the two race legs was 27:21.3, almost two minutes ahead of Marshall School's Declan Hutchinson who finished second with a combined time of 29:13.8.

Other Ely boys, with their overall place and combined times, included Pointer, 3rd, 29:23.7, Nettifee, 4th, 29:36.2, Jon Hakala, 7th, 30:37.6, Raif Olson, 14th, 31:35.2, and Micah Larson, 19th, 32:09.3.

The Ely girls team finished with 368 points, just behind Duluth East's 384 points, and ahead of Mesabi East, who scored 355 overall points.

Ely's Zoe Devine placed first in the 4.9K classic race and second in the 5.2K pursuit-free-style event. She finished with an overall time of 32:00.1, just behind first-place overall finisher Gretchen Haggemiller, of Duluth East, who posted an overall time of 31:50.1.

See NORDIC...pg. 2B



Above: Ely ninth-grader Zoe Devine competes during last Saturday's pursuit-free-style event at Hidden Valley.

Right: Ely tenth-grader Jon Hakala kicks it into gear during the classical competition this past Saturday.

photos by L. Anderson



HOCKEY

Ely goes 1-2 in weekend home finale



by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – The Timberwolves hockey team finished their home season with a 5-2 loss against the North Shore Storm Tuesday night.

On senior night, Ely's only goals came from freshman Kole Macho, who

Left: Ely's Jimmy Zupancich advances the puck during last Saturday's home game against Bagley-Fosston.

photo by K. Vandervort

scored at 6:59 in the first period with an assist by Logan Loe and Luke Olson.

The Storm answered at the 9:34 mark, and Macho scored again at 15:54, on a power play with an assist by senior Luke Olson, to give Ely a temporary 2-1 lead. North Shore scored at the end of the period to tie the game 2-2. North Shore scored once in the second period and added two more goals in the final frame for the 5-2 win.

The Timberwolves, who went penalty free on

their home ice, took 23 shots on goal for the night, while the Storm peppered Ely goalie Ben Cavalier with 36 shots.

Weekend action

Ely traded games with Bagley-Fosston last weekend, getting a win and a loss. The Timberwolves beat the Flyers, 5-4 Friday for their third win of the season, and lost 4-1 on Saturday.

On Friday night, the Flyers took a two-goal lead before senior forward Luke

See HOCKEY...pg. 2B

BOYS BBALL

Grizzlies crush Wrenshall

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

WRENSHALL – Senior Trevor Morrison and sophomore TJ Chiabotti each scored 23 points as they combined to lead the Grizzlies to a 99-37 rout of the Wrens here on Tuesday.

North Woods put up 56 points by the break before sending in the younger players for much of the second half.

"We got out early and pushed the tempo," said North Woods Head Coach Will Kleppe. "Lots of guys got minutes so it was good experience for some of our reserves," he said. "We moved the ball well in stretches in both halves

See GRIZZLIES...pg. 2B

Sports week

BOYS B-BALL

Friday, Feb. 7

North Woods at LBF, 7:15 p.m.
Ely at Mesabi East, 7:15 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 11

North Woods hosts I-Falls, 7:15 p.m.
Ely hosts Lakeview Christian Academy, 7:15 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 13

North Woods at Virginia, 7:15 p.m.

GIRLS B-BALL

Monday, Feb. 10

North Woods at Mesabi East, 7:15 p.m.
Ely hosts Fond Du Lac, 7:15 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 11

Northeast Range at Chisholm, 7:15 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 13

North Woods hosts Ely, 7:15 p.m.
Northeast Range hosts Nashwauk-Keewatin, 7:15

HOCKEY

Friday, Feb. 7

Ely at Moose Lake, 6 p.m.

NORDIC SKIING

Saturday, Feb. 8

Ely at Spirit Mountain, 11 a.m.

Timberwolves rally to top Golden Bears

Ely edges Carlton, routs Littlefork-Big Falls



Obituaries and Death Notices



Cynthia E. Aune

Cynthia Eileen Aune, 62, of Cook, passed away on Monday, Jan. 27, 2020. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 7 at Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home.

Cynthia was born to Henry and Marion (Lumbar)SchusteronAug. 22, 1957, inCook. Cynthia attended school inOrr, and then Loman High School where she graduated in 1975. Soon after graduat- ing, she met and married William Steinbach; they were blessed with two sons, Richard and James, and the family lived in International Falls for a time before Cynthia’s path led her in a different direction. Cynthia attend- ed college in Hibbing and earned her Certified Nursing Assistant cer- tificate; she worked for several nursing homes in the Hibbing area. She also worked at the Vermilion Hotel inCook and forBois Forte as an Indian Child Welfare advocate.

Cynthia liked to stay busy in her free time; she loved going out to the “shack on the farm” during hunting season. She was also an avid, and success- ful, fisherwoman. She was very patient while fishing and would often out-fish her family; her family teasingly nicknamed her “Butch Furtman” after a famous angler. Cynthia also enjoyed her day trips to the casino.

Cynthia was an easy- going soul who loved to joke around and have fun. She had a kind heart and was a very giving person; even though she did not have much, she would do anything she could to help someone in need. She loved her family with all of her heart, a family that included her dog Daisy,

whom she called “the love of her life”.

She is survived by her son, James Steinbach; brother, Bruce Schuster; sister, Roxanne Weatherton; grand- daughters, Cassandra and Madison; and great-grand- son, Jaxson.

Cynthia was preceded in death by her parents; beloved son, Richard Steinbach; and dog, Daisy.

Marjorie D. Trembath

Marjorie D. Utecht Trembath, 86, of Ely, passed away at the Cook Nursing Home on Thursday, Jan. 30, 2020. Funeral services were held on Wednesday, Feb. 5 at First Lutheran Church in Ely. Family arrangements

were entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

She is survived by her husband, Russell “Tom”; son, Keith (Patty); and five grandchildren.

Judith M. Dargontina

Judith “Susie” May Pluth Dargontina, 73, of Ely, died on Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020, at Brookdale Memory Care following a long battle with dementia. A memorial service was held on Thursday, Feb. 6 at Kerntz Funeral Home in Ely.

She is survived by her sons, Jason (Lisa) and Kevin Dargontina; and brothers, Richard and James “Moots” Pluth.

Joyce Skeryanc,

Joyce Ball Skeryanc, 88, of Ely, passed away on Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2020, at the Boundary Waters Care Center in Ely. Funeral services were held on Saturday, Feb. 1. Arrangements were with Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

She is survived by her daughters, Marriane Preblich (Allen Pangrac), Diana Bailey (Dale) Jenso and Margie Kastelac (Rex) Weisinger; grandchil- dren, Peter, Joseph and Cassandra (Joe Wood) Swanson, Jamie and Danny Jensen, and Shannon Stahl; great-grandchildren, Cody, Tyler, Madison and Zoey; and great-great grandson, Robbie.

2019 29th Annual Lights of Love

The VHHP Board of Directors would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all who contributed to the success of the 2019 Lights of Love Campaign.
A special thank you to the volunteers in the communities of Cook, Orr and Tower for their work in coordinating the ceremonies!

In Honor of:

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Grandchildren
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My sister, Cheri Osborn
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Ray Scofield
Tom & Helen Shuster
John Musech
Tenna Perkio; Michelle Perander Perkio
Ward, Leone & Paul Conklin
Patrick Wilenius & Harold Baumgartner
Family & friends who have gone before us
Fred & Katy Erkkila; Richard & Patricia Lenski
All of our loved ones who have passed
Frank G. Meyer
Richard N. Flack; Memphis Padora
Edna Lamppa
Eric Jay Kolstad and parents
Sandy Bodkin
Our Parents
Leo & Jean Moeglein
Robert Delich
All of our loved ones who have passed
Stephanie Moeller Vine; Gary VanBaak;
Murline Tajiha
Ilse Sutich; Grevich Family
Dennis Hanson
Sheldon Sandberg
Donald G. Housenga
Donald & Marjorie Herr; John & Helen Cinciva
Our loved ones
Tom & Ann Karakash
Our Parents
Warren, Regina & Nevin Johnson;
Bob & Louise Dobosenski
Leo Ducharme
Ole Swanson; Paul & Lucille Olson
Rose Marie Ellegard Roach
Wally & Edith Petrell; Bob & Margaret Whitenack
Mel Hintz
Dale A. Lundblad
Stanley & Donna Schelde; Jane Schelde;
Mavis Meyers; Allen Gunderson
Elizabeth Abrahamson
Pat Karich and Steve Geiger
Past Members
Cassandra Brandon
Bettie & Richard Kirschner
PattiJo Knoer
Deceased CCW Members

Darlene Karakas; Jacqueline Champa
Phil Cobby
James Barton Dietec
David Rubenstein
Our Parents
Jack Richardson

by Nancy Stoneburner
by Esther Jowaski
by Alice Niemi
by Laurie Chilcote
by Pastor Liz Cheney
by Linda Haugen
by William & Muriel Scott
by Rob & Rhonda Joki

by Valla Kuharski
by Eric Burckhardt
by Eleanor Phillips
by The Tire Shop
by Timbuktu Marina
by Matt & Larry Clines;
Christine Hampson & Family
by Nancy Stoneburner
by Jerry Shuster
by Verdella Musech
by Bruce Perkio
by Cork & Lynn Connor
by Leo & Lindi and Family
by Arlee & Doreen Olson
by Fred & Dana Erkkila
by Randy & Julie Grah
by George & Kathy Meyer
by Becky & Don Simpson
by Daryl & Cheryl Lamppa
by Doug & Sue Kolstad
by Voyageaire Lodge
by Mary & Bill Mollard
by Michael Moeglein
by Greg Delich
by Mlaker Funeral Home

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by Kathy & Nick Sutich
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by Stephen Abrahamson
by The Geigers
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by Roger & Nancy Lindbeck
by Larry Hutton Family
by Gene & Marilyn Jenkins
by St. Mary’s Council of Catholic Women
by Bob Champa
by Ryan & Whitney Cobby
by Robin Sue Fisher
by Don Schibel
by Tom & Sharon Pelach
by Richardson’s Shangri-La Resort

In Memory of (Continued)

Carol Ann Pohto; Roger Novak; Jim Backman;
Dave Lehtinen; Jim Kirk
Jim Katila
Viola (Podpeskar) Kmett; Dorothea Olson
Clay Jackson; Peggy Harju
Erling & Virgie Hegg
Raymond Johnson
Ed Borowiec
R. Terry & June Brownell

JosH Rutar
My Mom
Leonard & Becky Niemi
Chad & Paige Bergman

Sanford & Betty Sandberg
John Musech
Evelyn Pederson
Jody Cin; Joseph & Mildred Peterka; John & Faye Cin
Fred & Pat Shusterich
Ray & Janet Hill
Neil & Dick Mayo
Donnie Lindgren
Jan Ferguson

James F. & Emily C. Peyla
JosH Rutar

Nicholas Tuomela
Raymond Scofield
Patrick McDermott
Helen & Clarence Folstad; Harold Fuson
Bonnie Esala

Patricia Karcih; Irene & Chet Kishel; Fred & Ellen Sorgenfrei

Uncle Carlo & Aunt Dora
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Marge & Dick Workman
Norma & Joe Betlach; Harry Aune
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Art & Lorraine Boutto; Don Roderick
Phylliss & Darwin Platter; Bill Joki
Tammy Johnson; Dale Long
Bill & LaVern Fromel; Wes & Pat Sjostedt
Patty Karich
Leonard & Becky Niemi; Erling & Virgie Hegg;
Ernie & Lyna Lamppa; Art & Evie Lamppa; Dale Lundblad;
Sheldon Sandberg; Trevor Reichel
Shirley Martinson
Carol Jean Antus
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Erling Hegg; Glenn & Elsie Anderson
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Outdoors

Our lives in the
Northwoods

WATCHING THE WEATHER

January was warmer and gloomier than usual

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— The record books are now closed on January 2020 and it probably comes as no surprise to North Country residents that the month was both gloomy and mild.

And that’s to be expected, according to state climatologist Pete Boulay, who said cloudy conditions in January frequently come with warmer-than-average temperatures.

And this past January wasn’t

just mild, it was exceptionally so, as temperatures for the month averaged nearly seven degrees above average across the region. That probably wasn’t enough to put this past January among the top ten warmest on record, but at 6.9 degrees above normal, it did make the top twelve at International Falls, which has the longest period of records of any station in the region.

Other area weather stations experienced similar departures from average. Embarrass, for example, was 8.3 degrees

warmer than average, although some of that departure likely reflects the change in location of the weather station. Still, Babbitt’s official weather station recorded average temperatures for the month that were 6.3 degrees above normal, while Cook’s weather watcher reported that the month ran 5.8 degrees above average.

While the first half of January was closer to average, the second half was particularly warm, with temperatures often running double digits above

average. That trend continued into the first couple days of February. When area residents woke this past Sunday morning, Feb. 2, to an overnight low in the upper 20s, it was nearly 35 degrees above normal, noted Boulay.

This past month’s persistent cloud cover helped to keep temperatures milder, particularly overnight, said Boulay. That’s because clouds act like a blanket on the Earth, helping to keep daytime warmth from escaping into space.

While long-term records on cloud cover aren’t available for most Minnesota weather stations, Boulay noted that this past month the Twin Cities recorded its fewest hours of sunshine since 1963. He said that pattern held true pretty much across the state.

Despite the mild conditions, the area did see plenty of snowfall. According to Boulay, snow depth in the area, which ranged from 20-36 inches during the month, was in the top ten for deepest snow at this point in the winter season.



WILDLIFE

Winter may end “tougher than average” for whitetails

Despite lack of extended cold this winter, deep snow is limiting deer movement

REGIONAL—Deep snow since relatively early this winter season has been restricting deer movement for weeks, but the mild temperatures have kept the winter severity index, or WSI, from hitting the severe range, at least for now.

The WSI is a gauge of winter severity for whitetail deer. It includes a point for every 24-hour period with a below zero temperature reading and another for every day with at least 15 inches of snow on the ground.

As of Wednesday, WSI readings around the region ranged from around 50 near Lake Vermilion to as high as 80 closer to the North Shore, where deep snow has been in place longer. Typically, cold weather is responsible for most of the WSI points in northern St. Louis County, but this winter has been dominated by abundant

snow and mild temperatures.

And that could give a false impression of the WSI reading this winter compared to most recent years. According to DNR Tower Area Wildlife Manager Tom Rusch, the depth of snow and the duration of deep snow are the most significant factors affecting whitetail deer survival in northeastern Minnesota, since it impacts their ability to access food and escape from predators. By contrast, “very cold and dry winters have little impact on deer,” according to Rusch.

Recent winters with abundant snowfall, and varying temperatures, have combined to limit the recovery of whitetail deer in recent years, and it appears this winter could end up as yet another in that series. Rusch notes several permit areas in the region remain below goal for deer density, and have yet to recover from heavy snow winters in 2013 and 2014.

Rusch, who recently spent considerable time in the air for the DNR’s annual aerial moose survey, said he was struck by the lower numbers of deer spotted during the recent survey. “We’re seeing fewer deer on

the landscape,” he said.

An ongoing study of whitetail deer near Elephant Lake, north of Orr, has found close to 40-percent mortality for deer in that region. That kind of mortality, which Rusch said has been fueled both by abundant snow in recent winters and limited winter cover in the Elephant Lake area, has prevented the deer herd in that area from showing signs of recovery.

Rusch notes that quality deer habitat requires both adequate browse— which is more available in young, recently disturbed forests — and sufficient mature woods, particularly with conifers, to provide deer with thermal protection.

How deer fare this winter will still depend on the weather that the area experiences over the next two and a half months. Barring an early melt, the area appears likely to exceed a WSI reading of 120, which is considered a moderate winter in northern St. Louis County. But given the lack of cold temperatures so far, it would appear unlikely that this winter will reach the “severe” category, which includes winters that exceed a WSI of 180 points.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather

Friday				Saturday				Sunday				Monday				Tuesday			
16 4				19 5				20 5				24 11				21 6			
Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.
01/20	27	19	0.00	01/27	26	19	0.00	01/27	22	16	0.00	01/27	19	12	0.01	01/27	25	15	0.00
01/21	19	13	0.02 0.5"	01/28	19	11	0.00	01/28	16	12	0.02 0.5"	01/28	18	12	0.01 0.3"	01/28	15	11	0.00 0.4"
01/22	20	14	0.00	01/29	19	11	0.00	01/29	18	12	0.01 0.2"	01/29	21	14	0.00	01/29	18	11	0.00
01/23	24	16	0.00	01/30	23	15	0.00	01/30	22	14	0.01 0.2"	01/30	28	16	0.00	01/30	25	15	0.00
01/24	27	18	0.00	01/31	26	15	0.00	01/31	27	16	0.00	01/31	28	18	0.00	01/31	28	17	0.00
01/25	28	19	0.00	02/01	28	18	0.00	02/01	27	18	0.00	02/01	34	21	0.00	02/01	28	18	0.00
01/26	36	25	0.01 0.1"	02/02	35	18	0.02 0.2"	02/02	35	22	0.02 0.4"	02/02	30	25	0.00	02/02	35	21	0.00
YTD Total			0.63 74.3"	YTD Total			0.81 48.4"	YTD Total			1.41 58.4"	YTD Total			NA 42.8"	YTD Total			0.96 51.5"

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PUBLIC NOTICES

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS
SIXTH JUDICIAL
DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT
PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No.
69VI-PR-19-146

Estate of
William George Welsh
(also known as William G.
Welsh)
Decedent

NOTICE AND ORDER
FOR HEARING ON
PETITION FOR FORMAL
ADJUDICATION
OF INTESTACY-
DETERMINATION
OF HEIRSHIP AND
APPOINTMENT
OF PERSONAL
REPRESENTATIVE AND

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

It is Ordered and Notice is given that on February 26, 2020, at 9:30 a.m., a hearing will be held in this Court at 300 Fifth Avenue South, Virginia, Minnesota, for the adjudication of intestacy and determination of heirship of the Decedent, and for the appointment of Linda Claire Welsh, of 8163 E. Stone Lake Road, Zim, Minnesota 55738, as Personal Representative of the Estate of the Decedent in an unsupervised administration. Any objections to the petition must be filed with the Court prior to or raised at the hearing. If proper, and if no objections are filed or raised, the Personal Representative will be appointed with full power to administer the Estate, including the power

to collect all assets, to pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, to sell real and personal property, and to do all necessary acts for the Estate.

Notice is also given (subject to Minn. Stat. 524.3-801) all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the Personal Representative or to the Court Administrator within four months after the date of this Notice or the claims will be barred.

Dated: January 22, 2020

BY THE COURT
Michelle Anderson, Judge of District Court
Amy Turnquist, Court Administrator
Chelsea Opdahl, Deputy

Attorney for Petitioner
Angela Sipila
Sipila Law Office, LLC
412 S 1st St., Virginia, MN 55792
Attorney License No: 024501X
Telephone & Fax: 218-741-5000
Email: ange@sipilaw.com

Published in the Timberjay,
Jan. 31 & Feb. 7, 2020

**KUGLER TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF AUDIT**

The Kugler Township Board of Audit will be held on Tuesday, February 18, 2020, at 6 p.m. at the Kugler Town Hall. The regular monthly meeting will follow.

Julie Suihkonen, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 7, 2020

**NOTICE OF PRESIDENTIAL
NOMINATION PRIMARY**

KUGLER TOWNSHIP
Kugler Town Hall
9072 Hwy 135N, Tower

Notice is hereby given to all qualified voters of the Kugler Township, County of St. Louis, State of Minnesota. PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION PRIMARY will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2020. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The purpose of the PNP is for voters who identify with a major political party to vote for a presidential candidate who they wish their party to nominate as the candidate on the November State General Election ballots. Polling place election judges must record in the polling place roster the name of the major political party whose ballot the voter requested with the voting history of the nomination primary election.

The major political party whose ballot is selected by a nomination primary voter is private data, except that it will be shared with the chairs of the major political parties in the State of MN. If the voter refuses to select on a party ballot, they will NOT be allowed to vote.

Julie Suihkonen, Kugler Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 7, 2020

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**BEARVILLE TOWNSHIP
Board of Audit**

The Bearville Township Board of Audit will be held on Wednesday, February 19, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Bearville Town Hall. This meeting will consist of auditing the books for the year ending December 31, 2019 and preparing a budget and proposed levies to submit to the Annual Town Meeting.

Kathy Cressy, Bearville Township Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 7, 2020

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**NOTICE OF PRESIDENTIAL
NOMINATION PRIMARY**
Town of Embarrass
Embarrass Town Hall
7503 Levander Road
Embarrass, MN 55732

Notice is hereby given to all qualified voters of the Town of Embarrass, County of St. Louis, State of Minnesota. PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION PRIMARY will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2020. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The purpose of the PNP is for voters who identify with a major political party to vote for a presidential candidate who they wish their party to nominate as the candidate on the November State General Election ballots. Polling place election judges must record in the polling place roster the name of the major political party whose ballot the voter requested with the voting history of the nomination primary election.

The major political party whose ballot is selected by a nomination primary voter is private data, except that it will be shared with the chairs of the major political parties in the State of MN. If the voter refuses to select on a party ballot, they will NOT be allowed to vote.

Jennifer Boese, Embarrass Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 7, 2020



**NOTICE OF PRESIDENTIAL
NOMINATION PRIMARY**
FIELD TOWNSHIP
Field Town Hall
1627 Hwy 25, Cook, MN

Notice is hereby given to all qualified voters of the Field Township, County of St. Louis, State of Minnesota. PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION PRIMARY will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2020. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Field Town Hall.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statute 207A.11, a Presidential Nomination Primary will be held on March 3, 2020, in the State of Minnesota, the County of St. Louis. Presidential nomination primary voters must be registered to vote pursuant to Minnesota Statute 201.054, subd. 1.

Nomination primary voters must also request the ballot of the major political party for whose candidate the individual wishes to vote. Polling place election judges must record in the polling place roster the name of the major political party whose ballot the voter requested. The county auditor must include the name of the major political party whose ballot the voter requested with the voting history of the nomination primary election.

The major political party whose ballot is selected by a nomination primary voter is private data, except that it will be shared with the chairs of the major political parties in the State of Minnesota. If the voter refuses to select on a party ballot, they will NOT be allowed to vote.

Pat Chapman, Field Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 7, 2020

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	4		8				7	
6			4	3		5		
		2			1			3
8			7			2	3	
		9			6	8		
	7			9				6
2			5				1	
	3	4			7	9		
	1			8				5

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦♦ Moderate ♦♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Considerations of personal privacy, time and resources prevent the newspaper from investigating ads placed in the classified section. If you respond to an ad, we urge you to use the same care and prudence that you would use when conducting business in any other situation.

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Becca Bundy at 218-780-5423
or vhhpdirector@gmail.com.
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the second Friday of the month
at 1 p.m. at the Babbitt Municipal
Building, senior room. Open to
all. For information contact Mary
at 218-827-8327.

ORR AA meets Tuesdays at
8 p.m. at Holy Cross Catholic
Church, Orr.

**ELY CO-DEPENDENTS
MEETING-** Fridays at noon-St.
Anthony's Church Classroom
3-Use west side entrance. For
more information go to coda.org
on the web.

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS-
Meetings every Wednesday
at 4:30 p.m. at Our Savior's
Lutheran Church, Virginia.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP-
Are you troubled by someone's
drinking? Al-Anon Family Group
is a community-based mutual
support program for the friends
and families of alcoholics. It is
confidential and open to any-
one affected by someone else's
drinking. Hope Lutheran Church
in Embarrass hosts an Al-Anon
group on Monday evenings at 6
p.m. 218-984-2037.

BABBITT AL-ANON- meets
Thursdays at 7 p.m. at the
Babbitt Assembly of God
Church.

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Ely. 1/24

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in Babbitt.

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recovering addicts in Narcotics
Anonymous. We have been
there. For meeting or other
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(Narcotics Anonymous is a
non-profit organization.)

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CREDIT REPAIR SCAMS-
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message from The Timberjay
and the FTC.



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ACROSS

- While away the hours
- Amorphous, sunken-into seats
- Book divs.
- Adopts, as a belief
- Do a new layout of
- Marina del —, California
- Start of a riddle
- Musician Yoko
- Fixes a seam, say
- Drink served with scones
- Suffix with final or solo
- Heroic poetry
- Riddle, part 2
- 7-Eleven drink
- Isn't on target
- Contract inker, e.g.
- "Stones for —" (1988 film)
- San —, California
- Most fake

- Riddle, part 3
- With 57-Across, descent before pulling a rip cord
- Chilean cheer
- Praise publicly
- Margarita glass liner
- See 51-Across
- 1990s Philippine president
- Ad entreaty
- ET of TV
- Riddle, part 4
- "Rock and Roll, Hoochie —"
- Gel alternative
- Bow rub-on
- "— Cassius has a lean and hungry look": Julius Caesar
- Sunday
- Let out
- Xenon, e.g.
- Fesses (up)
- Riddle, part 5

- Deliver news about
- Capacious
- One of Jupiter's moons
- Rare Italian violins
- Trial run
- Watched kids for cash
- End of the riddle
- Tip jar bills
- Mimicker
- "— There Was You"
- ghanouj
- Poetry Out Loud org.
- Riddle's answer
- Wind up
- Tendency to stick together
- "Casino Royale"
- Bond girl player
- Rds.
- Outburst of wild emotion
- Tokyo "ta-ta"

DOWN

- Sunday seats
- Court champ Arthur

- Shoot forth
- Male heirs
- "Tsk!"
- "Semi-" suffix
- Get together
- Road twists
- Male sib
- Always, to bards
- Astern
- Feature of a perfect ball game
- Audacious
- Just slightly
- Slender fish
- Hog home
- Certain liquid fuel
- High-tech map subjects
- Natalie Portman's childhood home on Long Island
- "Bali —"
- Most tense
- Twist
- Skin cream brand
- Ensnared
- Cookie giant
- Lead singer
- Beginning on
- Have supper
- Son of Willy Loman

- Skyscraper beam
- Many an app
- Anguish
- Actor Gibson
- Had supper
- Sainted pope
- FDR follower
- Hit the links
- Boxing punch
- London lav
- 16 eighths
- Tummy "six-pack"
- Actor Marvin
- Interstate stop
- Pal, in Calais
- Earlier
- "No — do!"
- Rock blaster
- Mauna —
- Big magazine pitches
- Suze with financial tips
- Stir up, as silt
- NASDAQ kin
- Polishes
- Bride's belongings
- Green start?
- Big Red, e.g.
- Poet Lowell
- "— calling?"

- California's — Valley
- TDs, e.g.
- Fortitude
- -bitsy
- Looking up
- Attend
- Imminent
- Lard holders
- Seminal punk band
- Distin-guished
- Feared fly
- Luxury watch
- company
- Vows
- In a tizzy
- Dol.
- divisions
- Quotes
- Farm building
- Cruising
- South African Dutch
- Attress
- Faris
- "— bin ein Berliner"
- Nerf ball, e.g.
- Make public
- "— will not!"
- Genetic ID
- Actor Liotta
- Swelled head

FUNERAL SERVICES

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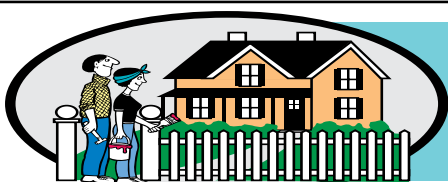
Hibbing
263-3276

"Friends Helping Friends"

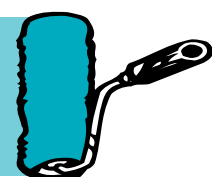
Answer

1	4	3	8	5	9	6	7	2
6	8	7	4	3	2	5	9	1
9	5	2	6	7	1	4	8	3
8	6	1	7	4	5	2	3	9
4	2	9	3	1	6	8	5	7
3	7	5	2	9	8	1	4	6
2	9	8	5	6	3	7	1	4
5	3	4	1	2	7	9	6	8
7	1	6	9	8	4	3	2	5

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72				73					74						75			76			
77							78						79	80				81	82	83	84



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