



Busy at the bird feeders...

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the **TIMBERJAY**

VOL. 31, ISSUE 14 April 10, 2020

\$1.00



COVID-19

Are Minnesotans better at social distancing?

Health officials credit response for low infection rate

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
Managing Editor



REGIONAL—While public health officials are being careful with potentially good news, there are signs that the worst of the COVID-19 impact in Minnesota could be peaking within the next two weeks, and at significantly lower levels than

initially feared. That comes as Minnesotans have proven to be remarkably effective at controlling the spread of the virus behind the global pandemic. “There could be something to Minnesota culture that makes us better at social distancing,” quipped

Jeremy Youde, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at UMD and an author on the politics of global health. More seriously, Youde credits an effective state response with keeping the infection rate in Minnesota remarkably low compared to other states. “To be effective, a public health intervention

See...COVID-19 pg. 7

Walz: Stay home ‘til May 4

REGIONAL — Minnesotans will now need to stay at home for all but essential activities or outdoor exercise until May 4 in an effort to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Gov. Tim Walz announced that extension of his current stay-home order on Wednesday. His previous stay-home order, issued March 27, had been set to

See...STAY AT HOME pg. 7

FROM THE ASHES



COOK ZUP'S NEARS RE-OPENING

In wake of fire, grocer set to debut in May

by **DAVID COLBURN**
Cook/Orr Editor

COOK - The countdown for the highly anticipated opening of the new Zup's Market in Cook is now a matter of weeks rather than months if all goes according to plan.

“It’s on schedule,” Jim Zupancich said Monday. “We might have a couple of setbacks, but we’re planning to be open by the end of May. We’re hoping to get it done sooner, but nothing’s for sure.”

Ed Chaney, project manager for general contractor DBS Group, said



Tuesday that construction is running ahead of schedule right now, something he wasn’t sure would be the case when they started work last October.

“The day we started this project the temperature was 19 below,”

Above: A construction worker places refrigeration units on Tuesday at the new Zup’s Market in Cook.
photo by D. Colburn

Chaney said. “We’ve been pumping concrete in, pumping water out, and pumping heat in this whole time. You don’t build right through the heart of the winter in northern Minnesota and get it in on time, but here we are.”

Chaney was cautiously optimistic the 18,000-square-foot store will

See...ZUP’S pg. 8

CITY OF TOWER

Fire chief appointed

Paige Olson has served on Tower FD for seven years

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
Managing Editor

TOWER—The city of Tower’s Fire Department has a female fire chief for the first time. The city council here made that official at a special meeting held last Thursday when they appointed Paige Olson to the position vacated by the dismissal of Steve Altenburg.

Olson has served on the department for the past seven years and previously served in the Minnesota Army National Guard.



Paige Olson

The decision wasn’t the only first of the evening. The council held its first meeting electronically as part of the city’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Three members of the council did attend in person at the city’s civic center, maintaining required social distance, while council member Mary Shedd attended via the virtual meeting app, GoToMeeting. Council member Rachel Beldo was absent.

While the city council had originally

See...TOWER pg. 7

ISD 696

Remote meetings: The new reality

Ely school board members gather by teleconference

by **KEITH VANDERVORT**
Ely Editor

ELY – The board meeting room at ISD 696 was practically vacant Monday night as school board members held their business meeting remotely as a precaution due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Board chair Ray Marsnik,

Superintendent Erik Erie, and district secretary Mary Wognum, along with two newspaper reporters, attended the meeting in person. Other board members and staff were connected by telephone.

As part of the school’s precautions, everyone who enters school buildings must have their temperature taken

and answer health-screening questions by the school nurse.

Speakers were required to identify themselves before speaking. All board action was conducted by roll call vote. “Speak loudly and clearly and press your telephone mute button when not speak-

See...ELY pg. 8



ISD 696 Superintendent Erik Erie, left, Board Chair Ray Marsnik, and secretary Mary Wognum were the only officials in attendance at the board meeting Monday night. Other participants were on speaker phone. photo by K. Vandervort



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Contact The Timberjay

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Community notices

St. Louis County solid waste sites extend winter operating hours

REGIONAL- Winter operating hours at St. Louis County solid waste sites have been extended until May 17. The continuing need to adapt operations to ensure safety of staff and customers during the COVID-19 situation prompted the change. Typically, summer operating hours begin in April and include an expanded schedule at some locations.

The extension of the winter schedule does not affect operating hours at the landfill or transfer stations. The complete schedule is available online at stlouiscountymn.gov/environmentalservices.

The county's two Household Hazardous Waste drop off sites in Virginia and Hibbing remain closed until further notice. Residents are asked to keep any household hazardous waste items - such as paint, household cleaners, rechargeable batteries, and fluorescent bulbs, among other things - until the sites re-open, so that the items can be disposed of safely. People needing to make an emergency drop off of household hazardous waste can call 218-741-8831 to try and make an appointment. Staff will accommodate emergency drop offs as schedules permit.

Because the COVID-19 situation is continually changing, residents are encouraged to call the Environmental Service Hotline at 218-749-9703 before driving to any of the county's drop off sites. The hotline message will be updated daily to alert the public if any other sites have to close.

Repaving of Hwy. 169 scheduled to begin in June

REGIONAL- Starting in June, 13 miles of Hwy. 169 from one mile north of Hwy. 53 to just south of County Road 26 will be repaved. Motorists should expect lane closures and slowed traffic. The project is expected to be completed in October. For more information, visit www.dot.state.mn.us/d1/projects/hwy169resurfacing/index.html.

County seeks volunteer pool for possible COVID-19 response

REGIONAL- Just as other counties around the state are doing, St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services is working to establish a pool of volunteers who are willing to help in the fight against COVID-19. Volunteers are anticipated to be needed for a variety of tasks ranging from shopping and delivering groceries and medications to the doorstep of someone in isolation/quarantine, to providing support to St. Louis County Public Health staff.

St. Louis County is using the Minnesota Responds system to register volunteers. To sign up, visit mnresponds.org. Anyone who wants to help is encouraged to sign up regardless of whether they have medical training or experience. Because many health personnel are already committed to a role during an emergency, many areas are actively recruiting "non-health" personnel to assist health professionals when the need arises.

The Minnesota Responds Medical Reserve Corps (MN Responds MRC) is part of a nationwide initiative to pre-register, manage, and mobilize volunteers to help their communities respond to all types of disasters.

PRESERVING FAMILY HISTORY

MDC offering free webinar on Creating Family Archives While Social Distancing

CHISHOLM- Last week, the Minnesota Discovery Center (MDC) announced a new partnership with New York author and archivist, Margot Note. Together, they will be offering the general public a free online DIY archival webinar based on Note's book, *Creating Family Archives*, a step-by-step guide for preserving family history and memories for future generations.

The next webinar, *Close Together/Far Apart: Creating Family Archives While Social Distancing*, will be offered online on Sunday, April 12 from 12-1 p.m. Participants will learn tips and tricks on how to organize and preserve their family and personal legacy from the comfort of their home. The webinar will be hosted on Zoom every Sunday starting at 12 p.m. until further notice. Participants must preregister online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/close-togetherfar-apart-creating-family-archives-while-social-distancing-tickets-102036114766>.



"I'm excited to offer this webinar to everyone in this uncertain and historic moment. I hope people will take advantage of this time at home to protect their family and personal materials. You'll learn how to identify collections that are important to you and to properly organize, preserve, and describe them so that they can be enjoyed now and passed on to future generations," said Note.

The webinar will cover:

- ▶ Tips and tricks archivists use to preserve materials.
- ▶ Ways to get quicker, easier, affordable results for organizing your stuff.
- ▶ Ways to approach an overwhelming organizational project so

that it's manageable.

- ▶ Real-world examples of how to approach organizational projects.
- ▶ Generous Q&A time so all questions can be answered.
- ▶ Exclusive access to a private Facebook group to support your efforts.

MDC Executive Director Donna Johnson added, "As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak we've seen a lot of organizations and businesses have to rethink and recreate what they offer people in person, online and that's exactly what we are doing with this webinar. We are grateful that Margot is willing to provide our audience with this special online experience from the comfort of their homes."

For quality purposes, this online event will be capped at 100 participants. Participants must preregister for this event. For more information regarding this event, please visit the Minnesota Discovery Center's website.

Multiple hotlines available for COVID-19 questions

REGIONAL- A new helpline to report discrimination is now available in addition to four other hotlines for Minnesotans to raise COVID-19-related concerns and ask questions. Here is a rundown of Minnesota's COVID-19 response hotlines:

Health questions: 800-657-3903; 651-201-3920; 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.; seven days a week

Housing questions: For single-family residences 651-296-8215; For multi-family residences 651-297-4455; Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

School and childcare questions: 651-297-1304; 800-657-3504; 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.; seven days a week

Discrimination helpline: 833-454-0148

Report a concern about the stay at home order: 651-793-3746; Email: sahviolations@state.mn.us

NorthStar Neighbor matches high-risk persons with low-risk volunteers

REGIONAL- NorthStar Neighbor, a new nonprofit organization, aims to match volunteers with seniors or those at high risk of COVID-19 who need remote companionship and conversation or help with delivery of food or prescriptions.

The program matches healthy, low-risk Minnesotans who are under 60 with a senior in their community who is 60 or older or otherwise high-risk. Once the connection is made, the matched individuals take complete ownership of the process and their relationship, but the volunteer is encouraged to talk via phone or electronic means on a regular basis with his or her match and inquire about needed deliveries of supplies, food or prescriptions.

The initiative was founded by a group of volunteers and is not part of any government program. Jeff Johnson, a Hennepin County Commissioner, is leading the effort.

"Minnesotans are generous and

caring and we all want to find a way to help someone else right now," Johnson said. "I have no doubt we will see an outpouring of those who want to volunteer; the challenge will be finding those who are isolated and disconnected and need a little companionship or help."

"There are many amazing nonprofit organizations and churches that are providing services similar to this to people in their networks. We're hoping to find those seniors or at-risk people who don't have an existing network and just need a friend right now."

Anyone wanting to volunteer or needing a match can apply at www.NorthStarNeighbor.com or by calling 612-430-8899.

"This program is a two-way street," Johnson added. "Those who volunteer are providing a gift to someone in need, but it's important to recognize that those who are receiving help are also providing a gift to someone who desperately wants to help a fellow Minnesotan in this time of social isolation."

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SUMMER FESTIVALS

Timber Days felled by COVID-19 outbreak

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK—Following suit with a growing number of popular summer festivals and community events, organizers have canceled the June 12-14 Cook Timber Days due to health and safety concerns caused by the new coronavirus.

“It’s very unfortunate that we had to, but it’s prudent to do for safety purposes,” organizing committee chairman Steve Kajala said. “It’s certainly a big hit for everybody. It’s kind of the kickoff to summer. We’re the first festival around.”

Planning had been coming along well since the committee started its work in January, and Kajala said they hoped to introduce a few new wrinkles to provide even more entertainment for participants.

But as the state’s response to the coronavirus moved from social distancing recommendations to school and business closures and stay-at-home orders,

Event organizers make donation to Cook Food Shelf despite lack of fundraising

it became clear Timber Days was in jeopardy. Reluctant to give up on an event that provides a boost for businesses and fundraising opportunities for charities, Kajala said the committee decided during a recent teleconference meeting to give it two more weeks before making a decision about canceling. It took less than one.

“In the next four days Grandma’s Marathon and Land of the Loon both canceled,” Kajala said.

Another factor was the toll COVID-19 precautions have taken on local businesses.

“Most of our donations come from small businesses in the area, and we have a few corporations,” Kajala said. “It would be tough to ask all these people to donate when everybody’s business has been negatively impacted by this.”

The committee looked at the possibility of rescheduling Timber Days for later in the

summer, but quickly decided the obstacles to doing so were too great.

“We have several dozen vendors that come here,” Kajala said. “They travel from festival to festival during the summer. All their business comes from attending these festivals. If we postponed, a number of our vendors wouldn’t be able to attend.”

Once the summer gets rolling, festivals and community events are happening every weekend throughout the region, and pushing Timber Days to the end of August or later creates conflicts with back-to-school activities, Kajala said, making it more difficult to put on Timber Days and get people to attend.

By biting the bullet and canceling now, the committee avoided having to lay out money for significant pre-event expenses such as fireworks, exhibits, and portable toilets, Kajala said.

He also praised prior Timber

Right: Logging skills competitions, a parade, food and craft vendors, and much more have long been part of the Cook Timber Days celebration. The event is canceled this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Days organizers for their financial stewardship, which enabled this year’s committee to make a “larger than normal contribution” to the Cook Food Shelf, despite not being able to do their usual fundraising.

“There are more people than ever relying on that,” Kajala said, noting that businesses suffering this year were the same ones whose generous donations last year made the food shelf donation possible.

While Kajala said he’s looking forward to re-booting Timber Days next year, it’s still hard to believe it won’t be happening this summer.

“We’ve been planning this

since late January, and at that point who would have thought the world would literally stop in a matter of eight weeks,” he said.

CITY OF ELY

Mayor stresses continued diligence during pandemic



by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY—The city council chambers here were practically empty Tuesday night for their regular business meeting as members instead convened by computer or cell phone from various locations around City Hall or from home.

In the council chambers,

Left: Members of the Ely City Council and city staff held their meeting this week remotely.

K. Vandervort

Deputy Clerk Casey Velcheff monitored the technology and called a roll call vote for every action taken. Technicians broadcast the meeting live over the local cable access channel and social media.

Mayor Chuck Novak stressed the importance for Ely residents to continue to stay at home during the Governor’s emergency order.

“Get your necessities, but don’t mingle,” he said.

“There is a concern in our city I hear from a lot of people in that we have visitors coming up to the

summer homes and visitors who don’t have summer homes who are staying up here,” he added. “There is a concern that we may have (the coronavirus) imported into our city. There is no authority to stop anybody from coming, but we do have the ability to remind people that they need to not mingle in public and follow the Governor’s stay-at-home order.”

He referred to increased law enforcement in enforcing the state’s executive order. “The State

See ELY... 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

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

Editorial

Contrast in response

South Korea shows how a more effective U.S. response could have saved lives

If there's a silver lining in the current COVID-19 pandemic, it's that, across the country, Americans are stepping up to fill the void left by the astonishing lack of leadership in Washington. As we reported last week, small companies like Wintergreen are reaching out to hospitals in their region, in hopes of using their capabilities to help protect healthcare workers through the manufacture of protective face masks and hospital gowns.

Similar stories are now being told throughout the country. In the absence of a coordinated national response, everyday Americans are coming up with their own solutions to help protect themselves, healthcare professionals and first responders in their own communities from the dangers posed by the COVID-19 virus.

That's the good news. The unfortunate reality is that it shouldn't have been necessary. It's no coincidence that the United States is now home to nearly a third of all COVID-19 infections in the world, with more than 25,000 new cases now reported daily. At the current pace of new infection, more than a million Americans will likely be diagnosed with a COVID-19 infection by the end of April and many times that number will likely have the disease without being tested.

America will ultimately be the country hardest hit by this disease in large part due to a monumental failure of leadership by President Trump.

We don't have to wonder how things might have been different had the federal government acted more decisively. Two countries, the U.S. and South Korea, both experienced their first confirmed case of COVID-19 infection on Jan. 20 of this year. Within a week of those diagnoses, South Korea's disease control agency mounted a full-court press, mobilizing private industry to prepare for the pandemic by producing quick and effective tests. Within a week, the tests were ready to go and the Koreans efficiently tested hundreds of thousands of their residents within a month, isolating those who tested positive. By taking effective

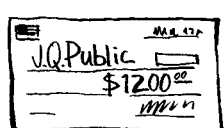
action from the start, the South Koreans have managed to keep their outbreak at a manageable level. Today, two and a half months after their first confirmed infection, that country of 50 million people is seeing new infections on the order of several dozen per day, compared to 30,000 per day here in the U.S. We have reproduced the graphs showing the rate of new infection for both South Korea and the U.S. below. The difference is striking and reflects, more than anything, the relative effectiveness of each country's response to this public health emergency.

Here in the U.S., the initial response was classic Trump: denial, followed by braggadocio. "We have it totally under control. It's one person coming from China. It's going to be just fine."

At a time when most other countries were ramping up for what most epidemiologists by this time recognized was going to be a monumental pandemic, the Trump White House dithered, continuing to vacillate between dismissing it as a Democratic hoax and touting what a masterful job the President was doing to keep it contained. "We are witnessing in the United States one of the greatest failures of basic governance and basic leadership in modern times," said Jeremy Konyndyk, who led the U.S. response to international disasters at USAid during President Obama's second term, while speaking recently to *The Guardian* newspaper. Many, many other experienced former officials have made similar observations.

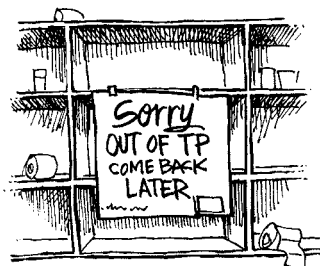
While reality eventually seeped into the tight bubble that surrounds President Trump, the U.S. largely lost this battle in the critical six weeks from that first infection in January to early March. By failing to take the action that this pandemic required, the Trump White House allowed this plague to gain a firm foothold in America, from which it is wreaking utter havoc, both on the health of millions, our overburdened healthcare system, and our economy. Americans will continue to pay the price of this failed leadership for a long time to come.

STIMULUS CHECK

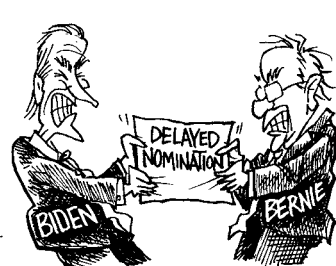


J. Q. Public

RAIN CHECK



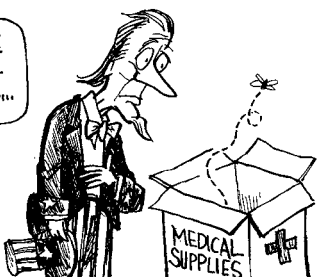
CLAIM CHECK



FACT CHECK



GUT CHECK



REALITY CHECK



Letters from Readers

The president who's never responsible

Your editorial on April was spot on. In a nutshell here...Some Americans will learn from this, but it seems others won't. I'm talking about following a leader who is a self-proclaimed expert on EVERYTHING! He doesn't listen to his experts and it seems continues to go on hunches?

In early January one of his experts sounded the alarm on this virus but it fell on deaf ears. All this President does when confronted with his ineptness is to place blame on the previous administration for their not preparing the country for something we are now experiencing.

Followers of this President won't take note of the turn of events that placed us in this situation where we could have massed resources that were available and taken steps to start the ball rolling in order to start industry in producing supplies to help the health care workers protect themselves. Too many times I have read and heard this President's followers blame the Democrats and the mainstream media for politicizing information going out to the public as does one of the commenters on this editorial. Remember folks. Early on this President stated it was a Democratic hoax. If that isn't politicizing, then I don't know what politicizing is!

Brian LaFrenier
Embarrass

Give me the "deep state" over Trump's incompetent state

So let's consider the "deep state" and then let's consider the chaos of the Trump administration.

The real definition of "the deep state" in my view is the competent, experienced and

honest government workers who know how a government works as opposed to the incompetent White House of the Trump administration and toadies like Mitch McConnell, that put us in this flat-footed position we are in now.

The GOP has for forty years been selling the idea that government is the problem and then set about to make it so. (Keep in mind it was our government that won WWII, the Cold War and put a man on the moon).

So now we have the GOP in charge and the government IS the problem, a problem that all those Trump toadies must own.

Trump famously proclaimed at the Republican National Convention that he alone could save us! I had to ask myself, from what? I'd sure like to go back to that world.

As it turns out it was Trump's incompetence and corruption we needed saving from.

If you are still riding the Trump train, it's time to get off and send that whole bunch packing.

Timothy McKenzie
Ely

Time to rein in the harm the U.S. does around the world

The coronavirus has hurt many people here in the United States. I feel for people here. So much suffering.

The world is also suffering and quite often it's the poor who are the ones living on the edge not knowing where their next meal will come from. War and economic embargoes are exacerbating the situation in many countries and much of that is a result of U.S. foreign policy.

It is time for us to insist that the U.S. government cease their brutality around the world. The U.S. is at war militarily or economically which is devastating to many. The strategy of the U.S.

as it tries to change a country's government is to make life miserable for the people so that they will turn against their governments, making violent coups more likely in some cases. (Chile-1973, Honduras-2006, and Bolivia recently, are examples of ousting governments that were trying to help their poor.)

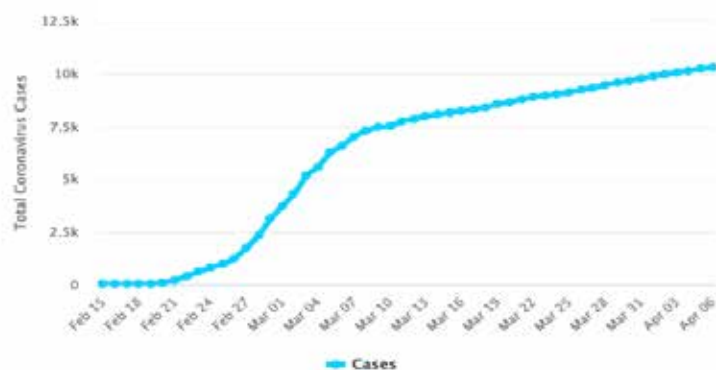
Venezuela is a prime example. Although the government there has helped poor and middle class people in health care, education, housing, and other social programs and the people have voted for President Maduro and are supporting it, the U.S. continues to try to destroy it. Same is true in Cuba and Nicaragua. In Yemen the U.S. supplies bombs that Saudi Arabia uses to kill and blockade them. They are suffering from a terrible cholera epidemic. Iran is also suffering under the embargo that the U.S. has forced on them. The Palestinians are suffering and are prisoners of Israel. Think of poor Gaza!

Now with this additional pandemic that everyone is experiencing, all the people of the countries I mentioned are really hurting and it is us the taxpayers that fund what the US is doing. We must force Washington to do what is right and stop the crimes against all of these people. None of those governments are our enemies. None of them are threats to the U.S. or to any of us. We must stop making life miserable for people around the world; we must stop the killing. America is not helping to stop the spread of the coronavirus, it is making it worse.

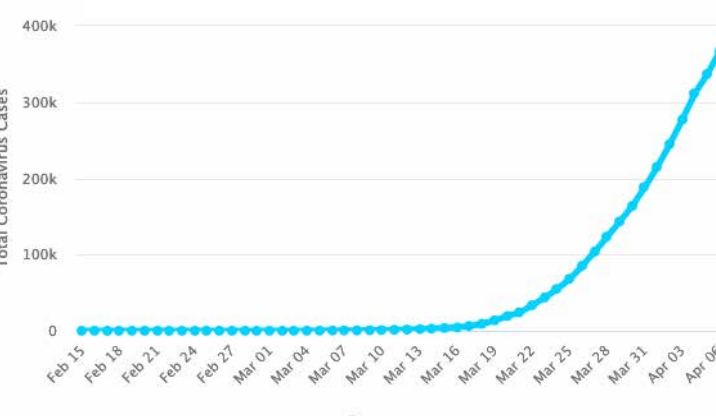
We need to rein in the horrible things that the U.S. does to the people of the world. How arrogant and criminal and shameful.

Steve Johnson
Ely

S. Korea total cases to date: 10,350



U.S. total cases to date: 400,000-plus



The right time to move to Minnesota

It's a curious thing to me, in the midst of global pandemic that's keeping people cloistered in their homes, that online streaming services are reporting a surge in the number of people watching, you guessed it, disaster movies.

Perhaps it's the old "misery loves company" routine. We've got it rough, but we don't yet have it meteor-destroying-the-earth, dinosaurs-crushing-my-friends, zombie-apocalypse bad.

Then again, maybe some of them are more popular because



DAVID COLBURN

they give people hope that calamitous disasters are survivable. Hint: If that's your motivation, stay away from "Seeking a Friend for the End of the World." It's one of Steve Carell's best movies, but even the star of "The Office" can't escape that blinding white meteor. Sorry,

Steve.

I'd have thought people would go more for a good romantic comedy like Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore in "50 First Dates". What better time than now to connect with

a character who each and every day can't remember yesterday?

However, of all the disastrous cinematic possibilities that run through my mind, I keep coming back to that comedic classic from 1980, "Airplane!" It's a hilarious, gag-filled, and these days frequently politically incorrect, take on the serious airplane disaster movies of the 1970s, and yes, everyone on the flight who ate fish for dinner and got violently ill survived. It has a happy ending.

The lines that keep coming back to me weren't uttered on the airplane, however. They were spoken by a stressed-out Lloyd Bridges in the control

See **MOVE...**pg. 5

Letters from Readers

That's to everyone for making the case for our speedy return

Thank you for the amazing story on the Zaandam's plight in today's *Timberjay*... Someone on Eagles Nest just texted it to us. Well done!

Frank and I got off the ship in the VERY first group on April 2 at 7:30 pm. I wanted to be the LAST OFF the Zaandam to make sure all folks got the medical help they needed — including the sick crew. But it was NOT TO BE!

The plan to leave the ship created by Holland America — and approved by the Broward County decision-makers — was incredibly detailed and strict. Very impressive!

It could have been a logistical nightmare but instead, it was incredibly well organized and well thought out! Because we own a home in Boca Raton — we were treated as Florida residents. We told them we were NOT RESIDENTS per se — but that we could easily quarantine at our house in Boca Raton, or at a family condo in Miami Beach.

The cruise line ushered one couple at a time off the ship into the port — we collected our suitcases that had been sterilized — and were put into a 'Covid-sanitized' limo — with a driver to our condo. We are now ensconced in a two-bedroom apartment in a small art deco building on Collins Ave. It is a veritable feast of space after

being confined to our small windowless stateroom for 13 days!

Yes — this methodical process of disembarkation will take multiple days to accomplish to remove all guests on the Rotterdam and Zaandam in such a safe and orderly way. ABSOLUTELY no one at all was able to just walk off either ship — loose and on their own.

Florida residents were taken off the Zaandam first and chauffeured home couple-by-couple — to wherever they lived. Everyone got a driver and their own car from the port to their front door.

The next day, the international passengers leaving the Zaandam — were taking chartered buses to chartered flights home anywhere in the world. It will take three or four days to do this operation carefully and safely...Holland America organized and is underwriting the entire operation.

The critically ill were ambulated to local hospitals immediately when we docked. I have no idea how many poor souls were in that category... we wish them a speedy recovery

The folks who are sick — but not critically ill — among the staff and passengers — will remain on the ship for treatment with Holland America doctors.

All who got off the Zaandam must isolate and quarantine for 14 days. We will be back home in Ely in about 18 days, after 14 days of isolation in South Beach in Miami and a road-trip back to

Minnesota.

We are fine. We are Elyites, after all. My grandmother taught me the meaning of *sisu* every day that she lived!

This adventure started with a bang and ended in tragedy. We take personal responsibility for this miscalculation. We only have the greatest respect for the Holland America cruise line — and the captain and crew were heroic. Their compassionate care throughout this ordeal was nothing short of super human!

The final thing, we would like to say is 'Thank you' to Captain Ane Jan Smit of the Zaandam. While the captain had dying passengers onboard, and he was desperately and frantically begging for emergency medical help from six different countries that all ultimately said no, Captain Smit maintained his calm, professional, wise, and humane manner as the leader of the Zaandam. Frank and I would travel to the four corners of the earth with Captain Smit as our fearless leader!

We thank all our friends in Ely, and throughout the U.S., who demanded that our elected officials work for a humane resolution of the Zaandam's plight. It honestly worked! We are so grateful and touched.

The staffs of Rep. Ilhan Omar, Sen. Tina Smith, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, and Rep. Stauber checked in with us almost daily... None of them could believe how many of our friends across the country were

bugging them to get us home. And, even Elizabeth Warren was brought into it!

Thank you — Ely and the media — for keeping the plight of the Zaandam front and center, for your support, and for your advocacy! It was so deeply touching. We will never, ever forget it!

**Valerie Myntti
Frank Sherman
Eagles Nest Twp.**

Vitamin C is critical to our good health

I was somewhere in the Cook area in the 1970s when I heard a visiting veterinarian explain that dogs did not acquire heart disease as we see it in humans. He thought this could be because most animals have a special enzyme to make part of their blood sugar into Vitamin C. Evening hibernating bears keep forming Vitamin C from their slow circulation.

Perhaps we remember the British sailors who developed fatal scurvy because they lacked C-rich foods. Only cats on board survived. Humans, primates, guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits, and fruit-eating bats rely entirely on what they eat for the protective Vitamin C.

During World War II, studies showed that one orange or its juice would not show bleeding gums (possibly beginning scurvy), so that very minimal level became the standard for all (60 mg).

Our C-deficient diets leave

us open to many diseases such as colds, dental problems, heart disease, and perhaps cancer. As Dr. Rath (MD) states in his book "Why Animals Don't Get Heart Attacks...but People Do." "Food processing, long-term storage, and overcooking destroy most vitamins in food...the body reservoir of Vitamin C in people is...10-100 times lower than the C levels in animals."

Dr. Earl Mindell, pharmacologist, states that Vitamin C is the only known anti-viral vitamin because it helps to form and strengthen collagen, a kind of glue between cells. This helps prevent viruses from piercing cell walls and making you sick. Thomas Levy, MD, a cardiologist from Colorado Springs, has lectured about Vitamin C and antioxidants. His book, "Curing the Incurable," shows how C has been able to cure or contribute to the cure of many infectious diseases. Viral pneumonia is listed as curable and preventable.

Supplemental C is best taken with a food source of C, such as oranges or other citrus, broccoli (if barely cooked), bell peppers, fresh cabbage, papaya, strawberries, and many fresh berries on the vine, and grapes (preferably organic).

Further education is needed for medical people and the general public. Vaccines are not the only cure.

**Marlyn Swanson, BSN
Virginia, Minn.**

MOVE...Continued from page 4

room, bemoaning the fact that he "picked the wrong week" to give up his vices of smoking, sniffing glue, and popping amphetamines. Remember that I warned you about political incorrectness.

I think those lines resonate now because so many of my old friends elsewhere and new acquaintances here have wondered if this Kansas native picked the wrong month, February, to move to the coldest place in the lower 48 states. Some have been gentle — "How are you doing with all the cold and snow?" they ask. Others have been more direct — "Are you out of your freaking MIND?!?!?" Surely, they believed it, or I, was a disaster waiting to happen. While that may be the case if I'm around power tools, it's a different story with Minnesota and me.

Sure, it was way colder and the snow way deeper than anything I'd ever experienced when I rolled into town in my truck to come to work at

the *Timberjay*. It seemed almost as foreign as my trip last year to India and Sri Lanka.

But after a quick trip to Ely to pick up a Wintergreen coat and snow pants and a pair of Steger mukluks, cold and snow weren't a problem at all. Well, that's not quite accurate. I learned the hard way on my first weekend covering an outdoor event why snowshoes are advisable when walking on seemingly firm, crusty snow. It was somewhat akin to the time I sank in quicksand on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. Fortunately, in both cases I hit a solid bottom before being swallowed whole. And the Boy Scouts I was covering in Cook were kind not to laugh at the old man foundering in the snow, at least to my face, anyway.

Today, with schools and so many businesses closed, with churches taking services online, hospitals and nursing homes barring visitors, and people hunkered down at home,

I believe February was a perfect month to move to Minnesota and make my home in the Lake Vermilion area. Unlike our current state of affairs, February was normal.

I experienced the area at its wintery vibrant best, from North Woods Grizzlies basketball to a Nett Lake pow wow to snowmobiling. I met people everywhere I went and experienced a welcome unlike any I've had in my many moves. And I found myself in one of the best work environments ever, doing what I love — telling stories. February was the month I felt more at home than any place I've lived in the past 20 years.

It's also the month I got an inkling that in a time of crisis such as this, I couldn't have picked a better place to move, and as March rolled into April that's become crystal clear.

We're living in precarious days. Everyone has wondered at some point if they're going to be the next to catch the virus, even those who believe

the coronavirus pandemic is much ado about nothing. Business owners anxiously wonder if they'll be able to survive the hit they're taking, and unemployed workers wonder if there will be any jobs to find when this is all over. They're all wondering how to pay mortgages or rent, how to put food on the table, and simply how to survive this health and economic crisis. They're frustrated that new government assistance programs meant to help are in many cases running about as smoothly as a pig on stilts.

No one knows the true meaning of the word "neighbor" better than those who live in small town and rural America, and that truth is revealing itself right here, right now. Neighbors are getting take-out meals from restaurants to help keep them afloat, and in turn restaurants have been finding ways to give back to their communities. Neighbors are checking in on neighbors and volunteering to run errands for those who can't get

out. Neighbors are making masks for health care providers. And on and on and on. Here, everyone's our neighbor, and that's going to be the biggest difference-maker in the weeks and months ahead.

This isn't going to have a "happily ever after" ending for everyone. There is already pain, loss, and sorrow, and there will be more that even good neighbors can't prevent. But the mark of truly good neighbors is that they will find a way to band together to prevail.

February was indeed the right month to move here. I got to see some of the best this corner of the world has to offer. And that gives me a certain hope that we'll come out on the other side of this better. Battered, bruised, yes — but better.

We get enough of the dire news from national outlets, and it's our job to report on the local angles of that as well. It's something we take seriously. But we also want to give you stories of good news, and since we don't get to

see much of you face-to-face right now, I'd like to invite you to touch base with us with ideas. I'm on Facebook under the name David Colburn Timberjay — feel free to send me a friend request or drop a note to me there. We also have the *Timberjay* Facebook page, and we're always happy to get your calls and emails at the office.

I won't promise we'll do a story on every suggestion we get. We can't. Some things make good little anecdotes to share among friends but don't lend themselves to a full story in the paper. Sometime people throw up the "modesty wall," as I like to call it: I ask for an interview, and they reply with, "Oh, no, I don't want to make a big deal of myself, goodbye." So many great stories left untold that way.

But I can promise this: I'll listen to what you have to share. It's one neighborly thing I can do for my new neighbors.

ELY...Continued from page 3

Patrol doesn't have much to do because there are not many cars on the road, so they are actually stopping vehicles with out-of-state license plates," Novak said. Violators are subject to a \$1,000 fine.

"We don't want the virus imported into the city," Novak continued. "We have an elderly population that is highly susceptible. My job is to somehow protect the city." Council member Heidi Omerza observed the alarming rate with which events are being canceled for this summer.

"The League of Minnesota Cities summer conference has been cancelled and quite a few other things are to follow very shortly," she said. "I'm sure city-wide functions and gatherings will probably soon be canceled. We are taking our lead from the Governor and simply not

doing these things."

She did not comment on plans for the city's Fourth of July activities, the Blueberry Arts/Festival or Harvest Moon Festival.

Novak told council members that he spends a lot of time communicating with the Governor's office about the details of the shelter-in-place order.

"We are getting inundated with information to the point of information overload," he said. "Paying attention to the daily briefings coming from the Coronavirus Task Group in Washington, D.C. is important along with the Governor's daily briefings and information from the Minnesota Department of Health. If conditions worsen, most of the decisions we make start in Washington or St. Paul. We don't have much choice but to follow that.

If something happens where I have to take further action, I will," he said.

Novak said if conditions ease, the city would take actions accordingly.

Police report

Ely Police Sgt. George Burger reported to the council that as many as six methamphetamine arrests were made in the city over the last couple months.

"As many as five of the arrests were eligible for the pre-charge diversion program where the suspect can get clean and the charges go away," Burger said. Of those five cases, just one suspect is in the diversion program.

"The other four either failed out of it or did not respond to our offer," he said. "To me, that is a problem."

Two Ely Police Department officers are assigned to drug investiga-

tions, according to Burger, along with collaboration of other officers from other law enforcement agencies.

"We can't do this work in a one-hour episode like you see on television. It can take hours and days to make an arrest," he said.

He pleaded to those struggling with drug addiction to reach out for help.

"We have the resources that we can put you in contact with to get you help," he said. Burger noted that success stories do exist.

Burger reported that he is noticing an increase in mental health and domestic calls since the implementation of coronavirus stay-at-home orders.

"The biggest thing is to get out and walk and find some kind of recreation to do because it is not a fun time to be cramped up at home," he said. "Our whole life has changed."

He mentioned that the Ely Community Care Team and Range Mental Health are available to help with mental health crisis.

"Those are two very beneficial groups that we are lucky to have in the area," Burger said. "We have the ability to make referrals. Feel free to reach out to us."

Burger also recognized the efforts of local high school students in providing protective masks to the Ely PD.

"Caleb Janeksel, Luke Olson, Harry Simon, Bryce Longwell, Eli Anderson, and Emmett Faltesek wanted to do something for the community, and they bought each officer in our department a respirator mask. It was a great thing to do and we really appreciate it."

Other business

The council took the

following actions:

► Approved a Storefront Rehab Loan of \$17,500 for E Sheridan Properties LLC for work on the former Salerno Building to include sewer infrastructure and concrete work in basement, bathroom framing, and electrical wiring of furnace.

► Approved the first reading of an ordinance to amend the city code to include rules and regulations relating to refuse collection and disposal, and scheduled a public hearing on the matter for Tuesday, April 21 at 4:30 p.m.

► Considered a communication from the K America Foundation asking for a three-year extension on their six-year agreement to develop the Community Center and agreed to discuss the matter at their next regular meeting.

Week of April 13

Monday

TOPS - Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tower, at 9 a.m. Canceled until further notice.

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

Tower City Council- 5:30 p.m. Meeting may be held electronically, information will be posted at www.city-oftower.com.

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 April 21.

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

Greenwood Town Board- 6 p.m. at the Town Hall. Meeting to be held electronically. See ad on page 6B for info.

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.

What's happening in Tower?

Easter fun for T-S Elementary

TOWER-SOUDAN- Tower-Soudan Elementary students got a little surprise when bus drivers and school staff dropped off homework packets on Monday. Each family received a fully-stocked Easter basket, thanks to donations from St. James Presbyterian Church and two anonymous donors.

"One anonymous donor dropped off over 50 ready-made Easter baskets," said school secretary Ilona Svedberg. Another anonymous donor made a cash donation.

Monday morning, school staff worked together, assembling one basket for each family. For families with multiple students, baskets had enough toys and candy for all the elementary-aged children in that family. Donations included stuffed animals, outdoor play items, and lots of candy. Baskets were assembled for each of the 61 families who have children enrolled in the school.

"The teachers weren't expecting these generous donations," said Svedberg. "One of them had said it would be nice to be able to send out something special for the holiday, and then we got all these donations."

Svedberg reported that the students seem to be adapting well to the home learning environment.

"Teachers are keeping in touch with their students," she said, "and students are getting in touch with their teachers if they are having trouble with the work that is being sent home to them."



Claire Jonas had a big surprise when she received an Easter basket along with her homework packet. submitted photo



David Durrant and his brothers have made a generous donation to Lake Vermilion Cultural Center to honor their Finnish-born grandmother and American-born mother. The gift was part of their mother's estate. She was the first in her family to go to college, and worked as a teacher. Pictured (from left) David Durrant, LVCC Board Member Jim Marttila, Kathy Meyerle, Sandy Erickson (seated), and LVCC Board Member Don Erickson.

Easter Worship - Drive-In Style

FIELD TWP- Due to the current events of the world, we continue to look for alternative ways to be "together" yet apart with our worship communities. One unique way to present worship during this time, is through a "Drive-In" style service. Yes, like the old drive-in movie theaters.

Immanuel (Tower) and Trinity (Cook) Lutheran churches are teaming up to bring to the area an Easter Drive-In Worship Service for Easter Sunday. Everyone will have to stay in their vehicles and not roll down their windows, but congregation members will be together in a different kind of way.

With the help of United in Christ in Eveleth, which offers a drive-in worship each Sunday during the summer, we were able to borrow an extra set of equipment to make this special Easter service happen in Cook. United in Christ began their drive-in worship last Sunday and will continue for as long as is needed.

The Easter service will take place at the North Woods School parking lot (10248 E Olson Rd, Cook) at 10 a.m. All are welcome. Please arrive before 10 a.m. to get parked and tuned in by 10 a.m. This will be a one-time drive-in service special for Easter.

St. James services available on YouTube

TOWER- Pastor Doug Workman is recording messages, liturgy, and prayers on the St. James YouTube channel each week. To view, go to youtube.com then in the search box above videos type St James Presbyterian Tower MN and hit enter. You will see a green circle with an "S" in the middle. Click on it and you will go to the channel and can pick the videos you want to watch.

Pastor Doug is available to talk on the phone at 218-753-6005.

the TIMBERJAY

The Tower-Soudan Timberjay and Cook-Orr Timberjay are published weekly on Friday by The Timberjay, Inc. Offices are at 414 Main St., Box 636, Tower, MN 55790 [218-753-2950], and PO Box 718, Ely, MN 55731 [218-365-3114]. Fax number is 218-753-2916. E-mail address is editor@timberjay.com. Visit our website at www.timberjay.com.

Entered as Periodicals at the Post Office in Tower, Minnesota. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Timberjay, P.O. Box 636, Tower, MN 55790. Three award-winning community editions are published each week for Tower/Soudan, Cook/Orr, and Ely.

Publisher Marshall Helmberger
General Manager Jodi Summit
Cook-Orr Editor David Colburn
Ely Editor Keith Vandervort
Staff Writer Stephanie Ukkola
Office Manager M. M. White
Graphics/Ad Sales Scarlet Lynn Stone
Ad Sales/Sports Jay Greeney
Ad Sales Bill Stone

Official Newspaper:

City of Orr, City of Tower, Townships of Bearville, Eagles Nest, Embarrass, Kugler, Vermilion Lake, Field, Morcom, Leiding, Crane Lake, ISD 707.

Member: Minnesota Newspaper Association, Lake Vermilion Resort Association, Lake Vermilion Area Chamber of Commerce, Ely Chamber of Commerce, Orr Chamber of Commerce.

Subscriptions Available:

St. Louis County: \$37 year Elsewhere: \$52 year. We accept VISA/Mastercard/Discover. Please specify Tower/Soudan, Cook/Orr or Ely edition.

NOTE: Changes of address must be sent or called in to the Tower office. Out-of-state delivery may take 2-3 weeks. For prompt out-of-state delivery try the First Class Subscription: \$100 year or \$10 per month.

Read the entire paper on-line every week. On-line subscriptions cost \$29.95/year; details at www.timberjay.com.

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

Senior Dining still available for carry-out

TOWER- Vermilion Country School and AEOA sponsor a senior dining site at the charter school in Tower. While school is closed due to COVID-19, the kitchen staff will be providing

carry-out meals. Please note, because of current health guidelines, the meals do not include the salad bar, but canned vegetables will be 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 wel-

come at the regular rate of \$5.75. There are no income guidelines.

Reservations are requested a day in advance if possible. Call the school at 218-300-1447 (direct line to kitchen) or 218-753-1246 (ext. 2 for the office) for information, or call AEOA at 1-800-662-5711 ext.

7323 for the one-time registration process.

Week of April 13
 Monday- No school, no lunch served
 Tuesday- Chicken Philly
 Wednesday- Lasagna
 Thursday- Chicken Broccoli Alfredo
 Friday- Sloppy Joe.

Northern Red Hat Belles cancel April meeting

TOWER- The Northern Red Hat Belles have canceled their April meeting.

Cook VFW
 Open Daily at Noon
CLOSED on TUESDAYS

Happy Hour
 Daily 4-6 p.m.
All Beer & Drinks
 Bar Menu & Pizza Available

Event Rentals
Welcome
 218-780-6709

Pull-Tabs Sold Daily
 Lic. 00390

Sunday FREE Pool

Thursday Bingo
 Early Bird 6 p.m.
 Progressive Prizes

Friday 4:30-7 p.m.
 Hamburger Special

Take-Out 666-0500

Letters from Readers

Jesus' suffering and death has a happy ending

We all know the story. Maybe not all the details, but we know the story line. A lot of bad stuff will happen this week to Jesus. Awful stuff. The greatest act of injustice ever to occur. And after three days in the tomb, we will be there with Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John. We will witness his resurrection. Lots of bad stuff will happen. But we know the ending. We know it is a happy ending.

The same goes with our life. Especially with the challenges of our time. Bad stuff is happening and will happen. But because we are Christian, because we have been baptized into Christ's death, we can also hope to rise with him. We know that as bad as things can be, we know that there is a happy ending to it all. We know that God will bring us through it.

St. Paul says, "This saying is trustworthy: If we have died with

him, we shall also live with him;

If we persevere, we shall also reign with him.

But if we deny him he will deny us.

If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself."

There are so many ways we can enter into the great Passion narrative this week. There are so many characters and dynamics taking place. I hope you take time to prayerfully read this narrative throughout this most holy of weeks. I would just suggest one point of entry. Consider Jesus in the garden. When "Jesus advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.'" I believe at this time in history, with the coronavirus, and stay at home orders and all the rest, that each of us is having our Garden of

Gethsemane moment. God is offering us the cup of suffering to drink. Will we drink from the cup that God gives to us? Or will we fight and reject it? Will we complain? Will we just get lazy? I know it's not pleasant. Faithfulness to the will of God is often not pleasant. It is not appealing. It wasn't for Jesus. But out of love for his Father and us, he drank the cup that was given him. Will we drink the cup that is given to us, today? Because if we do, yes, we will suffer, yes, we will still die. But we will suffer with Christ near us. We will die in Christ. And therefore, we will rise with him to eternal glory. Let us not refuse the cup that is offered us. Let us drink from the cup that God is giving us.

Father Nick St. Martin's Catholic Church, Tower

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

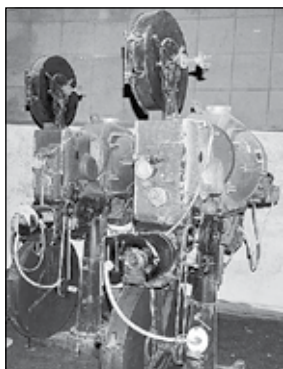
AA - Alcoholics Anonymous
AA - 7 p.m. Mondays,
and 7:30 p.m.
Wednesdays, First
Lutheran Church,
915 E. Camp St., Ely
WOMEN'S AA - Noon
Mondays, St. Anthony
Church basement, Ely
BABBITT AA - 7 p.m.
Tuesdays, Woodland
Presbyterian Church
AL-ANON - Sundays
8-9 p.m. at St. Anthony's
Catholic Church in Ely.
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.

New projector for State Theater

ELY—While the community shelters in place because of caution over the coronavirus, the effort to open Ely's Historic State Theater continues. The new digital projector for the theater arrived last week.

"And we have quite a bit of new equipment due this week for the huge concessions area we are building in the Salerno building," said David Wigdahl, board president of the nonprofit organization.

"The community's donations helped bring this \$50,000 4k projector to Ely," he added.



The screen is still in transit from overseas, and its exact arrival date is still up in the air, Wigdahl said, "Once it arrives, we start a 10-day countdown to expertly calibrate everything. We hope to be showing movies at the

David Wigdahl, left, board chair of Ely's Historic State Theater, and Peter Schamber, interim manager, next to the non-profit's new projector. Quite a contrast with the old projector, at left.
submitted photos



State by late spring." The COVID-19 pandemic may well set back the public opening for the theater, he admitted.

"In less than a year the nonprofit has raised over \$300,000 toward bringing movies back to Ely and the surrounding

area," said board member Steve Voiles. "A second round of fundraising will be needed to get funds to

launch a second smaller screen and extend our potential for offering all kinds of films."

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Ely Police Report: March 15-31

Editor's Note: The Ely Police Department summarizes activity and public contact twice each month. The Ely Timberjay publishes an edited version of the summary.

Arrests/Citations:

- Individual arrested for domestic and 5th degree assault.
- Individual cited for driving without a valid driver license.
- Individual cited for possession of an open bottle.
- Individual cited for possession of a small amount of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of an electronic delivery device.
- Individual cited for failure to obey traffic

- control device.
- Individual cited for driving without a valid license, no driver's license in possession and taillight not illuminated.
- Individual cited for allowing unlicensed driver to drive and fail to change address on driver's license.

Complaints:

- Check Welfare. Dispatched to check welfare of a young male walking along Camp Street acting erratic. The caller advised the male was smoking marijuana, singing and talking to himself. Unable to locate the male.
- Disturbance. Dispatched to a disturbance of a male swearing and yelling outside an apartment building. The male was located and spoken to about his behavior. The male advised he was just blowing off some steam.
- Public Assist.

Request for a call back to the Ely Area Food Shelf requesting barricades for traffic control. Advised there was no need for barricades, as the police department would be patrolling and would keep traffic flowing properly.

➤ Fraud/Scam Call. Call back to an individual who gave out personal information to someone she thought was a friend on Facebook. The caller was advised not give out personal information on Facebook.

➤ Motor Vehicle Property Damage. Dispatched to a motor vehicle crash on Washington Street and 11th Ave E in which a vehicle made a U-turn and another vehicle collided with it. Owners exchanged information and the driver making the U-turn was advised for driving conduct.

➤ Medical assist of a juvenile male who injured himself sliding at the Ely Golf Course. Assisted the ambulance.

➤ Assist Other Agency. Request by St. Louis County Sheriff's Department to assist locating an injured deer near the intersection of Hwy 169 and Kawishiwi Trail. The deer was located already deceased.

➤ Neighbor Trouble. Complaint over possibly burning oil in a garage wood stove. Advised.

➤ Dispatched to the sounds of disturbance coming from the downstairs apartment of the caller. Officers investigated and determined the basement tenant was packing items up to move home and was talking loudly on the phone with her boyfriend.

➤ Dispatched to call an individual over dispute between two neighbors. Both neighbors spoken to and advised of their conduct.

➤ Dispatched initially to a verbal domestic between the caller and his "lady friend." Officer Deinhammer arrived on scene and investigated the incident. The caller advised Officer Deinhammer that nothing was physical, but his female acquaintance was arguing and yelling at him. Officer Deinhammer spoke with the female about the incident and she said the male had been gossiping about her with the neighbors and being controlling. Both individuals stated the incident was only verbal and both

agreed to spend a night apart. The female was given a ride to a local motel.

➤ Dispatched to an unwanted person. The caller advised a female was knocking on her door for about 10 minutes and she didn't want her there. Officers arrived on scene and the suspect was gone upon arrival.

➤ Individual called to report water backing up from the basement drain. Ely utilities were advised of the situation.

➤ Two Medical Assists

➤ No Fire Assists

Submitted by:
Sgt. Chad Houde
Ely Police Department

Yesterday's news, this week

from the archives of
THE ELY MINER
Courtesy of the Ely-Winton Historical Society

April 9, 1920

Shot to death

Kenneth "Stoney Slim" Lavigne was shot and killed Sunday evening at the farm home of Jos. Wylie between here and Winton. The remains were brought to the city's Laing Undertaking parlor where Dr. Ayres and Coroner Parker performed an autopsy.

It was found that Lavigne had been shot in the eye with a 32-caliber bullet, death resulting instantly. A coroner's jury was impealed and an inquest held at the Community Center by Coroner Parker and County Attorney Stone.

Several people, whom it was thought might shed some light on the incident, were examined. So far, no tangible clues have been presented which might lead to the arrest of the murderer.

The inquest was conducted in private, but from the story as gleaned by the reporter, it was learned that Lavigne, who was employed as a watchman at the Wylie farm, was called to the door and when he showed himself two shots were fired from a close range. One of the shots lodged in the door casing while the other struck him in the eye.

With Lavigne at the time was Miss Gene Rose who was also employed at the farm. Miss Rose and the murdered man were playing cards at the time when a knock on the door caused Lavigne to answer. As the house had been known as a sporting house but was not in operation at the time, it is presumed that a party of men wished to gain entrance. Lavigne told the men that no one was there and could not come in. A little later he was again called to the door when the shooting took place.

The authorities have investigated every chance clue but so far without success. Deputy County Attorney Stone of Virginia was here and concluded the inquest for the county attorney and Deputy Sheriff Hoel is here from Duluth investigating.

The funeral of the murdered man took place from the Laing Undertaking parlor. Many friends of "Stoney Slim" attended. Mrs. Edward Matthews, a sister of Lavigne, was here from Duluth to attend the funeral.

He was 34 years old and had been a resident of these parts for years as a lumberjack. Several years ago, while in the act of thawing dynamite, himself and a partner were severely injured by the premature explosion of the material and Lavigne lost a part of his hand and one eye. He was an easy-going man and the theory of an enemy is scouted.

the TIMBERJAY

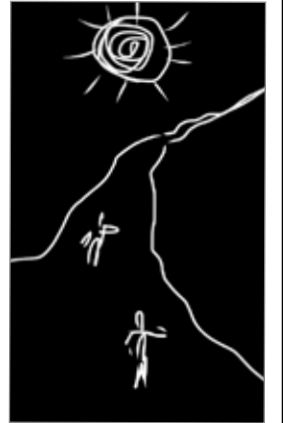
The Ely Timberjay is published weekly on Friday by The Timberjay, Inc. Offices are at 414 Main St., P.O. Box 636, Tower, MN 55790 [218-753-2950], and PO Box 718, Ely, MN 55731 [218-365-3114]. Fax number is 218-753-2916. E-mail address is editor@timberjay.com. Visit our website: www.timberjay.com.

Entered as Periodicals at the Post Office in Tower, Minnesota. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Timberjay, P.O. Box 636, Tower, MN 55790. Three award-winning community editions are published each week for Tower/Soudan, Cook/Orr, and Ely.

Publisher	Marshall Helmberger
General Manager	Jodi Summit
Ely Editor	Keith Vandervort
Cook-Orr Editor	David Colburn
Staff Writer	Stephanie Ukkola
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Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2020



Silent empty streets
Six foot distance dividing
Soak in the sun's warmth

SAINT LOUIS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
BETTER WASTE SOLUTIONS

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

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Subscriptions Available:
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CORONAVIRUS CONUNDRUM

Orr family stranded in California longs to get home

Coronavirus clampdown came before they could get prepared for 2,000-mile drive back

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- There's no place like home, and that's become painfully obvious to Jeremy Morris of Orr, who is temporarily stranded with his family nearly 2,000 miles away in San Diego because of a March 16 stay-at-home order issued by California Governor Gavin Newsom to combat the spread of the coronavirus and COVID-19.

Morris and his wife, Eliana, are originally from San Diego but moved to Orr 10 years ago. With some of the tightest restrictions on movement in the country, Morris said San Diego is eerily quiet.

"It's like a ghost town," he said. "Sitting here watching it all unfold before your eyes is quite the thing. I knew right away (coronavirus) was going to shut everything down. I'm stuck in the last place in the world I want to be stuck in with something like this happening."

So how did a couple from San Diego end up in Orr, and then back in San Diego at the scariest time possible?

Morris said his father was born and raised in Minnesota, and a close family friend from Hibbing named Scotty traveled to San Diego every year to visit. In 2010, Morris decided he would return the favor.

"I said, 'Scotty, I'm going to come up and visit you this year,'" he recalled. "I came up a month later, started working at Ryan's (Rustic Railings), and I loved it too much to ever go back home."

Jeremy moved from Ryan's to work at Lumber Orr Hardware and then with encouragement from Russ Holman struck out on his own a few years ago. He established Morris and Company, specializing in doing residential remodeling and

providing various birch products for sale.

Last year Eliana's mother came to Minnesota and took Eliana and the couple's four children back to California for an extended visit. Eliana hadn't been back since 2010, and the children hadn't ever met their Golden State relatives. Eliana also wanted to help out her sister there, who had six children of her own.

Morris went to San Diego for a brief visit last



Jeremy Morris

June to see them, and he returned to Orr with one of his daughters, who he said didn't like it there. They decided to drive back to San Diego for Christmas, spend a few weeks, and then come back with the rest of the family.

Morris picked up a used 15-passenger Ford E-350 van at an auction for \$1,000 and readied it for the 4,000-mile roundtrip. He hooked on an enclosed trailer to take his tools and enough birch poles to keep filling online orders while he was in San Diego.

"If I needed to get money to get home, I could do a few jobs," Morris said.

Morris started in construction in San Diego, and shortly after he arrived he ran into customers he had once worked for who had plenty of work for him. Between that and filling online orders, he felt comfortably set for the trip home.

That plan changed

when the coronavirus pandemic exploded.

Morris said he could tell things were going to get bad several weeks ago, and he told his family to get ready to leave. This time, "family" included his sister-in-law and six nieces and nephews, as well as Eliana's mother. Everybody was getting out, but before they were ready to hit the road the governor's restrictions were enacted, and Morris couldn't leave.

"There are travel restrictions from here to there," he said. "Right now, if you're not wearing any kind of face mask, you're going to get \$1,000 fine. If you're on the streets without reason they're going to fine you or throw you in jail. We're in quarantine, the whole state, and nobody can leave their house for two weeks more. It's going to be a month straight."

Little wonder that Morris says he's worried and stressed.

"I've got to protect the kids and it's hard to protect them when you've got so many people around," he said. "The neighbors are literally six feet away. That's not even safe if they've got the virus."

The ten children and the adults are living right now in a two-bedroom duplex that costs \$1,800 a month in rent. Needless to say, living on top of each other isn't easy.

"It's a little overwhelming," Morris said. "The kids, luckily most of them are small and they don't take up too much space. We've got plenty of toys, and we've got them into drawing and reading books."

And living in such close quarters means they also are doing something else.

"They're fighting with each other about every other day," Morris said. "When they can't get out at all, it keeps the tension really high. For



When Jeremy Morris and his daughter drove to San Diego in December they were towing an enclosed trailer stuffed full of birch poles Morris had cut so he could continue to fill orders for his online business.

courtesy photo

the adults also."

Morris is the only one who can leave the house on a regular basis.

"I got permission that I can be driving around in my vehicle because it's a commercial vehicle," he said. "I've got a permission slip on my windshield. Otherwise we'd be in a bad situation."

Much of the money that was going to go for the long drive home went instead to stocking up on groceries that should last about another three weeks.

"I got us all stocked up," Morris said. "I figured since we can't get out we might as well hunker down."

Food costs weren't much higher in California than they were in Minnesota, but that's changed, Morris said. Items are selling for three and four times their original cost, and people have no other options.

Food shortages are starting to pop up, and Morris said one reason is that Californians are ill-prepared with any space to actually store what they buy.

"Everybody's putting their money into extra groceries and they have no place to store them," he said. "Most people down here have a regular refrigerator in their house, and they don't have freezers like we have in Minnesota. They don't have pantries in their houses. They rely on being able to stop at the store twice a week. Now they go and buy a bunch of groceries and come home and realize they don't have a place to keep it and all that food goes bad."

Morris believes it's going to get even worse, and he's ready to hit the road as soon as restrictions are eased. He admitted there would be many uncertainties from state to state on the route home, but the risks involved in getting home are not as bad as the thought of

staying put in San Diego.

And when that big van finally comes to a stop and the all the family unloads safely back in Orr, Morris knows exactly what he's going to do.

"I'm going out and cutting some more birch poles," he said. "I love doing that, being in the woods by myself. I'd rather count trees than people."

Morris said life in Orr has been such a wonderful change that he has absolutely no interest in moving back to San Diego or to any other city ever again.

"I don't even like to drive in them anymore, not where there is five or six lanes and cars are bumper to bumper," he said. "I like my Highway 53 where three cars are a traffic jam."

NORTH WOODS THIRD QUARTER HONOR ROLL

A Honor Roll

Seniors

Brielle Anderson
Bethany Cotten
Kenzie Fox
Clayton Janssen
Morgan Malecha
Trevor Morrison
Olivia Niska
Nicole Olson
Karlyn Pierce
Nicole Roy
Kayla Towner
Michaela Tschida
Macy Viita

Juniors

Zachary Cheney
Brynn Simpson

Sophomores

Morgan Burnett
Tyler Chiabotti
Ty Fabish
Trey Gibson
Alex Hartway
Taylor Jones
Abby Koch
Michaela Luecken
Sean Morrison
Jacob Panichi
Kaya Tschida
Olivia Udovich
Brandie Walker

Freshmen

Cooper Antikainen
Kohen Briggs
Grace Koch
Angeline Lilya

Kaden Ratai

Karah Scofield
Elias Smith
Steven Sopoci
Emily Trip
Skyler Yernatich

Eighth Grade

Jonah Burnett
Annabelle Calavera
Addy Hartway
Rhonda Hoagland
Helen Koch
Riley Las
Madison Taylor
Trinity Vidal
Jacob Whiteman

Seventh Grade

Jacob Benoit
Addison Burckhardt
Alex Burckhardt
John Carlson
Aki Goodsky-Spears
Aidan Hartway
Sierra Schuster
Amber Sopoci

B Honor Roll

Seniors
Trevor Adelmann
Lauren Arvila
Zander Carr
Katrina Chapman
Daniel Crockett
Samantha Francke
Luke Gabrielson
Pierce Johnson
Amia Kisch
Wyatt Kneen

Cecilia Martinez

David Moes
Kylie Parson
Neiva Smith

Juniors

Jack Cook
Emily Fosso
Samuel Frazee
Olivia Fultz
Diana Hunter
Aubrey Koskovich
Joey Lakoskey
Andrew Peak
Elijah Squires
Cole Thiel
Zoe Trip
Cassandra Villebrun

Sophomores

Haley Bogdan
Ivy Chauklin
Bryce Chosa
Joshua Copeland
JessieAnne Drift
Christopher Fairbanks
Erik Hagen
Joseph Hoagland
Kadence Holland
Anneliese Isham
Timothy Lilya
Leona Lindgren
Nathan Palm
Cole Snidarich
James Towner

Freshmen

Jared Chiabotti
Thomas Debeltz
Kia Deegan
Hannah Kinsey

Garrett Lappi

Kiana LaRoque
Dillon Musakka
Anya Pearson
Jacob Swanson
Brian Swinson
Avery Thiel

Eighth Grade

Preston Anderson
Brandon Cook
Madison Dantes
Sean Drift
Emily Grah
Cynthia Kirkman
Haley Leinonen
Zefrym Mankowski
McKenna McCormick
Cadence Nelson
Victoria Olson
Jessy Palmer
Cole Rabas
Caleb Thom
Luke Will

Seventh Grade

Kalvyn Benner
Alauna Boshey
Rory Bundy
Ella Cornelius
Nia Gaskell
Nevada Gauthier
Talen Jarshaw
Mya Kinsey
Louie Panichi
Ethan Ploof
Victoria Ryan
Terrence Strong-Boshey
Richard Swinson
Lydia Trip



the *TIMBERJAY*

The Cook-Orr Timberjay is published weekly on Friday by The Timberjay, Inc. Offices are at 414 Main St., Box 636, Tower, MN 55790 [218-753-2950] and Box 718, Ely, MN 55731 [218-365-3114]. Fax number is 218-753-2916. E-mail address is editor@timberjay.com. Visit our website: www.timberjay.com.

Entered as Periodicals at the Post Office in Tower, Minnesota. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Timberjay, P.O. Box 636, Tower, MN 55790. Three award-winning community editions are published each week for Cook/Orr, Tower/Soudan, and Ely.

Publisher	Marshall Helmberger
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Cook-Orr Editor	David Colburn
Ely Editor	Keith Vandervort
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Official Newspaper:
City of Orr, City of Tower, Townships of Bearville, Crane Lake, Eagles Nest, Embarrass, Kugler, Vermilion Lake, Field, Morcom, Leiding, ISD 707.

Member: Minnesota Newspaper Association, Lake Vermilion Resort Association, Lake Vermilion Area Chamber of Commerce, Orr Chamber of Commerce, Ely Chamber of Commerce.

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COVID-19

Essentia Health reduces non-medical staff, restricts visitors

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

REGIONAL—Due to caution over the coronavirus pandemic, patients visiting any Essentia Health clinic are asked to attend their appointments alone. Limited exceptions include one additional person being allowed to accompany children, obstetric patients and adult patients who require assistance. Anyone accompany-

ing a patient to a clinic appointment is required to be healthy and at least 18 years old.

“This follows recent restrictions placed on visitors at our hospitals,” said Louie St. George III, Essentia Health media relations specialist. “These steps are geared toward slowing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting our patients, staff and the communities we serve.”

Also last week, Essentia Health announced

a reduction in non-medical staffing levels. “These plans include redeploying the workforce to best position Essentia Health to care for patients, while responding to the significant financial impacts caused by a reduction in services due to the pandemic,” St. George said.

As a result, about 500 employees who are not involved in direct patient care have been placed on a special administrative leave. St. George declined

to comment on how many employees were laid off at the Ely Clinic. In an email response to the *Timberjay* last week, he wrote, “We are going to refrain from addressing the topic further, beyond what was in the press release.”

Staffing levels will continually be evaluated and adjusted as needs evolve, according to St. George. Essentia is maintaining employees’ health insurance for the near term. “These employees

can take vacation time or paid time off to lessen the financial impact, as well as unpaid leave,” he said.

They also can apply for unemployment benefits, which have been expanded and extended by recent legislation. Essentia is offering access to employee-assistance programs like financial counseling, as well as other counseling resources.

“The decision to refocus our operations for the coming COVID-19

surge is difficult because we deeply appreciate the contributions of all our Essentia colleagues,” Dr. Peter Herman, Chief Medical Officer for Essentia, said in a statement. “We recognize and regret the hardship this uncertainty will have on our coworkers and their families.”

The health provider has about 14,500 employees.

COVID-19...Continued from page 1

depends crucially on communication and trust, and the state has really done a great job,” said Youde. “We’re getting clear messages from state officials and, very crucially, they are giving us the same message.”

Public health experts are giving Gov. Tim Walz credit for that consistency and for following the science as it continues to develop around the current pandemic. “Our health department and our governor didn’t wait for it to get bad,” said Kelly Searle, an epidemiologist

and assistant professor with the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities. “As soon as that first case was reported, we were already looking out at what had been happening elsewhere. We could start implementing measures pretty quickly in response,” said Searle.

Those measures included implementing a state of emergency on March 13, just one week after the first confirmed case in Minnesota. Five days later, Gov. Walz ordered the closure of the state’s schools. And on March 27, he issued a stay-at-home order through April 10.

While the number of infections is still rising in Minnesota, the rate of growth in new cases has been remarkably low compared to other states. In fact, the number of infections per capita in Minnesota is currently among the lowest of all 50 states, with just 210 confirmed infections per million people as of Wednesday. Statewide, 1,154 Minnesotans have been diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus since the first infection was confirmed on March 6.

That compares to more than 7,000 per million residents in New York, the state hardest hit by the virus. Across the country, the average number of infections, by state, per million population, was 1,150 as of this week.

That has state health officials feeling increasingly hopeful that the impact of the pandemic could be limited here in Minnesota. “Right now, we’re a month out, and we’re not trying to be care-free about it. But things are not out of control at this point,” said Searle.

The low number of infections in Minnesota does not appear to reflect a low number of tests,

although Minnesota has tested far fewer residents per capita (at 5,294 per million residents) than some of the hardest hit states. Across the country, health officials have conducted an average of 6,077 tests per million residents, although the vast majority of the tests are being done in states with much more severe outbreaks than seen in Minnesota so far. Minnesota’s testing rate is actually running above the levels in many other states in the nation’s mid-section. The average for ten Heartland states, from the Dakotas to Oklahoma, and Arkansas to Wisconsin, was 4,569 tests per million population as of this week.

“Minnesota seems to be doing a better job of mitigating transmission, at least at this point,” said Searle.

While health officials and the governor can take some of the credit for that, Youde said Minnesotans in general appear to have done a good job of complying with the governor’s recent stay-at-home order. “I live right by the beginning of I-35 in Duluth, and I’m struck by how few cars I see on the interstate these days. That’s proof that Minnesotans know

what the state is asking us to do and are taking these messages to heart.”

Youde said the governor’s response to the virus has helped build confidence. “Governor Walz, in particular, has also done a great job of showing us the data that he and other officials are using, empathizing with the significant burdens these restrictions are imposing, and acknowledging what we don’t know,” said Youde. “All of these efforts build and reinforce a sense of trust, and that makes it easier for all of us to do what needs to be done.”

Minnesota may have also caught a break with the timing of the pandemic’s arrival in the state, which largely coincided with spring break at many schools. That meant that most students haven’t gathered together since the first week of March, or about the time that the virus first arrived in Minnesota. Searle notes that St. Paul schools were closed a week before that due to a teachers’ strike. While all these events may have been unrelated, Searle said the timing was fortunate as it relates to Minnesota’s efforts to fight the spread of the

COVID-19 virus.

New projections raising hopes

And new projections issued this week by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington, suggest that Minnesota will largely avoid the kind of infection rates and deaths that earlier models had suggested.

The latest data suggests Minnesota will retain sufficient hospital and intensive care unit capacity to meet the anticipated need.

According to the new model, the state will hit its peak hospitalization need on April 23, with the need for hospitalization dropping sharply after that to near zero by Memorial Day. The model projects Minnesota will see a peak in daily deaths at 24 on April 26, before falling to zero by May 25.

While earlier models had suggested that Minnesota could see tens of thousands of deaths even with social distancing and other measures, the latest study now projects a total of 625 deaths in the state related to the pandemic.

But public health

officials note that these numbers don’t take into account the fact that many potential infections may never be recorded in official tallies. “What proportion of actual cases are we seeing right now? That’s something we’re still trying to figure out,” said Searle. “There is a lot of individual decision-making that either brings or doesn’t bring people to seek medical care,” said Searle. “There is also a lot of variation in terms of the response to the virus.”

Most of those infected will experience only relatively mild symptoms, which may not be severe enough to prompt them to seek out medical attention. And some, although the percentage is still uncertain, will experience no symptoms at all, meaning they’re unlikely to ever seek testing. “Generally, in only the most severe cases are people seeking medical care,” noted Searle.

Perhaps the best news for Minnesotans is that the worst of the pandemic could be in the rearview mirror by Memorial Day, meaning that many of the restrictions currently in place may be lifted just in time for summer.

STAY AT HOME...Continued from page 1

expire this today.

His order also extends the takeout-only requirement for bars and restaurants until May 4. The governor had previously indicated that his order would continue through May 1. The state’s schools were already set to remain closed through May 4 and the governor made no new announcement on school closures in his briefing on Wednesday, although most school officials are anticipating that the classes will be limited

to online-only through the end of the school year.

“What we are doing is working,” said Governor Walz. “We are taking this seriously, and we are staying home. While Minnesota is showing lower rates of infection than our peers across the country, now is not the time to let up or allow that trajectory to change. Updated federal guidance and our own public health experts are showing that if we keep staying home, we will save lives – which is

why I made the data-driven decision to extend the stay-home order until May 4.”

As the *Timberjay* reports this week, Minnesota has achieved the lowest rate of infection per capita of any state in the country – at least to date. News of the stay-at-home extension comes on the same day deaths linked to COVID-19 in Minnesota rose to 39 as of Wednesday, an increase of five since the day before. The total number of cases in the state jumped to

1,154, up 85.

Meanwhile, St. Louis County officials announced 11 new cases in the county on Wednesday, pushing the total to 28. And for the first time, county officials can’t find an obvious source for some of the recent infections, which suggests that the county is now experiencing community spread.

Most of the new cases in the county are confined to St. Ann’s Residence, an assisted living facility in Duluth, although county

officials have indicated cases have shown up in both rural and urban parts of the county.

Gov. Walz’s order to stay home is forecasted to continue to slow the spread of COVID-19, pushing out the peak of the disease to mid-July and allowing the state to continue key preparations for the pandemic. These preparations include building new hospital capacity and buying ventilators and masks, planning for how to protect those most at risk,

expanding testing, and freeing up time for health care giants like the Mayo Clinic to develop critical treatments for the virus.

While deaths and cases continued to rise, the number of people in intensive care – a key indicator of the state’s ability to manage the spread – stayed unchanged from Tuesday at 64, according to data posted by the state Health Department.

TOWER...Continued from page 1

discussed the appointment of an interim fire chief, Tower Clerk-Treasurer Victoria Ranua told the council that the state Fire Marshal had urged that the city to make a more permanent pick in order to restore stability to the department. A number of resignations within the department in the wake of Altenburg’s dismissal temporarily depleted department staffing.

Ranua said she and Olson had a more than two-hour-long phone conversation with the fire marshal, who provided both of them with valuable guidance and assurance about rebuilding the department while moving it in a new direction.

The rebuilding process began in earnest moments after Olson’s appointment, as the council approved

five new volunteers for the fire department. Those new volunteers include Shawna Gawboy, Victoria Ranua, Jessie Hinkel, Marshall Helmlinger, and Jordan Purkat.

Ranua noted that the training costs for untrained firefighters runs about \$1,600 per person, which would total \$6,400 for the four new recruits without the required Firefighter I and II training. Helmlinger, who has served on the Vermilion Lake Fire Department for 25 years, previously completed the required training.

Ranua noted that the city may also need to purchase turnout gear for new members, since most of the existing gear is currently two years past its expiration date and would likely need to be replaced

rather than repurposed for use by the new firefighters. Ranua noted that the city had \$11,000 in its budget already to provide for turnout gear replacement, although that’s unlikely to be sufficient to purchase a full set of gear for everyone.

In other emergency services action, the council approved a job posting for temporary civilian drivers for the city’s ambulance service. Ranua noted that Gov. Walz’s emergency declaration allows ambulance services to hire civilian ambulance drivers without the emergency medical training that’s normally required.

Ranua noted that as the COVID-19 virus begins to affect the local area, there will be a need for additional drivers, particularly if ambulance personnel are

exposed to the virus and either become ill or need to self-quarantine.

The posting, which the council approved unanimously, pegs the wage at \$14 an hour for the temporary drivers. Ranua said additional costs that might be incurred by the ambulance service during the emergency are likely to be reimbursable.

The council also agreed to hire Danielle Boettcher as an emergency responder. Interim ambulance co-director Dena Suikonen told the council that Boettcher had completed her emergency medical technician, or EMT, coursework but was still waiting to take her final test. She said it’s not clear when those tests will be offered given the current pandemic, which has prompted the suspen-

sion of virtually all classes in the state.

In addition, given the potential need to act quickly to hire ambulance drivers, the council also temporarily authorized city staff, the city’s ambulance commission representative, and the mayor to make hiring decisions for front-line emergency staff during the current pandemic.

In other action, the council:

► Unanimously approved a resolution declaring a local emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The action allows the city to take certain actions, such as closing the city hall to public use and the civic center to non-essential use. It also acknowledges that the requirements of addressing the pandemic

may exceed the resources of the city and potentially qualify the city for assistance.

► Approved on a 3-1 vote a request by Mayor Orlyn Kringstad to provide communications to the public via the city’s website. Those communications will, in some cases, be reviewed prior to posting by another city council member, the city attorney, and/or the clerk-treasurer.

The subject memo on the council notes that “misinformation and rumors are divisive and damaging but nevertheless are unfortunately inaccurately being spread in social media and dangerous public rhetoric.” Council member Sheldon Majerle voted against the motion.

ZUP'S...Continued from page 1

be ready to open by the middle of May.

"We will get some stuff that's going to run behind, knowing full well that's just the way the world is right now," Chaney said. "If we can get a few things early, then if a few things come late we're OK. We'll see what the weather brings and what the truckers bring but building-wise we're in real good shape."

Zupancich said he doesn't anticipate any problems filling the store with merchandise when the interior work is finished.

"Our warehouse has been pretty good to us," he said. "They're going to put that store on priority only because it's a new store and they want us to open it right. Right now, they're allocating a lot of product coming to us. They want



The new Zup's Market in Cook could be open next month.
photo by D. Colburn

us to have whatever it takes to keep it open."

However, both men acknowledged a wild card that could impact their timeline.

"We're hoping this COVID-19 is not going to slow the operation down," Zupancich said.

"I've worked (for DBS) for 25 years and we have never missed one date. I probably shouldn't even be saying that," Chaney said. "I hope this COVID thing isn't the thing that flips us over."

Chaney said he and his subcontractors are

doing their best to prevent any coronavirus-related delays.

Workers have their temperatures taken every morning and aren't allowed to enter the site if they're showing any signs of illness, Chaney said. Tools are sanitized every

morning and portable toilets are sanitized twice as often as required. Two hand-washing stations are available.

"It's hard to get hand sanitizer right now, except for our porta stations," Chaney said.

Face masks are encouraged but optional once workers are in the building. "If they feel comfortable inside they usually don't wear them," Chaney said. "We're trying to maintain that six-foot distance even inside. Now in construction you know that's not going to happen all the time. But we're doing the best we can with it."

Restricting access to the site adds an extra element of prevention. "Typically, we don't let anybody on the site," Chaney said. "The vendors even have to stay in their

rigs. We're trying to keep it as healthy and clean as we can."

The precautions appear to be successful thus far. Chaney said he hasn't had to send anyone home for possible illness, and two workers with cold-like symptoms who chose to stay away have since returned to work.

"We know everything in there is safe," Zupancich said. "We want to be sure it's kept safe, clean, and sterile. You're never going to see a more sterile store than that one. It's all brand new."

It's not only shoppers who are eager for the store to open. For many, Zup's is an employment opportunity.

"We have a lot of applications coming in," Zupancich said. "We're going to need people. That's getting very close."

ELY...Continued from page 1

ing," Marsnik advised. Despite a couple of garbled statements and pauses of silence, the light agenda was covered in less than an hour.

Ely students have been subject to distance learning protocols since last week as all schools in the state remain locked down as ordered by Gov. Tim Walz.

The roll out of the new distance learning procedures is now completed, although some technology obstacles, such as uneven access and intermittent and slow Internet service, have created problems for some students.

Erie said last week that he was surprised at the number of requests for Internet access devices from both students and staff—and that's an issue that school officials have sought to address. "We have a new access point in the parking lot for our Internet for those students who are having (connection) difficulty at home," said Erie. "That may be because of the number of people who are trying to connect, including parents who may be working from home. So they can come to our parking lot and connect to our high-speed Internet."

As many as 40 mobile wifi hot spots have been distributed to families in the district who don't have Internet service, according to Erie. "At least 80 devices, such as laptop computers or iPads, have been distributed to families," he said.

School buildings are essentially closed to the public for the duration of the shutdown. A critical care team of as many as 12 to 14 workers, including administration, custodial staff, para-professionals, bus drivers, and office staff report to work every school day on a rotating basis, according to Erie.

More than 300 breakfast and lunch meals were distributed to students on Monday. That service, as mandated by the Governor's executive order, is provided by district cafeteria staff. Families can pick up the meals on regular school days. Meals are delivered by transportation staff as needed.

Childcare for those essential employees in the community continues to be provided. Those numbers were as high as 14," Erie said. "The numbers have dropped a little bit, but

could fluctuate according to need." Just six students received the service on Monday.

Emergency, hospital, and first responder employees are entitled to have their children cared for by the school district during the school day. Other essential workers required to provide critical services in the community are also allowed to use the service.

Schoolboard members praised the staff and teachers for transitioning to the new learning procedures that are in place at least through Monday, May 4. While nobody would say it out loud, the 2019-2020 school year will likely end without students returning to school in person. Erie said he expects an update on school distance learning by the Department of Education by mid-week. "According to the Governor, the chances of school being back in session this year were 'slim' or 'not likely,'" he said. "We are preparing both ways for the end of the year. Right now we are very guardedly optimistic that (athletic) events will not be called off."

Athletic Director Tom Coombe said any school athletics will follow school being called back into session. "If school does not go back in session, spring sports seasons are likely over before they begin," he said.

Marsnik added, "From what I heard today, this coronavirus in Minnesota probably won't peak until the middle of May or the first part of June. As of right now, it doesn't look very good for schools to come back in session."

Building project

On a 5-1 vote, school board members approved a construction management contract with Kraus-Anderson Construction Co. for the \$20 million school facilities renovation and building project.

With a proposed timeline to present a bonding referendum to district property owners on Tuesday, August 11, board members are planning to vote on moving forward with the project at their next meeting on May 11.

Professional service providers, including the district's lobbying group and architect, were set to meet this week, according to Erie, to examine the project's scope and budget.

management contract will cost 2.25 percent of the total cost of the \$20 million project, assuming voters approve the funding later this year. The company will be paid \$9,500 either way for planning services associated with project—a provision that board member James Pointer questioned. "Why are we paying Kraus-Anderson to duplicate services?" he asked. "I thought we were paying ARI (Architectural Resources Inc.) and our lobbyist to do that. It seems like we don't really need the construction manager to go for the referendum."

He questioned why the facilities committee did not get input from other construction companies on project management services. "It seems like Kraus-Anderson jumped the gun on putting in their proposal."

Heidi Mann questioned the duplication of services that Kraus-Anderson proposed to provide in the contract. "I would hope that they are not taking the time to redo the (building) condition assessment that has already been done," she said. "At the same time, I imagine that a company like this wants to have that knowledge in their own heads and they are going to want their own lay of the land, so to speak, in order to move forward."

Marsnik noted that the contract proposal letter indicated that Kraus-Anderson's services included a "review" of the existing information. "I don't think they are going to go back, and I don't see that there would be any duplication here," he said.

Later in the meeting,

Marsnik noted that a legal opinion indicated "schools are not required to follow the competitive bidding process when contracting for professional services."

He also noted that board policy requires the hiring process of a project manager be reviewed by a facilities committee and brought before the full board for approval. The ISD 696 facilities committee consists of Erie, district facilities director Tim Leeson, and board members Marsnik and Tony Colarich.

Pointer voted against

hiring Kraus-Anderson as the district's building project manager.

Other business

In other action the board,

Accepted the retirement of Robin Erickson, Memorial school secretary, effective June 22,

Accepted the resignation of Darren Visser as head girls basketball coach and Amanda Vanderbeek as head dance team coach,

Approved the hiring of Maddie Swenson and Darren Visser as assistant girls track coaches,

Approved the fol-

lowing head coaches for the 2020-2021 school year, Cory Lassi, head football coach, Andrea Thomas, head volleyball coach, Jayne Dusich, head boys and girls cross country coach, Ben Johnson, head hockey coach, Paula Anderson, head Nordic skiing coach, and Tom McDonald, head boys basketball coach,

Heard from 6-12 principal Megan Anderson that 2020-2021 class schedule selection process for students, based on a six-period day, will begin soon.

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ELY MANUFACTURING

Wintergreen ramps up production of medical supplies

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – As of this week, the Centers for Disease Control is recommending that everyone wears a face mask while out in the public for essential needs, such as grocery shopping or going to the clinic or hospital.

Wintergreen Northern Wear has teamed up with local Ely community members to hand sew thousands of masks for local hospitals, nursing homes, essential workers, and community members, but they need more help.

“We have already donated

Sewers lined up, but material shortage continues

hundreds of masks to the Ely community,” said Wintergreen owner Sue Schurke. “We are looking for support to provide additional masks to Ely and neighboring communities. We now have over 2,000 requests for masks and about 60 home-sewers who have signed up to help make them. We are providing kits of 24 masks. We are happy to donate in bulk and also to individuals.”

In order to provide masks for local hospitals, health care facilities, care centers, and food shelves, Wintergreen is

asking for donations to cover the cost of labor and materials.

“We have reached our capacity for sewers at this time,” Schurke added, “but will post an announcement on Facebook if we can get more material. For those who have signed up or emailed us to sew, thank you. We are working on putting kits together and will let you all know as soon as possible when they are available for pick up. We are cutting and packaging sets as fast as we can.”

Wintergreen continues to

accept requests for masks. Go to the sign-up sheet at their website, www.wintergreen-northernwear.com, for more information. “You can also donate to our campaign to help cover costs for material and labor here as well,” she said.

See SUPPLIES...page 2B

Bria Schurke models one of the medical-grade masks being produced by Wintergreen and community sewers. submitted



While Babe Winkelman is best known for his hunting and fishing shows, he is also becoming known for his work educating the public about the dangers of tick-borne illnesses.
submitted photo of Winkelman with a muskie caught on Lake Vermilion

TINY DANGERS

Learn how to protect yourself from ticks

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

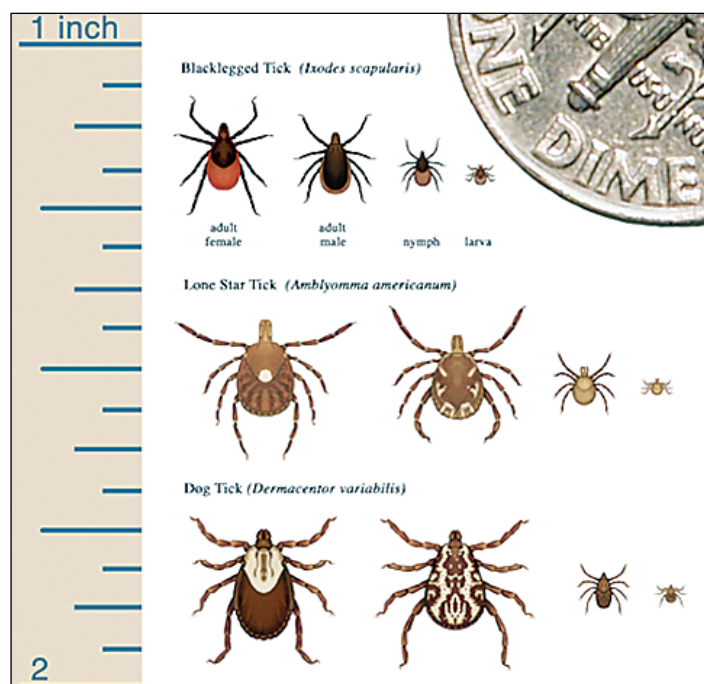
REGIONAL- Babe Winkelman is the only outdoorsman to be inducted into the Sports Legends Hall of Fame. Winkelman is well-known for his 40-plus year career on television, promoting fishing and hunting, as well as writing a nationally syndicated column of fishing, hunting and conservation that is read by millions.

But lately, Winkelman is on a crusade to teach everyone about something else – the dangers of tick-borne illnesses and how to prevent them. Black-legged (deer) ticks are now known as the primary vector to transmit Lyme disease to humans (as well as dogs). Other tick-borne diseases are becoming more common and can be transmitted by other tick species including the more common dog tick.

Tick season starts now. As soon as the snow begins to melt, ticks will become active, and local dog owners are already reporting finding black-legged ticks on their pets.

Black-legged ticks are tiny, and often find their way inside a home on dog fur. So even if you aren't active in the

Outdoorsman Babe Winkelman wants to keep fishermen, hunters, and everyone safe



outdoors, if you have a dog, you are at risk.

Winkelman was scheduled to come to Tower this week to give a free presentation on preventing and identifying tick-borne illness. He was invited by the local Lyme disease support group. The talk was canceled, due to COVID-19, but hopefully will be rescheduled at a later date.

Lyme disease is something that Winkelman is personally passionate about. Both he and

three of his daughters have been affected, and some have had life-altering effects from the disease.

Winkelman said he was one of the first people to warn of the dangers of Lyme after contracting it for the first time in the late 1980s. At that time he was a spokesperson for Estes Johnson, the makers of Deep Woods Off insect repellent.

“It just bounced off everyone's head,” he said, “at that time people thought ticks were

This picture shows each of the life stages of the black-legged tick: adult female, adult male, nymph, and larva. It also shows the relative sizes and patterns of the black-legged tick, Lone Star tick, and American dog tick.

photo courtesy of the Minnesota Department of Health

just a damn nuisance.”

In a quest to find answers to his own health issues, Winkelman worked with doctors from across the country.

“I wanted to find the truth,” he said. “I feel like I got a college education in about two months learning about Lyme disease and its symptoms.”

Today, much more is known about Lyme and other tick-related diseases.

Winkelman said that prevention is the first line of defense.

“The first thing I tell people is that it is not anyone else's job to educate you. You need to educate yourself for

See TICKS...page 2B

FAMILY FUN

Online Easter egg hunt on Saturday at Minnesota Discovery Center

CHISHOLM- The Minnesota Discovery Center (MDC) announced they will be offering a Virtual Easter Egg Hunt starting at 10 a.m. this Saturday. The Virtual Easter Egg Hunt will remain available online for viewing purposes indefinitely. Participants will have a chance to virtually tour the facility, hunt and count eggs, and win prizes, all for free. One special golden egg has been hidden; find it and win a special surprise.

Participants will be able to access the virtual tour online at <http://www.leedrick.com/easter/> starting at 10 a.m. on April 11. Additionally, participants will be encouraged to keep track of what they find by filling out an online form and submitting it on or before Monday, April 13 at 10 a.m. for a chance to win prizes!

Executive Director Donna Johnson stated, “Now more than ever, families need things to do to keep their kids busy at home, so it was nice to be able to partner with local organizations and businesses to put this event together. We would like to thank all those who contributed to make this happen. During challenging times, it's nice to know and see individuals and businesses step up to the plate to fill some of the voids as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.”

Special thanks to Thrivent Financial in Hibbing, Lowe's Home Improvement in Hibbing, Papa Murphy's Pizza in Hibbing, Leedrick Aerial Imaging, Grace Lutheran Church in Hibbing, Open Door Church in Hibbing and several other participating businesses for making this experience possible.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Ambulance subsidy agreement still under review

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

Commission asks for \$1.66 per mile subsidy payment for any transfer miles

TOWER- The Tower Area Ambulance Commission wants the city of Tower to contribute \$1.66 to the city's ambulance replacement fund for every mile an ambulance is driven on a non-emergency inter-hospital transfer. The commission approved that request on Monday, although it will still need to be ratified by the Tower City Council when it meets this coming Monday. The recommendation is significantly higher than the 55-cents-per-mile contribution that the city proposed at the April 6 meeting.

It was the first time the commission met using GoToMeeting, an online meeting app, but it did not run as smoothly as the prior week's city council meeting. Some were present at the regular meeting site at the Tower Civic Center, but over half were attending virtually. For those listening to the meeting online it was difficult to hear others speaking from the audience or even those at the conference table who weren't close to the microphone. Tower City-Clerk Treasurer Victoria

Ranua did her best to reiterate questions and answers, but when the discussion got heated it was difficult to follow at times.

The commission has yet to agree on a final ambulance subsidy contract to replace the one that expired at the end of 2019. The commission consists of representatives from Tower, Breitung, Kugler, Greenwood, Eagles Nest, Vermilion Lake, and Bois Forte, all of which are within the Tower ambulance service's coverage territory. The city and townships each contribute a per capita subsidy payment and Bois Forte makes a set donation each year. The subsidy payments are set aside and then used to help purchase new ambulances, as needed.

Former Ambulance Supervisor Steve Altenburg had asked the townships to double the existing \$15 per capita subsidy to \$30, starting in 2020, but none of the townships agreed, citing the lack of clear financial projections that showed why the increase was necessary.

At a special meeting in early

March, the commission agreed to retain the \$15 per capita payment for 2020 but did not agree on final language for the contract.

The largest sticking point has been the rate at which the city should reimburse the ambulance replacement fund to cover the mileage put on the ambulances during non-emergency transfers. Altenburg had initially said the city would add \$18.75 per transfer run (which averaged 263 miles each in 2019), which works out to about seven cents per mile. The revised agreement, presented in March, increased that amount to 22 cents a mile, but this amount did not pass muster for any of the ambulance commission, and they asked the city to come back with some figures to review.

At the March meeting, Eagles Nest Fire Chief and commission representative Larry McCray suggested a reimbursement rate of \$1.66 per transfer mile, computed based on the total of the subsidy payments made in a year, divided by the number of miles driven for 911

emergency calls.

On Monday, the city had come back with its own calculation based on the cost of purchasing each ambulance and its life expectancy in miles. The calculation did not include maintenance or staffing costs or equipment costs. This rate, which came in a report presented by Tower Council Member David Setterberg, totaled 52 cents a mile with the current fleet, but would increase to \$1.47 per mile when calculated with new ambulances.

The calculations by the city, put together by Setterberg, and ambulance interim co-directors Dena Suihkonen and Josh Villebrun, assumed the service kept three ambulances, with a five-year replacement schedule.

"Your math is correct but your assumptions are totally wrong," said McCray. "We aren't talking about the depreciation cost of the vehicle. We are talking about the city and their transfers not contributing what the townships are contributing based on the 911 call miles."

"The issue," McCray continued after a brief time when the meeting cut off due to technical issues, "is we felt that Tower should be paying back into the fund exactly what we pay [based on miles]."

McCray said that the city's calculations showed that the subsidy and contributions from the city would fund the purchase of a new ambulance approximately every five years without the need for any transfer call revenue. But McCray's calculation is likely to be impacted by the city's recent decision to suspend accepting transfers in most cases, at least for the foreseeable future.

Setterberg said their calculations showed if the ambulance service stopped doing transfers, they would need the \$15 per capita subsidy to fund future ambulance purchases. He said the city has about \$100,000 in additional costs to outfit each ambulance with

See **AMBULANCE**, page 3B

SUPPLIES...Continued from page 1B

CDC advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age two, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

The masks are based on the most recent CDC guidelines for masks worn by the public. They are designed to reduce droplet distribution, but they do not prevent COVID-19 inhalation.

Cloth face coverings should:

- ▶ Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face,
- ▶ Be secured with ties or ear loops,
- ▶ Include multiple layers of fabric,
- ▶ Allow for breathing without restriction,
- ▶ Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

According to CDC guidelines, face coverings should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use. Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing their face covering and wash hands immediately after removing.

Medical gowns for Ely-Bloomenson

Meanwhile, Wintergreen finished up their first order of 100 medical gowns for the Grand Marais hospital this week and started on an order of 200 gowns for the Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital.

"We are using the gown pattern we received from North Shore Health Hospital with just a few changes," Schurke said. "We may be making another 100 gowns for the Grand Marais facility and are in contact with other healthcare providers."

She said Wintergreen is looking for a supplier to provide them with Level 3 quality material for Level 2 medical gowns. "It has been very difficult for small manufacturing companies like ourselves to get the materials that we need to make vital PPE (personal protective equipment) for

our local hospitals, even though we have the tools and the team to make readily-available products at a much faster turn-around time for our local hospitals when compared to larger international companies," Schurke said.

"We can make high quality medical gowns at a competitive price, but again, it is very difficult to get the material to do this. We have completely shifted our production to making PPE and are even helping to improve standard designs. If we can get the material we need, we can continue to provide well-paying jobs and support the Ely economy."

Wintergreen is looking for guidance and support from state and local government to help the company become an active part of this vital supply chain for medical providers. "We have the team, the tools, and the talent to make high quality reusable gowns, the missing piece of



the puzzle is the raw material," Schurke said. "Everyone we have called is out of stock or has significantly increased their prices. We are eager to make a larger impact for both our community and health care providers."

TICKS...Continued from page 1B

the sake of your family. You don't want someone to get misdiagnosed."

Ticks can be found all over, not just in woody areas, he said, and are often found on lawns and sports fields. And ticks are a danger from early spring to late fall.

Winkelman traces most of his family's tick exposure to turkey hunting trips in the Midwest, in the spring. And while he thought he knew enough about proper protection, it turned out he was missing some vital information.

"We didn't know we had to treat our clothing," he said. "We were still covered with ticks every day."

Winkelman said the advice about wearing light-color clothing so that ticks would be more visible is not that useful, because it doesn't prevent ticks from crawling up the inside of your clothing.

Protect yourself

Winkelman said two products are important for

your tick prevention toolkit.

Picaridin is an insect repellent that is safe to apply to skin and repels ticks for up to eight hours. DEET is a more popular insect repellent, but Winkelman said he prefers Picaridan because he believes it is more effective. Picaridan also repels mosquitos and other biting insects. Research studies indicate both are about equally effective against ticks.

Winkelman advises people to spray Picaridan, which is a naturally-based repellent, on all areas of their skin that are not covered with clothing that has been treated with his second recommended product, permethrin.

Permethrin is a repellent that is applied to clothing, not the skin. It is a natural insecticide, derived from the chrysanthemum flower, but often synthetically produced. It is not toxic when applied to skin, as it only lasts for minutes on the skin, but

when applied in a solution to clothing it binds to the fabric and will stay effective for long periods of time. Outdoors clothing with the "Insect Shield" label is treated with permethrin that will last through 70 washes. You can even send your own favorite articles of clothing out to be treated professionally.

There are also spray solutions you can purchase to easily treat your own clothing that will keep them protected over multiple washes.

"Start with your socks," he said. "Spray them down and let them totally dry, and then turn them inside out, spray again, and let them dry."

Winkelman also treats his pants, long underwear, cap, shirts, gloves, and the outside of his shoes.

"If a tick crawls on permethrin-treated clothing, it will fall off dead within five or ten minutes," he said.

"None of my family members have had any tick bites since we've learned how to treat our clothing and skin properly," he said.

"We were out turkey hunting and saw ticks crawling everywhere," he said. "Turned out we were standing on a nest of ticks. We watched them crawl on our shoes and then fall

off dead."

Tick bites

Daily tick checks are the simplest way to prevent tick-borne diseases. Ticks do not wash off in the shower. Be sure to inspect your armpits, back of knees, neck and ears, and around your waistband.

People also need to be very careful removing any tick that is attached to their skin.

"You need to slowly pull the tick straight out," he said, "using a pair of tick tweezers or long-nosed tweezers."

The important thing, he said, is not to squeeze the tick, which would cause any bacterium or viruses in the tick to travel into the opening in the skin, and to be sure to remove the tick's head, which can be embedded in your skin.

Pets should be treated to prevent them from contracting tick-borne illness, as well as preventing them from bringing live ticks into the home. Winkelman said he has seen very good results using the Bayer Seresto brand tick collar. There are also many brands of tick medications that protect dogs available at your local veterinary clinic.

Tick-borne diseases

People can be infected with Lyme disease whether or not they develop the characteristic bull's-eye rash, which used to be considered diagnostic.

Winkelman said he has only developed a rash one time from a tick bite that gave him Lyme disease, and in that case, the rash was rectangular in shape. The other two times he didn't get a rash but did test positive for Lyme.

Winkelman said he feels the medical and insurance establishment has been willing to recognize issues related to chronic Lyme disease, which can be life-altering. "It is horrific what chronic Lyme does," he said, noting that one of his employees died from complications of chronic Lyme.

In addition, he said, there are many other tick-borne illnesses that are just starting to be diagnosed and understood. His website has links to home tick testing kits (to test the actual tick for pathogens).

"The responsibility lies on you for the health of your family," he said. Winkelman said there is some promising news on the horizon, including a rapid test that can be done at a doctor's office and gives results in 15 minutes. There are also some new treatments being tested

that may help prevent the spread of the disease by killing the pathogen in wild mice, that are vectors which spread the pathogen to ticks.

Resources

▶ Permethrin-treated clothing is available. Look for outdoors clothing with the "Insect Shield" label. Mail in your clothes to have them professionally treated to repel ticks: <https://www.insectshield.com/IS-Your-Own-Clothes-P338.aspx>.

▶ For details on how to treat your clothes and shoes with permethrin at home visit <https://www.winkelman.com/tick-borne-illness-information-center/>. Permethrin sprays are available locally at many area retailers; look for the Sawyer brand.

Please note: Permethrin is toxic for cats, so cats must avoid contact with permethrin-treated fabrics.

▶ Picaridan is available locally at many retailers; look for Sawyer brand repellents. It is considered safe for ages six months and older, including pregnant women, and does not damage plastic or synthetic coatings.

▶ To purchase a specially designed tick removal tweezer: <https://tickease.com/product/tickease-tick-removal-tweezers/>.

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REGIONAL-

Keeping track of what businesses, stores, and restaurants are open or closed or offering limited access or hours is a huge problem during the coronavirus crisis.

The *Timberjay*

has a new feature on our website, www.timberjay.com, to help businesses connect with their customers during this time. The self-service platform makes it easy for any business, or their staff, to enter their own data and get it into the searchable listing.

The new feature is called "What's Open" and is located prominently on the *Timberjay* home page, just under the featured stories.

Businesses just need to click on "Add My Business" and enter their contact information, and then the information about their business. The listing is controlled by the business, and can be updated at any time. There is an option to add special features, such as a downloadable menu, for a nominal fee. The listings are both mobile and web-friendly, so they view well on both a cell phone and computer.

We are starting to add new businesses every day, and hope that all our area businesses will take advantage of this free service.

Anyone with questions on how to add their own listing, can call us at 218-753-2950.



Clarification

Last week's story on voter fraud allegations against a Tower resident may have left the wrong impression about the county's willingness to investigate the claim. In fact, St. Louis County Elections Supervisor Phil Chapman told the *Timberjay* that his office did investigate the matter and determined that John Burgess did not commit voter fraud or vote improperly as alleged by Vermilion Lake Township resident Carol Pratt.

According to Chapman, Burgess provided his office with the necessary documents to prove his residency. "We looked into it and as far as we are aware, Mr. Burgess did not commit voter fraud," said Chapman.

The *Timberjay* appreciates the opportunity to clarify this story.

AMBULANCE...from page 2B

equipment. Suihkonen noted that the advanced life-support equipment in the ambulance has given them the ability to give more state-of-the-art care to heart attack patients. "So far this year we have had three active heart attacks, and the Zoll heart monitor has diagnosed them and allowed us to get the patients safely to Duluth," she said.

The new ambulance will also have a "self-loading" cot, which means the ambulance crew does not need to lift the cot into the back of the ambulance, a task that can be difficult, Suihkonen said. Vermilion Lake Supervisor and commission member Phil

Anderson noted that the city's calculations were assuming driving each ambulance for the optimal number of miles (150,000 for gas engine or 250,000 for diesel), which is theoretical, and wondered what happened if the ambulances did not last as long as predicted. The Tower ambulance service is in the process of replacing a 2011 diesel rig with approximately 150,000 miles on it.

Commission members from Eagles Nest, Breitung, Vermilion Lake, and Bois Forte all voted in favor of a motion to set the transfer mile reimbursement rate at \$1.66 per mile. Tower

member Rachel Beldo abstained. Kugler and Greenwood did not have a representative present at the meeting.

Current ambulance activity

The COVID-19 stay-at-home orders have drastically decreased the number of ambulance calls, and in addition, the service has stopped accepting non-emergency transfer calls. Calls for the month of March totaled 30, down from the totals in March of last year. The first six days in April only showed three calls, and two of them were

lift-assists, with no transport needed, according to Suihkonen.

Ambulance Commission member Jeff Damm, from Fortune Bay, noted the closure of the hotel and casino has caused call numbers to drop dramatically, along with fewer calls for vehicle accidents, due to fewer cars out on the road.

New ambulance delayed

Ashutdown, due to COVID-19, at a facility that needs to perform testing on the new ambulance's sliding side door, is delaying the delivery of

the service's new ambulance, which was ordered in December 2018. The sliding door provides additional safety measures and is becoming standard on most new ambulances. There is no significant cost saving in switching back to the swing-out style door, and no guarantee that making that change would speed up the delivery. The timeline for delivery is still uncertain.

Obituaries and Death Notices



Reino W. Lahti

Reino W. Lahti, 75, died of natural causes on Saturday, March 28, 2020, at his home in Field Township (Cook). A memorial service will be planned at a later date. To continue the support of a local cause Reino cared deeply about, memorials may be sent to the Cook Community Food Shelf, 124 5th St SE, Cook, MN 55723. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

Reino was born on Nov. 19, 1944, in Carlton, to Eino and Kathryn Lahti. He graduated from Cloquet High School in 1963 and earned a bachelor's degree in floriculture from the University of Minnesota in 1968. In 1976, Reino and Kathleen moved to Field Township, where they raised their four children. Reino found great joy in the gardens, yard, field and forest that he called home; there was no other place in the world he'd rather be. For as much as he loved his home, his grandchildren were his greatest joy. Through his boundless love and the playful way he engaged them, he instilled hope, compassion, love, acceptance and forgiveness. He was a proud Finn, gifted storyteller, and staunch Democrat.

Reino is survived by his children, Will (Hanna) Mannikkolahti, Tanya, Jed and Mary Robin (Matt), and their mother, Kathleen Lahti; grandchildren, Sierra (Terho), Makaio, Eli, Micah, Helen, Iris, Reino and Fanni; sisters, Evie (Clyde) Luttinen and Darlene Woodward; brother, Marvin Lahti; nieces, nephews, cousins and countless friends. Reino is also survived by the Elverum family, dear to his heart, Darlene, Ian (Pam), Poul (Ashley), Orion (Alia) and Mariya (Dave) Buxton; their children and grandchildren, Brittany (Alex), Michael (Anna), Cooper, Lily, Emerson, Seraphina, Lochlan, Levi and Grayson.

Reino was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Ralph and Wesley; and cherished grandson, born on his birthday in 2001, Will Schlotec (Willy J.) who he missed greatly.

Ann E. Silda

Ann E. "Granny Annie" Silda, 75, of Embarrass, passed away on Sunday, April 5, 2020, at her home with family by her side. A celebration of life will be held at a later date and burial will be in the Waasa Cemetery. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by two daughters, Leann Johnson of Hibbing and Tammy Aho of Virginia; numerous grandchildren, including Crystal and Grant Roy who lived with her; several great-grandchildren; and longtime best friend, Sue Skule.

Robert Baier Sr.

Robert "Bob" Baier Sr., 95, of Ely, passed away on Tuesday, March 31, 2020, at Boundary Waters Care Center in Ely. Funeral services will not be held at this time. Burial will be in the Veterans Section of the Ely Cemetery. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his children, Elizabeth (Donald) Petersen of Austin, Robert (Sheryll) Baier Jr. of Ely, Patricia (Raymond) Marsnik of Ely and Barbara (Steven) Fultz of Babbitt; 12 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren; several brothers- and sisters-in-law; and several nieces and nephews.

Derek N. Klingfus

Derek Nathan Klingfus, 35, crossed over from medical complications on Monday, March 30, 2020, at St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth. Due to the current shelter in place mandates, a memorial service will be held at a later date. Memorials are preferred and may be sent to Vermilion Funeral Home, PO Box 445, Tower, MN 55790. Family services are provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower.

He is survived by his mom, Deaune Dehler

Klingfus; sister, Danielle (Aaron) Nickolson; niece and nephew, Chezne and Ethan Nickolson, all of Ely; dad, David (Kim) Klingfus Jr.; half-brother, Ian Klingfus; half-sister, Maggie Klingfus, all of Austin; maternal grandfather, Clark Dehler of Aurora; great-aunt, Carol (Harold) Siefert of Woodbury; special friend, Jen Hubbard and her children, Logan, Maddie, Kaylee and Greyson of Gilbert; aunts, uncles, cousins, extended family and friends, including lifelong friends, Billy Cogger and Sigurd Noyes.

Frances B. Siskar

Frances "Fran" Barbara Miletich Siskar, 97, of Gilbert, died on Monday, March 30, 2020, at Waterview Woods. She will be interred at a graveside service at Lakeside Cemetery in Biwabik with Fr. Peter Lambert officiating and will be honored at a celebration of life ceremony at a later date. Local arrangements are by Ziemer-Moeglein-Shatava Funeral Home in Gilbert.

She is survived by four of her children, Frank (Kathy) Siskar of Tower, John (Margaret) Siskar of Hood River, Ore., Marjorie (James) Tyacke of California and Mary Waseleski of Nevada; sisters-in-law, Jan Miletich and Molly Siskar; eight

grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren and their families; and many treasured nieces, nephews and friends.

Benjamin R. Kaiser

Benjamin "Ben" R. Kaiser, 37, died on Monday, March 30, 2020, from injuries sustained in a utility side-by-side vehicle accident near his home in Gilbert. Those who knew and loved Ben will find solace that he spent the last day of his life outdoors doing what he loved to do. A memorial service will be held at Holy Spirit Catholic Church at a later date. Family services are provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his children, Joseph (11), Jack (9) and Sophie (8) who reside with their mother, Katie, in Eveleth; parents, Bob and Theresa of Crane Lake; sister, Megan (James) Devine and niece and nephews, Zoe, Otto, Wyatt and Boden, of Ely; aunt, Barbra Kaiser of Virginia; uncles, Bill Kaiser of Woodbury and

Bill Matos of Eveleth; and cousin, Ashley Leonard of Waconia.

Jesse A. Giroux

Jesse Alan Giroux, 47, of Makinen, passed away on Sunday, March 29, 2020. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Arrangements are with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his wife, Kaija Saukko Giroux of Makinen; parents, Gary and Kaye Giroux of Cook; sister, Jennifer (Cal) Peterson of Delano; nephews, Nicholas (Amanda), Jordan and Trent Peterson; niece, Amber Peterson; great-nephew, Henry Peterson; mother-in-law, Noreen Saukko of Tower; brother-in-law, Matti (Paula) Saukko of Iron; aunts, Mary (Bob) Johnson of Two Harbors and Lynn (Darrel) Ion of Columbus; several cousins; and former wife, Mona Kasola.

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Outdoors

Our lives in the Northwoods



ENTERTAINMENT DURING PANDEMIC

Spring feeder frenzy

The season is upon us, just in time for us to stay-at-home to enjoy it

LOSTLAKESWAMP—A funny meme showed up on the email feed for the Ely Field Naturalists the other day and it got me thinking about my own best source of entertainment during this time when all of us, to one degree or another, are in a kind of quarantine.

The bird feeders are always stocked around our house, but I'm putting out a bigger spread than usual right now. That's not just because we're not going anywhere these days, so we're spending more time watching. It's because the spring migration is in full swing, which means there's something new to see almost every day.

Lately, it's been the juncos that have dominated our attention. They're coming through in huge numbers right now, so I've been putting most of the morning smorgasbord out on the snow-covered ground, where they prefer to feed.

Actually, I spread most of it underneath a thicket of hazelbrush that sits within a few feet of our feeders. I'm not a fan of hazelbrush and I've been tempted so many times over the years to clear out this patch, but I've always held off. Birds are constantly alert to predators, particularly hawks, and this thicket provides the perfect protection since no hawk can easily penetrate such a tangle. I've decided

Above: A male purple finch warbles for a mate amidst all the recent activity.

Right: My favorite Internet meme of the week.

Lower right: A fox sparrow feeds on cracked corn.

wildlife photos by M. Helmberger

its benefits outweigh my aversion to the stuff.

For the sparrows, I feed mostly cracked corn mixed with about a half cup of thistle seed. You can also mix in some of the cheap wild bird mixes this time of year if the thistle seed is to spendy for you. I normally don't buy the stuff because it's of little interest to most of our resident birds. But the juncos, sparrows, and other ground-feeders that are coming through right now seem to eat all but the millet seed which, unfortunately, tends to dominate the really cheap bird mixes.

Mixed in with the throngs of juncos, are a handful of beefy fox sparrows— among the largest and rustiest of our sparrows— along with the more diminutive tree sparrows, which are easily identified by their rusty caps and light gray chests marked with their mid-chest single dark spot. A few redwinged blackbirds

See **FEEDER...**pg. 5B

People in quarantine watching their bird feeders



Above: A flock of juncos feed under the protection of a hazel thicket.

Left: Snowshoe hares are regulars around the feeder as well.

Right: Two female purple finches.



DEER

Extended deep snow made winter severe for whitetails

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
Managing Editor

R E G I O N A L — Months of deep snow this winter spelled trouble for the region's whitetail deer population and hunters are likely to see the effects of that tough winter later this fall. Tom Rusch, Tower Area Wildlife Manager for the Department of Natural Resources, predicts that bag limits for the 2020 firearms deer season will be "very conservative" this year.

Wildlife managers will meet later this month to determine antlerless harvest limits for this year.

While this year's winter was a tough one due to extended deep snow cover, temperatures proved milder than average and that helped keep the DNR's winter severity index, or WSI, from reaching levels experienced in some of the toughest winters in recent years. Even so, with WSI readings ranging from 132 around Eveleth to 166 in Tower, this was among the top ten toughest winters for deer over the past half century. In a typical winter in the Tower area, the WSI will reach about 110-120. Anything over 150 is considered severe.

The WSI adds a point for each day with a below zero F temperature and a point for every day with 15 inches or more of snow on the ground as measured in a mature aspen stand.

In a more typical winter, snow depth and temperatures will add similar numbers of points. This year, however, it was snow depth that dominated the index. Of the 166 points tallied this year in the Tower area, snow depth accounted for 106 points, compared to just 52 points for temperature.

"Snow depth was the main driver for winter severity this winter," stated Rusch. "More than 100 snow-days with greater than 15 inches is a brutal winter for deer."

Whitetail deer are at the northern fringe of their range in far northern Minnesota, and that means winter conditions can have a major impact on deer survival. "Since 2008, we have had five winters over 150 WSI at Tower resulting in a plummeting population," said Rusch. "From 1998 to 2010, we had just one winter greater than 150 WSI, resulting in a population explosion."

While malnutrition

See **WSI...**pg. 5B

Outdoors briefly

Apply soon for bear permits

REGIONAL — If you're hoping for a bear hunting permit this year, you'll need to apply by Friday, May 1. Applications for the 2020 season should be submitted online or via telephone at 888-665-4236.

A total of 3,575 licenses are available in 13 permit areas. Bear licenses cost \$44 for residents and \$230 for nonresidents, and there is a \$5 application fee. The season is open from Sunday, Sept. 1, through Sunday, Oct. 18.

Lottery winners will be notified by June 1. The deadline to purchase licenses awarded by lottery will be Thursday, Aug. 1. Any remaining unpurchased licenses will be available over the counter starting at noon on Aug. 5.

Overall, bear permit numbers for quota areas, which include northeastern Minnesota, remain mostly unchanged this year to allow bear population numbers to gradually increase and support a robust bear population.

State forest road closures

REGIONAL — Spring thaw and saturated soils from heavy rainfall last fall are negatively impacting

road and trail conditions on state lands, according to the Department of Natural Resources. This may affect Minnesotans who live near these areas and use these roads for essential travel or to get outdoors near their homes.

Numerous roads and trails in state forests, state parks, recreation areas, and wildlife management areas across northern Minnesota are closed temporarily because they are not firm enough to support vehicle traffic without causing damage. Depending on weather conditions, the temporary closures could remain in effect until sometime in May. Details about road and trail closures are available at mndnr.gov/closures.

"We ask that people use good judgment, obey the closures, and check the DNR website for updates," said Dave Schuller, state land programs supervisor for the DNR's Forestry Division.

Users should pay particular attention to state forest road closures. Forest roads and trails are listed individually, rather than listing a general road closure for the whole forest. Roads that can handle vehicle traffic will remain open but may be restricted by vehicle weight. Signs will be posted at entry points and parking lots.

WSI...Continued from page 4B

and starvation are the most direct causes of deer mortality during severe winters, the conditions particular to this winter also left deer more vulnerable to predators, particularly wolves. "This winter was mild by northern St. Louis County standards," noted Rusch. "But, the stretch of 40-50 degree temperatures in early March followed by cold weather created a thick crust. This tipped the balance in favor of predators. Wolves, bobcats and coyotes could stay on top while deer broke through the crusted layer."

The tough winter is also expected to reduce fawn production this spring. "Does in a compromised physical condition give birth to fawns in poor condition that then have high mortality rates," said Rusch. "Deer populations will decline as a result and hunter success will likely decrease this fall."

Any recovery will require a return to mild or moderate winters, notes Rusch. "And it takes time," he said. "Fawn production will improve following milder winters and the population will rebound."

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST from NOAA weather

Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
43 23					48 23					38 19					34 17					34 14				
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.
03/30	50	28	0.00		03/30	52	16	0.00		03/30	50	26	0.00		03/30	54	25	0.00		03/30	53	23	0.00	
03/31	53	19	0.00		03/31	43	29	0.00		03/31	51	21	0.00		03/31	54	19	0.00		03/31	54	14	0.00	
04/01	50	22	0.00		04/01	51	35	0.12		04/01	51	20	0.00		04/01	46	25	0.00		04/01	53	19	0.00	
04/02	42	31	0.04		04/02	41	9	0.20	1.4"	04/02	44	26	0.00		04/02	52	34	0.13		04/02	45	30	0.20	
04/03	51	36	0.07		04/03	41	13	0.00		04/03	52	34	0.21		04/03	43	19	0.00		04/03	40	22	0.00	
04/04	41	10	0.15	1.5"	04/04	50	20	0.00		04/04	41	10	0.22	1.5"	04/04	37	9	0.00		04/04	38	9	0.12	1.2"
04/05	38	10	0.00		04/05	50	35	0.07		04/05	37	9	0.00		04/05	52	25	0.00		04/05	39	17	0.00	
Total			1.82	94.4"	YTD Total			2.33	65.2"	YTD Total			2.70	75.5"	YTD Total			NA	NA	YTD Total			1.95	64.4"

FEEDERS...Continued from page 4B

are back as well, along with the usual numbers of purple finches. In fact, the purple finches have been around off and on throughout the winter, with the males adding their dash of wine purple to feeders otherwise sorely lacking that color, given that pine grosbeaks were a disappointing no-show this winter.

Of course, birds aren't the only thing that provides entertainment around the feeder these days. With their winter cone caches mostly depleted, we've got at least a dozen red squirrels here most of the day. Since I learned to accept them as part of the entertainment package, I see their antics in a whole new light. And our resident snowshoe hares are regulars as well... they like the cracked corn, too. Watching the high-strung red squirrels and the jumpy hares interact can be hilarious. The other day, a squirrel and a hare startled each other, sending both of them leaping into the air over each other. They landed in a heap and both took off in opposite directions. Somehow, purely by accident, I caught the incident with my camera, and the results are at right.

In many ways, the current stay-at-home order here in Minnesota is just fine by me. In fact, if I didn't have a news-



paper to put out every week, I'd probably stay out here in the woods all the time. As long as the wild neighbors keep offering up their daily dose of amusement, there's no reason to go anywhere else.

Above: A startled red squirrel leaps into the air, startling a snowshoe hare that was feeding next to it.



Right: The startled hare leaps as well.



NOTICE ELY FOOD SHELF CHANGES

On April 15 the Ely Area Food Shelf will be doing their monthly food distribution from the Vermillion Community College.

Approach will be from 17th Avenue and Camp Streets. Watch for signs and follow the directions of volunteers directing traffic.

We will be taking your name in one area and then drive to another to pick up your food. You will load it into your own car for zero contact with volunteers.

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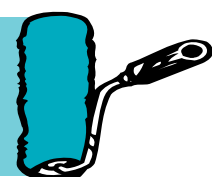
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