

**White-throated
sparrows...See /4B**



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EXTREME WEATHER

Prolonged polar plunge poses problems

Ten days below zero: Longest cold snap in 50 years

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— For months, residents of the North Country were left wondering if Old Man

Winter would ever arrive. But when he decided to pay the region a visit, beginning Feb. 5, it seemed for a time he'd never leave, and that's left some homeowners and communities struggling to keep

their water flowing.

"This is called the other shoe dropping," said state Climatologist Pete Boulay this week as a per-

See...POLAR pg. 9

A National Weather Service reporting station, at left, near Snowbank Lake on Saturday. Frosty eyebrows Saturday morning, right, were the result of a morning hike at -42 degrees.



OUTDOOR RECREATION

For the love of sled dogs

Couple met through mutual bond in training and mushing canines

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

REGIONAL- Ashley Thaemert and Ryan Miller are both looking forward to hitting the trail on Sunday for Ely's WolfTrack Classic. The two met through a mutual love of sled dogs, though Miller is certainly later to the game.

Mushing might seem very romantic, wearing a fur-trimmed parka and driving a sled through the snowy woods with a team of dogs barking in the lead. But the reality of caring for and training these four-legged athletes is a different story. There is daily care and feeding, veterinary care, yard cleanup, and of course the time needed to establish a bond with each dog, learn each dog's strengths and weaknesses, and then train the dogs to run as a team.

The story of dedicated
See...LOVE pg. 12



Ashley Thaemert rounds a curve during the 2021 John Beargrease Sled Dog Mid-Distance Race last month. photos by P. Wattering

COUNTY SCHOOLS

ISD 2142 hit with phishing scheme

Payroll documents
fraudently obtained

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- ISD 2142 fell prey to a common online phishing scheme on Feb. 4 when a scammer posing as Superintendent Reggie Engebritson used a fraudulent email to obtain the W-2 forms of 677 district employees.

Engebritson sent a letter to staff the same day, informing them of the data breach.

"Earlier today, a phishing scam targeted the W-2 information of all school district employees,"

See...HACK pg. 10

CITY OF ELY

Ely thrift store shut in wake of drug allegations

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – The Ely Drop and Shop secondhand retail shop was shut down last Thursday by the Ely City Council, which yanked the operation's business license during an emotionally-charged public hearing. The closure was triggered by criminal charges against one of the business's owners for allegedly selling methamphetamines on the premises.

The council voted 6-0, with one member absent, to revoke the retail store's business license and ordered

See...ELY pg. 11

Mushers, volunteers ready for 2021 WolfTrack Classic

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY - The roster is full for the Ely WolfTrack Classic sled dog race on Sunday. By early this week, 39 mushers and their dog teams were on the way to Ely for the 13th annual event.

"We have 21 six-dog teams and 18 eight-dog teams scheduled," said race coordinator Ellen Cashman. "And 26 of those 39 teams are just coming off the John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon, so we have lots of top-notch competitors this year."

Spectators not allowed due to COVID-19



The first racer will pull up the anchor hook at precisely 9 a.m. Sunday from the Ely Softball Fields.

The race is running in accordance with the Stay Safe Minnesota COVID-19 guidelines and the Wolf Track Classic

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan that limited the number of teams to 40.

"We had a total of four team scratches," Cashman said. "Some teams decided to be removed from the wait list, and we just went down the list to the next name. We are not adding any more teams, but teams can scratch or change from the eight-dog to the six-dog race up until the mandatory musher meeting on Saturday

See...RACE pg. 12

Snowflakes falling, shovels throwing...

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Community notices

2020 Annual Lights of Love Campaign

COOK- On behalf of the Virgie Hegg Hospice Partners board of directors, we wish to say thank you to all those who contributed to the 2020 campaign. While the Annual Lights of Love Campaign looked much different from other years, we are happy to report it was a success. LOL has successfully raised over \$5,500. Per the LOL tradition, trees were placed in the communities of Cook and Orr. Instead of a public gathering with caroling and coffee an' to follow, VHHP had a virtual Lights of Love ceremony which can be viewed on the VHHP website and Facebook page. Thank you to all the volunteers who came together to provide and decorate the trees and those who made donations and memorials.

VHHP is here to help hospice patients and their families as well as hospice eligible patients and their families. If you would like more information about VHHP, who we are, and what we do, please see our website at www.vhhp.org. We have a Hearts for Hospice fundraiser currently happening within our community. Please make a donation at a participating business. Our annual membership drive will begin in May; watch for details to come out soon.

"ReVive" First Thursdays returns

VIRGINIA- ReVive Virginia announces the return of a popular art walk in a new and more frequent form. First Thursdays QC is a monthly event that will pair local businesses with local artists, musicians and performers to celebrate the region's creative community and small businesses.

The first First Thursday QC is May 6, starting at 4 p.m. Both artists and businesses can sign up to participate at <http://tinyurl.com/1stThursQC-signup>. The cost for businesses is \$25 to be a one-time or occasional host, or \$15 per month for an annual commitment. Funds will be used to promote the host locations through social and traditional media advertising.

Businesses and artists will "choose" each other; each group will have a list of participants and make connections to their host or artist.

"Some businesses may choose to have special discounts, food, beverage or candy tastings, or other activities when they host an artist," Olivanti explained. "Artists may of course sell their works, but they could also have a demonstration, reading or musical performance. It would be great to get the whole Quad Cities community involved. It is our hope that restaurants will offer First Thursday specials to further encourage residents and visitors to get out and shop, dine and have fun in our cities."

Questions about First Thursdays QC may be directed to firstthursdaysqc@gmail.com.

Cook Care Center public vaccination clinic Feb. 24-26, visitor policy update

COOK- The Cook Care Center will be holding a COVID-19 vaccination clinic for individuals who are 65 years and older on Feb. 24, 25 and 26 from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. each day at the Cook Community Center. Please refer to the Cook Hospital website, www.cookhospital.org or Cook Hospital Facebook page for sign-up information. If you do not have internet access, please call 218-259-6055.

The Cook Care Center is currently open for general visits to our residents. All visits must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance for those who are interested. Infection control guidelines must be followed including hand hygiene, social distancing, and wearing of personal protective equipment.

Per MDH and CDC guidelines, out-of-state and international travel is highly discouraged. CDC recommends a COVID test 3-5 days after travel AND to stay home and self-quarantine for 7 full days. Even if you test negative, you should stay home and quarantine for 7 full days. Avoid being around people who are at increased risk for severe illness for 14 days whether you test or not.

Based on this guidance, the care center requests that you consider refraining from visiting residents in the care center after returning from any travel out of state until your 14-day quarantine is complete. 99 percent of long-term care facilities have had a case of COVID in a resident. We are one of a very small number of facilities in the state who have not had a COVID positive resident. We ask that you consider following the recommendations from the CDC when you consider visiting our residents after travel.

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GET OUTDOORS

Snowshoeing now open at MDC

Trails will be ready for fat-bikes in near future



The Redhead MTB Park's North Star Loop Trail has opened for snowshoers. submitted photo

CHISHOLM- The Minnesota Discovery Center (MDC), in conjunction with the city of Chisholm and Iron Range Off-Road Cyclists (IROC), announced that the North Star Loop Trail at Redhead Mountain Bike Park in Chisholm will be open exclusively for snowshoeing. All other trails and trail use remain temporarily closed, including for hiking, which can damage winter fat-biking trails. Fat-biking is anticipated to begin soon. Once open, outdoor enthusiasts will be able to enjoy the park seven days per week from dawn to dusk. The park will temporarily close again during the spring thaw to allow the trails to adequately dry.

The anticipated opening follows a grant announcement by the Iron Range Tourism Bureau's Trails Task Force, which awarded approximately \$2,100 to the city of Chisholm and IROC to cover half of the cost of a brand-new state-of-the-art Snow Dog Trail Groomer. IROC put forth the other half of the funds needed to purchase the groomer. The groomer will help IROC trail maintenance volunteers and MDC staff keep up with grooming efforts and create a solid base that will allow for an enjoyable fat-biking experience.

Youth and adult snowshoe rentals are available inside the Winter Entrance at MDC. Redhead MTB Park guests are invited

to utilize free parking, indoor bathrooms, and the Miner's Daughter Gift Shop at MDC, the exclusive retailer of Redhead merchandise. The shop is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., and Thursday from 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. There is no admission fee to snowshoe at Redhead, but guests are welcome to warm up and explore MDC's 33,000 sq. ft. award-winning museum or explore MDC's historic 660-acre campus by snowshoe. Regular admission prices apply.

If you plan on visiting Redhead for some snowshoeing or fat-biking on the North Star Loop Trail we want to remind you to dress warm and that it

is good practice to bring extra water and snacks. Furthermore, always check the TrailForks app, the Redhead MTB Park website, mndiscoverycenter.com/visit/redhead-mountain-bike-park/, and the Redhead social media pages for updates regarding trail conditions and park closures before visiting Redhead.

Redhead MTB Park encourages the public to stay tuned to their social media and website for important updates and to reach out on social media, @RedheadMTBPark, by email, infor@mndiscoverycenter.com, or by phone, 218-254-7959 if you have any questions.

Ely Rotary Club donates \$1,000 to Friends of the Lake Vermilion Trail

ELY- During the 2020 giving season, the Friends of the Lake Vermilion Trail was awarded \$1,000 from the Ely Rotary Club.

The Ely Rotary Club is committed to improving health and welfare in our local community. By supporting area trail projects, like the proposed Lake Vermilion Trail, they are enhancing our community connectivity, improving the overall quality of life for our residents, and promoting tourism activities in the area.

"We are delighted to receive support from the Ely Rotary Club," says Friends of the Lake Vermilion Trail board member, Char Conger. "The funds will go toward phase one of our project which includes prelimi-



Pictured, left to right, Ely Rotary Club past president, Jeff Sundell and president, Todd Heiman and Friends of the Lake Vermilion Trail board members, Char Conger and Caroline Owens. submitted photo

nary engineering work and assessments."

The Lake Vermilion Trail will be a premier, paved, scenic route providing an opportunity for

healthy, safe, non-motorized, year-round, transportation and recreation connecting Cook and Tower/Soudan in the beautiful natural landscape south of Lake Vermilion for residents and visitors.

The trail will connect with the already established Mesabi Trail from Tower to Ely. Visit www.lakevermilliontrail.org or Facebook @lakevermilliontrail to donate and for further information.



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ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

MPCA proposes change to clean water rules

Proposal would likely reduce need for clean-up of taconite mine contamination

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— It appears mining companies on the Iron Range can afford to clean-up toxic water discharges at their taconite plants and tailings basins. But they likely won't have to if new rules the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is proposing are enacted, as early as this year.

The new rules, designed to replace standards first established in the late 1960s, were the subject of a public hearing earlier this month before an administrative law judge in St. Paul. The public comment period on the new rules, which would all but eliminate numeric water quality standards for what are known as Class 3 and Class 4 waters in Minnesota, ends Feb. 24. (See sidebar for more on water classifications in Minnesota).

According to MPCA spokesperson Darin Broton, the proposed change in rules has been ten years in the making. "The proposed rule applies modern science to the standards and will provide a more nuanced, localized approach to protecting water quality," Broton said. "In addition, the revised standards will allow for flexibility in creating permits, reduce wastewater permitting delays, and avoid wastewater treatment costs that don't provide environmental benefits."

The changes have found support, in general, from the mining industry, agricultural processors, and the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities. A long list of Iron Range cities also sent nearly identical letters in support of the changes, which are designed to lessen regulatory burdens on dischargers.

Tribal officials and environmentalists, who have waged a 12-year effort get the MPCA to enforce the state's existing water quality rules, particularly on the mining industry, see the new rules as little more than a capitulation to industry. "The new rules will require less treatment and, in many cases, no treatment whatsoever," said Paula Maccabee, legal counsel and advocacy director for Duluth-based Water Legacy. Tribal officials also view the changes as a weakening of the state's pollution standards, and they complained to the Walz administration about it in a letter last October, which alleged that the changes were coming to placate U.S. Steel, which operates the Minntac and Keetac taconite mines on the Iron Range.

MPCA officials don't deny that the proposed changes would make life easier for some taconite mines. In the agency's Statement of Need and Reasonableness, which goes by the acronym SONAR, officials note that costs that the mines might incur in order to meet existing standards would "generally be avoided if the [new] rules are adopted."

Indeed, the proposed new rules would eliminate existing numeric standards for hardness, bicarbonates, sodium, conductivity and would weaken standards for chloride (from the current 50-100 milligrams per liter to 230 mg/l), total dissolved solids (from 700 mg/l to 3,000 mg/l), pH (from 8.5 to 9), and salinity (from 1,000 mg/l to 3,000 mg/l).

Many of these pollutant categories are regularly exceeded by taconite mines in Minnesota under current rules, but most mines would likely have less trouble meeting the new standards.

The new rules do not propose to eliminate the 10 mg/l sulfate standard, which is included under the Class 4A designation and is designed to protect wild rice. Yet, the MPCA isn't currently enforcing that standard in any

of its permits, ostensibly per the direction of the state Legislature. The new rule is expected to set a sulfate standard for Class 4 waters, but at 600 mg/l it's far higher than the federal drinking water standard of 250 mg/l and the existing wild rice standard. Even so, the MPCA predicts that the new sulfate standard could require at least some treatment of discharge from area taconite mines, if enforced.

While the proposed new rules appear to weaken or eliminate existing numeric standards, they also appear to weaken the narrative descriptions of the "beneficial uses" of water desired under the Class 3 and 4 designations. For example, under Minnesota's existing Class 3A designation, water is supposed to be maintained at sufficient quality to "use without chemical treatment, except softening for groundwater, for most industrial purposes... for which a high quality of water is required." The new rules would eliminate the three subclasses (Class 3A, 3B, and 3C) currently listed under the Class 3 designation and set a water quality standard for all three subclasses that appears to establish a remarkably low bar, allowing water that can be used "for industrial purposes to avoid severe fouling, corrosion, or scaling."

Under Class 4B, the existing narrative describes use by wildlife for watering, "without inhibition or injurious effect." The proposed new standard for all Class 4 waters, removes the qualifier about inhibition or injurious effect.

Critics of the MPCA plan say the new rules won't protect aquatic life because they allow more pollutants that are currently allowed. MPCA officials don't disagree but argue that's not the point. "The Class 3 and 4 standards were not designed or intended to protect aquatic life, and revision of these standards should not be tied to aquatic life standards," state agency officials in their SONAR, published in December. Instead, agency officials argue that the standards for Class 2 waters (designed to protect aquatic life) won't be affected by the new rules. Yet Maccabee notes that some of the strictest numerical standards for some pollutants are actually found in the existing Class 3 or Class 4 rules, and that by eliminating those standards, it will impact aquatic life.

The new rules are supposed to address concerns about the lack of numeric standards, through the use of a "translator," which MPCA officials say will allow them to convert narrative descriptions into numeric pollutant levels they can actually apply in permits. But the MPCA, in its SONAR, acknowledges that the proposed translator is likely to allow many dischargers to go without effluent limits in their permits. Indeed, the agency acknowledges that the proposed changes will have broad impacts on permitted dischargers, most likely eliminating the need for effluent limits on such factors as total dissolved solids, specific conductance, hardness, and bicarbonates, or sodium.

MPCA says current treatment costs are high

MPCA officials argue that the high cost of treating the types of pollutants addressed in its proposed new rule is a significant factor in its decision to revise the existing standards. While tribes have focused much of their attention on mining pollution, which impacts wild rice in northeastern Minnesota, the new rules are also intended to address high levels of various salts and sulfate being discharged by wastewater treatment plants and some agricultural processing



A view across a portion of Twin Lakes, located just downstream of the Minntac tailings basin. The MPCA is proposing to change water quality rules in a manner that could significantly reduce the need for cleanup of discharges from the tailings basin. file photo

How water is classified, and protected, in Minnesota

Public waters in Minnesota are regulated based on their classifications, which reflect potential uses of those waters, such as drinking water, recreation, industrial or agricultural irrigation. Those classes include: Class 1 (drinking water), Class 2 (aquatic life, recreation, and wildlife) Class 3 (industrial), Class 4 (agricultural), and Class 5 (aesthetic enjoyment). Many public waters have multiple designated uses and, when taken together, those designations can impact the water quality standards that the MPCA is required to enforce for those lakes or streams.

The MPCA proposal would largely eliminate existing standards for Class 3 and 4 waters that limit the concentration of pollutants based on various numeric measurements, such as mil-

ligrams per liter. Instead, the MPCA will rely on written descriptions, or narratives, of the water quality the agency seeks to maintain in lakes or streams subject to discharge permits. According to the MPCA, narrative standards typically address basic forms of water pollution, such as floating solids, scums, oil films, or algae blooms, but can be more difficult to enforce because any narrative description can be subject to varying interpretation. Numeric standards, by contrast, set clear pollution limits which can be easily monitored for compliance.

While narrative standards are used routinely in pollution regulation, they are more typically used in combination with numeric standards which most regulators and environmental groups see as more enforceable.

facilities.

According to the MPCA, the treatment of many of the pollutants covered in the new rules can only be effectively addressed with currently available technology through the use of reverse osmosis, or RO, which is costly and comes with its own list of environmental concerns, including the need to dispose of highly concentrated, salty brines. Because of the significant energy demand associated with RO, it's also a potential contributor to climate change, according to agency officials. An MPCA analysis suggests the energy inputs required to treat the discharges from the Minntac facility would result in new annual carbon emissions equivalent to those emitted from a city of 5,000-10,000 people. "The complex environmental trade-offs involved in mine water treatment are difficult to analyze quantitatively and ultimately require decisions to be made taking into account more than just finances," states the MPCA in its SONAR.

The costs to some cities of using RO to meet existing water quality standards could be high, argues the MPCA in its SONAR. "Collectively they face millions of dollars in costs related to these... standards," the agency wrote. According to agency officials more than 160 Minnesota municipal wastewater treatment plants are likely to require a limit to protect a Class 3 or 4 water quality standard. In almost every case, they argue, compliance with those limits would require the wastewater treatment plant operator to build new infrastructure. "Over 90 percent of affected cities are small rural cities of less than 5,000 people and no city

of greater than 25,000 people is likely to be affected by the current rules," according to the MPCA's SONAR.

The MPCA's claim, however, assumes that the agency will actually enforce its current standards on public wastewater treatment facilities, when its past practice has been more relaxed. Indeed, the rules in effect for Class 3 and 4 waters were instituted in 1967. Of the 571 wastewater treatment facilities in the state, only nine have standards in their permit requiring them to meet existing rules. The agency suggests that many more facilities, perhaps as many as 100, are likely to require additional treatment in order to meet the existing standard of 700 mg/l for total dissolved solids, for example. That standard would be relaxed to 3,000 mg/l under the proposed new rule.

Maccabee notes that the existing rules already allow for variances for most public facilities, particularly in smaller communities, if the cost of treating wastewater to a certain standard proves to be too high. She suggests the MPCA is using professed concern over such facilities to justify changes to water quality rules that are more likely to benefit industrial polluters.

Even industrial polluters can apply for variances, although they aren't often granted, particularly if the company has sufficient resources to meet standards in its discharges. When it comes to large industrial facilities, like taconite mines, the MPCA conducts an economic and socioeconomic analysis to determine whether a variance is justified.

The agency conducted such

an analysis for the Iron Range's taconite plants and found that the companies, under the most likely circumstances, would appear to have sufficient resources to meet the existing standards. "If the parent companies' finances can be leveraged for complying with existing water quality standards for their subsidiary taconite mines in Minnesota, this assessment has not proven substantial economic impacts would result from doing so," notes the SONAR. "The strong associations between parent companies and subsidiaries indicate that such leverage can be reasonably expected."

The MPCA's calculations indicate that the annual cost of operating RO treatment at area mines would average about \$60 million across the industry, or about \$1.50 per ton of taconite produced. Iron ore is currently selling for about \$120 a ton on the open market, which would put the cost of clean-up at just over one percent of the gross sale price.

Such calculations haven't always prevented the MPCA from issuing variances to taconite mines. The former Dunka Mine, for example, currently has a variance for its exceedances of several pollution standards, including total dissolved solids, bicarbonates, total hardness, and specific conductance. The Thunderbird Mine in Eveleth was also awarded a variance, for exceedances on pH.

Nancy Schuldt, water quality specialist with the Fond du Lac Band, says she doesn't understand why the tribes' arguments for enforcement of existing standards has faced such pushback. "At the heart of it all, what the tribes are asking for should not be controversial," she said. "We have never said 'no mining'. We have been engaging with the intent that industry plays by the rules."

Big change without much public attention

Maccabee has been among those at the forefront of the debate over water quality in Minnesota in recent years and says she has increasingly lost faith in the work of the MPCA. But of all the agency actions she has fought, she says this latest proposal is the most far-reaching, potentially the most damaging to the environment, and among the toughest to fight because of the complexity of the rules proposed for change.

Schuldt agrees. "It is eminently frustrating," she said, "because these are complicated and mostly esoteric issues for most of the public." By and large, she says, the public has bought into a myth that Minnesota has a strong regulatory framework and willingness to maintain water quality.

"That might have been true 40 years ago, but it's not true today," she said.

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

False equivalency

The Capitol riot bears little resemblance to the George Floyd unrest

We've heard an awful lot of false equivalency when it comes to the Trump-inspired riot on Jan. 6, which was the subject of the recent impeachment trial in the U.S. Senate. Trump's apologists have suggested, among other things, that the assault on the Capitol was somehow in-kind with the rioting that followed in the wake of the death of George Floyd. Both did involve violence and destruction of property—and that's where the similarity ends.

The unrest in the wake of the death of George Floyd was a spontaneous response to a real and gut-wrenching reality. We all saw the video as Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin casually snuffed the life out of a person whom he had sworn to protect and serve. Even in a nation that has watched white police officers kill black men with virtual impunity for decades, the killing of George Floyd was symbolically unique. The knee to the back of the neck of the struggling black man, represented, for many, generations of white violence against blacks in America. If you need refreshing on the grotesque injustice that black Americans have faced in this country from white Americans, read “The Warmth of Other Suns,” a powerful story of the migration of black Americans from the Jim Crow South by Pulitzer Prize winner Isabel Wilkerson. That is the context, the real experience and reality, that fueled the anger and protest that followed in the wake of George Floyd's killing. It certainly doesn't excuse violence or destruction of property, but it provides an understanding of the deep sense of injustice that fuels such protest. Slavery was one of America's original sins, but the injustices against people of color continue right up through today. For them, a sense of grievance is well earned.

Contrast that to the riot at the Capitol, which was a response not to a real event, or a history of injustice, but to a vicious lie perpetrated by a deeply disturbed president who hoped to use a mindless mob he incited to hold onto power that the American people said he no longer deserved. It was his last desperate act after some Republicans, thankfully with conscience, opted to uphold their oaths and refused his entreaties to steal the election in his favor. There was nothing spontaneous about the attack on the Capitol. It was orchestrated, planned, and carried out for a purpose—to overturn a legitimate presidential election. More than 140 police officers were injured in the fracas, many severely. Many black officers reported they were subjected

to the n-word multiple times during that afternoon, as if they needed any reminding that the desire to oppress black people is still alive and well in Trump world. The Jan. 6 riot, more than anything, was white privilege run amok.

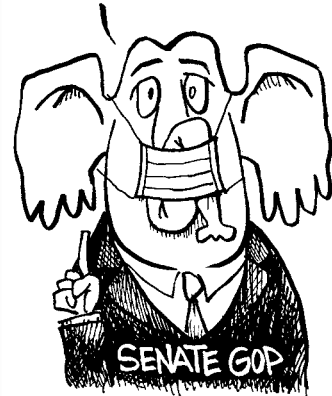
Closer to home, we have been disappointed at the extent to which some in our region have failed to recognize such compelling distinctions or recognize the obligation we all have as Minnesotans to help Minneapolis rebuild. We know that many of the actual perpetrators of the destruction that devastated parts of Minneapolis came from outside the Twin Cities. Two of the four men who have since pled guilty to fire-bombing the Third Precinct police headquarters in Minneapolis, are from the Brainerd area. We've previously reported on arson-related charges against right-wing extremists, who came to Minneapolis from around the country in hopes of sparking a race war.

There is no one or simple story when it comes to the George Floyd protests. We do know, however, that the vast majority of the protest was peaceful. A relative handful of extremists, many without any clear political motivation, contributed to the violence. Among the politically motivated individuals who sought to benefit from the unrest was then-President Donald Trump, who did more than any person to fan the flames and fuel division as a tool for his re-election campaign. Minneapolis fell victim to a political storm, generations in the making, and just as we all contribute to recovery efforts when a flood or a tornado strikes, Minnesotans have an obligation to rebuild communities devastated by this political upheaval.

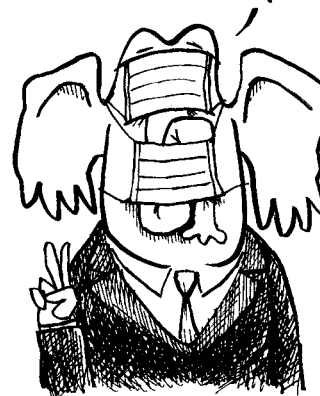
Suggesting otherwise reflects an astonishing blindness to the realities of funding in Minnesota, and the degree to which rural Minnesota, including our region, benefits significantly from the economic vitality of Minneapolis and the surrounding metro. Taxes generated in the Twin Cities pay the bulk of the cost of operating our schools. They pay for the broadband grants our communities all seek. And they're paying for the bonds that built the new Hwy. 53 bridge, so the Iron Range can continue to dig iron ore.

Those who wish to divide, always push a message of us versus them, and excuse themselves with tales of false equivalency. Let's not fall for it yet again.

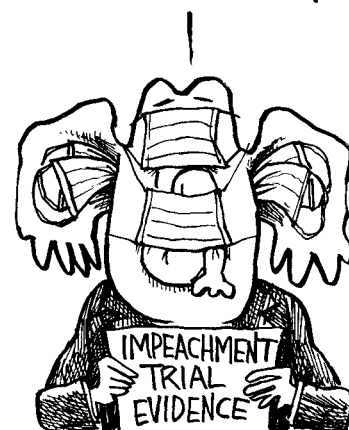
I HEARD TWO MASKS
WORK BETTER THAN ONE



IF TWO ARE BETTER
THAN ONE, THREE
WOULD BE BETTER
STILL!



AND, FOUR WOULD
BE JUST RIGHT!



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Letters from Readers

We need to learn how to dissent constructively

We are in a kind of war in our communities. We are not at peace with one another. But we do not have to stay at war. Becoming a peaceful community is one of the great challenges facing us here in the Northland. But how do we become a peaceful community?

Using the “Harvard Business College Program on Negotiation” definition, we get an idea what it is we are looking at in making peace right here on the Vermilion Range.

The key to effective community peace is... constructive dissent: disagreements that respectfully and don't productively challenge others' viewpoints.

In America, and in local communities, our dissent is not constructive, our disagreements are not debated or discussed respectfully and productively challenge opposite points of view. In the *Timberjay* area a city or a township needs to create events where people with opposite points of view can come together under rules that will guide all speakers in constructive dissent. Now, the only rule is to either win or destroy the opposition. Instead of fighting, we can hold forums where the objective is to gain positive solutions that arise out of the debate. Now our discussions are usually, “I win, you lose.” Everyone leaves, only hardening their point of view.

How do we build respect for one another's differences? We accept disagreements and respect all holding beliefs and attitudes. We have constructive disagreement when we respect those who oppose us and challenge them to move into constructive solutions that will grow everyone's perspective.

When our communities are at peace, having the kind of dissent with each other, with

businesses and with politicians, we will grow economically, educationally, and spiritually. If we continue in the kind of dissent in which we are engaged, I can envision nothing more than continued decline.

Let us have conversation about peace MAKING in our governing boards and around our coffee tables and propose the kind of actions that MAKE peace among us.

Art Dale
Soudan

Greenwood needs a shakeup at the top

Township election time is here again on March 9. Hopefully everyone will get their ballots in, either by voting absentee, or safely in person. The recent misogynistic action by the board of reducing the pay of only the appointed women (treasurer and clerk), and the former elected clerk, was appalling. Since when has that board cared about ‘saving money’? Why didn't the board members reduce their pay to hourly, too?

Greenwood has been run like a fiefdom with the current board members. No public input is allowed at their ‘listen’ only teleconference monthly meetings. Correspondence from property owners is no longer read by the clerk, nor is it considered public information. We need to allow for public opinion and input again. The chair is now the decider of who gets to see what. This is not democracy. Time to mix things up a bit. Please vote ‘no’ on allowing the board to ‘choose’ the next treasurer and clerk (Option B). A board member stated that if appointed, rather than elected, they ‘would be easier to control’. Just say NO and remember to vote.

Barbara Lofquist
Greenwood Twp.

Coronaviruses prove Darwin was right

Darwin must be smiling. With their manifold mutations and adaptations the clever coronaviruses are, once again, proving him to be honest and his theory to be true.

Jim Ganahl
Cook

Supervisors need to step up for broadband

Again, with no public comment at the Greenwood Township Board meetings – a public forum is needed for any comments.

I understand the board members—Byron Beihoffer and Carmen Deluca - assigned to attend the Broadband meetings, have not been in attendance since April 2020. Soon to be a year.

The board has said they are in favor of our area getting Broadband for the township. Where is that interest if they don't attend the meetings?

We do have residents who have been VERY active in learning about Broadband and bringing it to our township—Dr. John Bassing and Dr. JoAnn Bassing. They should be applauded and thanked!!!

My question is, why do residents have to work for this Broadband project? This is work the supervisors should be doing. We do need to get into the 21st century with our communications.

Sue Drobac
Greenwood Twp.

Fight for the world as it should be

I have been reading Michelle Obama's book, *Beloved*, and waxing nostalgic about what was and what could have been. When Barack Obama was elected in 2008, I thought we, as a country, were finally taking a step up on the evolutionary scale, finally living up to the ideals that are the underpinnings of



BETTY
FIRTH

this country. I loved reading Michelle's words about struggling to balance the demands of politics. She wanted to nurture and protect her family, but as a citizen, she knew that America needed and deserved to have the man with the “noble heart” in the Oval Office.

She deplored the hype and pretension, but she wanted so much

to have a positive effect during Obama's campaign. She said she did that best by revealing her real self, making personal connections with people she met in small groups and in large crowds. Facing the small-minded sniping about her, her clothes, and every word she uttered, she wanted to articulate who she really was and to show the world an intimate view of Barack.

In her speech at the 2008 Democratic National Convention she said she had recognized when they were getting to know each

other how much she and Barack had in common: being raised in a loving and supportive family that sacrificed to provide the education needed to pursue their dreams; believing that hard work made it possible to realize those dreams, which meant making a positive difference in the world, not just seeking money and power. Quoting her husband, she said, “He spoke about the world as it is and the world as it should be, and we too often settle for the world as it is even when it doesn't reflect

our values and aspirations. We know what fairness and justice and opportunity look like, and he urged us to believe in ourselves and to strive for the world as it should be. And isn't that the great American story?” She said, “Barack and I agreed that you treat people with dignity and respect even if you don't agree with them.” She acknowledged Joe Biden, saying, “People like Joe Biden, who has never forgotten where he came from and

See **OBAMA...** pg. 5

For broadband, votes count

As a full time, voting resident of Greenwood Township, I hereby pledge not to vote for any candidate for any township office who does not publicly and enthusiastically promise to make every effort to bring high speed internet to the township as soon as possible.

Please join me in this pledge - votes matter. Together we can make this happen.

**Don Brown
Greenwood Twp.**

Vote for transparency and the future

The Greenwood Town Board has shown, over the last couple of years, that it is clearly not up to the task of conducting township business in an open and transparent fashion or addressing the needs of the township. First of all, on two separate occasions, the board was found in violation of the Open Meeting Law. The board has terminated all citizen input by eliminating public comments during monthly meetings and by not reading correspondence that is sent to the board. Votes are conducted with little or no discussion so it is apparent that decisions are made prior to the meeting. They have also created a convoluted 12-step path for anyone wanting to acquire public data on board actions making it nearly impossible and costly to get even the most basic information. Mark Anfinson, attorney for the MN Newspaper Association and expert on public access laws, stated he was skeptical Greenwood's ordinance to obtain public data was lawful.

Secondly, the board's

ineptness and lack of interest in bringing broadband to Greenwood has kept us far behind. When we had a community meeting in October 2019, several internet providers came to speak and Steve Howard, the Paul Bunyan Communications representative, told us, Townships that are organized and make a concerted effort are more likely to be successful. In Morcom Township they got letters of support from the citizens. You need to get fired up and push." This has never occurred in Greenwood. The point person for broadband in Greenwood is Byron Beihoffer, and he hasn't advocated for it. Instead, he has done his best to stop it. In May 2020, he said: "The community is not interested in it and I can't see spending any more money on it." Most recently, he has said, "Nobody is too enthused about it (broadband) and kind of act like it is a dead horse and are satisfied with what they've got." This is poor leadership which does not recognize the bankrupt monopoly which inadequately provides telephone and internet services to our township. The regional LTE (Laurentian Chamber, TEDA, and East Range Joint Powers Board) committee, which Greenwood is a part of, has crafted a feasibility study, but Byron has missed the last 19 meetings. When the Greenwood board called a special meeting to hear about the feasibility study, Byron did not attend nor could the board achieve a quorum. Other townships are participating and working on the study. Why not Greenwood? Broadband is a utility, emphatically defined by the pandemic, whose importance grows exponentially. We need to embrace it and advocate for it.

In the upcoming town-

ship election, we need to elect candidates committed to open transparent government, ones that are not tied to old, tired ideas but will advocate and bring us the ability to tap the technology of the future. Vote Sue Drobac, Barb Lofquist, and JoAnn Bassing on March 9.

**JoAnn and
John Bassing
Greenwood Twp.**

A little about truth, justice and the American Way

Two years prior to the 2016 election, a good friend stated, "America is a bad country to live in if you don't bother to think!" When I asked for clarification he replied, "We are constantly told what we should believe, how we should look and what we should buy." Given that the powers driving society have always used multiple platforms to market beliefs as well as products, I think my friend was right. My views, like everybody else's, are influenced by the media I consume, but most of the time I can separate fact from opinion, truth from fiction.

As a child I watched as much television as I could get away with, including a lot of rubbish. Nevertheless, back then the networks often offered a wholesomeness that is sorely lacking in much of today's programming. Clark Kent may have looked white, but in essence, Superman was the ultimate immigrant who every day risked his superhuman life in defense of "...truth, justice and the American Way." As a result, I grew up believing that the "American Way" was something worth risking one's life for and that it was based on, as I understood from a ritual

that initiated every school day, "...one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all." To my young mind, those words were as unambiguous as the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence and they still are.

For reasons of self-preservation, I stopped watching the networks 45 years ago, but from the wreckage Trump left in his wake, and following his recent predictable acquittal, Superman keeps tugging at the cape of my subconscious. Forgive me for asking, but what exactly is the "American Way," and what on Earth does it have to do with truth or justice?

Truth? Everyone knows the myth about young George Washington and his father's cherry tree. Lest you missed the point, 'honesty is the best policy no matter what it may cost you.' In the past four years, however, an alarming proportion of our population have come to sanctify deceit, if not actually to believe it. What can we say about the relevance of truth in a country whose very leader lied blatantly and promiscuously before, during, and after his presidency with the willful backing of his party, the willful ignorance of his constituents and constant amplification by "the most-watched cable network in the country?"

Justice? The concept of justice is so intrinsic to the image of this nation that the words "EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER LAW" are chiseled into the white marble above the main entrance of the Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C. Really? Maybe it's time for a little redecorating. What hope is there for justice in a land where the (former) president sanctioned the use of multiple strong-arm tactics against peaceful American citizens who

were reminding us that black lives really do matter while later rolling out a red carpet for the armed invasion of our Capitol by an angry mob?

The American Way? We are taught from birth that the American Way is more than an abstraction, more than an ideal. We are taught that it is our unique reality and what makes America better than everywhere else on earth. If Superman were to start his career today, he'd be sorely conflicted. For today, truth is elusive, justice selective, and there really is no one American Way. We have stumbled for almost 250 years down a path that has brought us closer to the ideal envisioned by this nation's founders. There have been hopeful milestones along the way: the Emancipation Proclamation, the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, to name three. However, as the reversals of the past four years, the attempted coup of Jan. 6, and the refusal of 43 Republican senators to acknowledge the facts that led to that coup have proven, we are not there yet. And that's the truth!

**David B. Stanton
Cook**

Things that hold humanity back

Here are a few thoughts to consider:

HUBRIS. Self-importance of the privileged is an illusion emitted from the veneration of power and wealth. Distrust the government, but trust in the market allows mega-rich hotshots to falsely claim their wealth and philanthropy will fix the problems of society. Trump,

three economic

crashes in 20 years and COVID-19 have exposed deep flaws of capitalism.

S U P R E M A C Y. Racism, patriarchy, wealth and class are etched into the psyche of power elites and their admiring minions. Each preaches equality but practices and promotes inequality. White supremacy, sexism and classism of "the select" undergird their privileged station in society.

H I E R A R C H Y Hierarchical thinking falsely places human relationships in a top-down pecking order, to spell inequality. Holistic thinking sees concentric spheres expanding in broader and deeper dimensions of understanding. Wisdom, knowledge and skill accrue in three-dimensional reality, not up an imaginary ladder.

M E R I T O C R A C Y. The wellborn assume their advantage derives from their ability and talent, not privilege and wealth. Inheritance, social connection and advantage of investor over worker wealth is not acknowledged. Outcomes tell us privilege and wealth matter more. If merit delivered economic inequality, who needs it? Blaming government, foreigners or malcontent envy won't do!

We welcome your letters

The *Timberjay* encourages letters to the editor. You can submit letters by mail at PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790, or email letters to marshall@timberjay.com.

Letters are subject to editing, primarily for length and clarity.

OBAMA...Continued from page 4

has never stopped fighting for people who work long hours and faced long odds and need someone on their side again, all of us driven by the belief that the world as it is just won't do. That we have an obligation to fight for the world as it should be. That is the thread that connects our hearts....and runs through our journeys....and that is why I love this country."

She reflected on Obama's work in the Senate to insure that veterans would be honored with not just parades, but with good jobs and health care, including mental health care. She said that "this time would be remembered as when we listened to our hopes instead of our fears."

Obama, at his last Press Club Dinner, thanked the journalists for their hard work and said, "Taking a stand on behalf of what is true does not require you to shed your objectivity; in fact it is the essence of good journalism."

During the 2008 campaign, we saw the hate lashing out and oozing everywhere with not-so-subtle racist slurs, and when Obama won that first election, what did Mitch McConnell say? That the priority of the Republican party was to see that Obama failed. Isn't that admirable? That elected leaders would focus their

energies not on improving conditions for American citizens or building the economy in sustainable ways but stonewalling the very efforts that would.

The Republican party choices have just seemed like one bad joke after another. Sarah Palin for vice-president? Come on, now. When I heard the announcement at the Republican National Convention and heard her speak, I breathed deeply and relaxed, for I knew then that Obama would be elected. Thanks for that gift, Republicans. What is it that beats in the hearts of these people? I really have a hard time understanding it. Do they really think that people with money are more valuable as people?

Can anyone really be that ignorant in 2021 to believe that someone's skin color makes them more or less worthy? (It has been a lifelong conundrum to me that some prejudiced, pasty-white people spend thousands of dollars going to white sand beaches for a tan, risking skin cancer, to attain the same beautiful, brown color to flaunt at their country club that bars membership to those who are naturally brown and beautiful.)

Then along came Trump and all that followed. I was writing thoughts for this column on Saturday along the lines


of seeking common understandings, shared goals and humanity, quoting Michelle saying, "It's hard to hate up close." And then I heard that Trump had been acquitted.

In the history of our country, there has never been a President who has so crassly ignored (or seemingly been ignorant of) the mandates of the constitution or the fact that it actually is his job to uphold the constitution and the electoral process. Never has there been a President who has encouraged insurrection and violence for his own blatant self-interest. Trump had clearly lauded the violence in Michigan, calling Governor Gretchen Whitmer a half-wit and a tyrant because she was enforcing safe COVID lockdown restrictions. He continued to criticize her after a right-wing attempt to kidnap and possibly murder her was foiled by the FBI. Trump tweets going after Democratic governors said his followers should liberate Michigan, (and Minnesota and Virginia) and "save your great 2nd Amendment."

Trump encouraged the mobs to get rougher. He had a well-documented history of encouraging hate groups and political violence, paving the way for later violence in the

attack on Congress on Jan. 6. The mobsters were supposedly protesting a stolen election, but I read that eight of those arrested had not even bothered to vote. Six people lost their lives. Yet the lily-livered Republicans could not call him to account for his extraordinary behavior, so Trump celebrates in his sumptuous surroundings, chortling about his victory, declaring, "We're not done yet!" and the sycophants huddle around, sucking from what they perceive is the power teat.

How is that even possible? I'm trying to seek the higher ground, but I'm having a hard time getting there. We can breathe a sigh of relief because we now have a reasonable, sane, caring man in the Oval Office, but we can't complacently sit back and think that all is well. This time our country was saved from four more years of Trump, but the irrational forces are out there, committed to defeating every progressive thing that we might believe in (and that, ironically, often benefits them). We can't rely on hoping or wishing that things will magically be okay. We need to speak up, step up, and put our time, energy, and money behind whatever we value to help make the world as it should be.



the
TIMBERJAY

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Call the Tower office at (218) 753-2950.**

Week of Feb. 22

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.

Tuesday

Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from **2:30-5:00 p.m.** Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is March 16.

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

Wednesday

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

Thursday

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

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

COLLEGE NEWS

Gabriel Irons named to Dean's List at Bethel University

ST. PAUL- Gabriel Irons, a junior from Tower, has been named to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the fall 2020 semester at Bethel University in St. Paul. The Dean's List honors students who achieve an outstanding scholastic record during a semester with a grade point average of 3.6 or greater.

Bethel University is a leader in Christ-centered higher education with nearly 4,500 students from 47 states and 22 countries enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, seminary, and adult undergraduate programs.

CHURCH NEWS

St. James hosting a free movie night on Feb. 21

TOWER- St. James Presbyterian Church is hosting a free movie night on Sunday, Feb. 21 at 6 p.m. The movie REASON will be shown. When a mysterious man appears in a small town, unexplained miracles start to occur, changing the lives of everyone he meets. There's a mother whose five-year-old boy has leukemia, two doctors - one an atheist haunted by his past, the other a brilliant young oncologist who places all her hope in the power of modern medicine - and a blind pastor whose son hasn't spoken a single word in 38 years. All of them will be brought together by the presence of this stranger, who teaches them the true meaning of faith and hope.

TOWER VS. SOUDAN

Hockey Day Soudan set for Sunday, Feb. 21

SOUDAN- Hockey Day Soudan is set to take to the ice on Sunday, Feb. 21. The event was originally scheduled for Feb. 14, but organizers moved the event one week later because of the extreme cold. With COVID-19 safety measures in place, only limited numbers of people are allowed inside the warming shack at a time.

Temperatures on Sunday are forecast to hit the upper 20s, which will make for a much more pleasant afternoon outdoors.

All skaters are welcome to join the fun. Some skates (child and adult sizes) are available to borrow from the warming shack. The youth/boot hockey game will be held at 11 a.m., and the adult Tower vs. Soudan game will begin at 1 p.m.

Good Ol' Days will be selling food outdoors. Please bring wood to contribute to the bonfire.



Tower vs. Soudan action at last year's Hockey Day. file photo

LAKE VERMILION CULTURAL CENTER

Win this quilt...**Raffle to raise funds for Lake Vermilion Cultural Center renovation project**

SOUDAN- A hand-made 54"x76" quilt donated and sewn by Jill Wagoner is being raffled off as a fundraiser for the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center renovation project.

Raffle tickets are \$5 each, or \$20 for five, and can be purchased in person

at the Soudan Store or Vermilion Park Inn, or by mail by sending a check and a self-addressed stamped envelope to Susan Ellis, PO Box 445, Soudan, MN 55782. Any questions, call Susan at 651-747-6477.

The drawing will be held on or before April 1,

depending on when all the tickets are sold.

The quilt features "Minnesota Moments" and is on display at the Soudan Store.



GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

Meet the candidates; election set for March 9

GREENWOOD TWP- Greenwood voters will have plenty to choose from on the ballot for the upcoming March 9 township election. *The Timberjay* has sent out candidate questionnaires to the four candidates running for the two open supervisor seats, and the two candidates running for clerk. There is only one candidate on the ballot for the open treasurer spot, interim treasurer Belinda Fazio who was appointed to fill the vacancy left after Pam Rodgers resigned. We are publishing lightly-edited versions of the first two candidate responses this week and hope to hear back from the remaining candidates for next week's paper. For space considerations, it was not possible to run all the candidate responses at one time, and we are still waiting to hear back from some candidates.

Township residents will also have the chance to vote for a second time on Option B, which gives the town board the authority to appoint a clerk and treasurer. In 2020, voters rejected Option B by a margin of 194 to 97.

Sue Drobac for Supervisor 5 seat

(Sue Drobac is challenging incumbent Byron Beihoffer)

What is your short-term vision for the township? Get residents involved.

What is your longer-term vision for the township? Keep residents involved.

Do you support Option B: why or why not? I do not support Option B. Residents should not lose the ability to elect a clerk and a treasurer. Also, with these positions appointed, the township could possibly have a person from outside the township.

How essential do you feel broadband is, and how should the town board support it? Broadband is very necessary, especially to make our township more attractive for younger families. Our town board should grab hold of any opportunity to upgrade our systems for the betterment of the entire community.

What is your view on township transparency? Do you think the township should follow the state's data practices law (which currently do not apply to townships)? The township should have nothing to hide. Everything in the township

should have transparency (excluding items having to do with lawsuits, etc.).

Do you think public comment should be added back to the town board meeting agenda? Yes, the public comment is a very important item for the residents to voice any concerns they may have. The agenda should have public comment at the beginning, so the residents can comment on upcoming items on the agenda.

What former roles have you had in the township or volunteering? I have served as the Township Clerk for 4-1/2 years and have volunteered at the Fire Department Auxiliary picnic fundraisers.

What is your view of current/future township spending? Township spending has been quite high. Right now, what is done, is done. I would like to see the levy at not over \$150,000.

Anything else you would like voters to know? I will work for the residents.

Joanne Bassing for Clerk seat

(remainder of term that expires in March 2022, JoAnn Bassing and Debby Spicer have both filed)

What experience do you bring to this role? I feel qualified for the position since I have had my own dental office for over 40 years and been involved in all aspects of it. I've dealt with payroll, government quarterly reports, the public, expenses, payments received, inventory, budgeting, insurance, maintaining records, HIPAA, etc.

What do you see as the role of the clerk and their relationship to the town board? The township clerk is an adjunct to the board. Firstly, supporting them by, according to state statute, informing the citizens about township government business such as posting meetings and placing official notices in the paper. Secondly, by being the chief elections administrator. Next, in records administration, the township clerk's office is the repository for most township records. Also, as a financial accountant allowing the board to assess and approve the township's monthly spending.

What has been your involvement/background in the township in the past? I have been a resident of Greenwood Township for 40 years and have volunteered my

service to the township as a member of the Comprehensive Plan Committee. I have attended most township meetings over the last 8 years and take a keen interest in our Township's governance.

Do you support Option B? Why or why not? I do not support Option B. Electing a town clerk avoids cronyism, or "politics", of having an appointment made by supervisors. Furthermore, they have a sensitive role in the administration of elections and town meetings that would be ill served by being beholden to those who are seeking re-election.

An elected clerk (being a township resident) is directly accountable to the people of the township and serves at the will of the people, not the supervisors. This is especially important during town elections, when the independence of the clerk's office is vital. An appointed clerk (could be a non-resident) comes with an inherent conflict of interest in this area.

All local township supervisors have for many years trusted the electorate to make the selection of its clerk and treasurer. This ballot question, forwarded by the town board, indicates they don't trust you, the electorate, to take the responsibility to make this decision any longer.

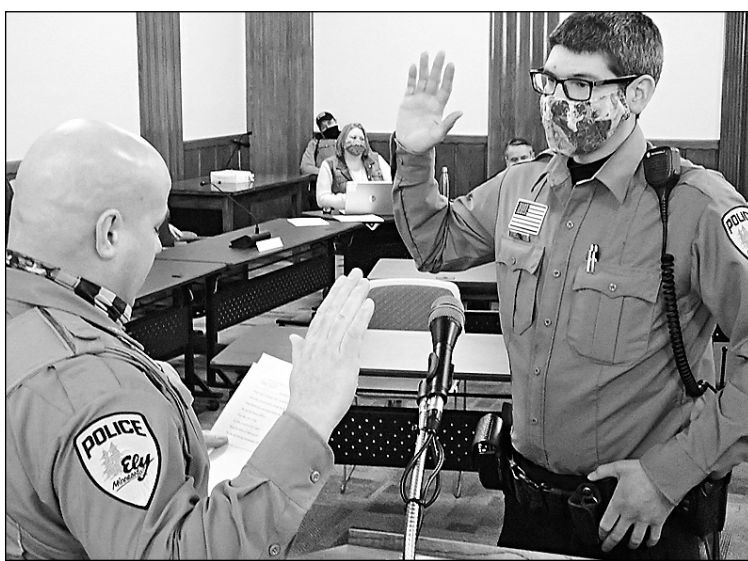
There is no valid reason to take this responsibility and right away from the people. The people's power (right to vote) should never ever be taken out of the hands of "the many" and be placed in the hands of "a few".

Anything else you would like voters to know?

I will work conscientiously and to the best of my ability to support open and transparent township government in anyway I can. Also, bringing broadband to the township is of great importance to me as shown by my being chair of Blandin's Broadband TEDA Committee to disperse \$75,000 throughout our area to increase broadband awareness, and a member of the Broadband Feasibility Study helping us achieve broadband access. I will continue to be a broadband advocate and get even more creative in obtaining broadband for us.

Read us online at
www.timberjay.com

CITY OF ELY POLICE DEPARTMENT



New police officers for the Ely Police Department took their oath of office Tuesday night at the Ely City Council meeting. Chief Chad Houde introduced Officer David Wimmer, left, and Officer Joseph Olufson, right. Their families participated in a badge-pinning ceremony.
photos by K. Vandervort

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Shop local campaign underway in Ely

ELY - So, why do you choose to shop here? According to the Ely Chamber of Commerce, shopping locally is a positive action supporting area businesses who invest in the community by providing goods and services, jobs, and supporting local events and fundraisers.

“For the past several years, the Ely Chamber of Commerce has promoted ‘Shop Local’ initiatives,” said Executive Director Eva Sebesta. “We are asking residents and business owners to go a step further by sharing your thoughts and shopping habits via a survey.”

The ShopLocal survey kicked off this week and runs until Friday, March 5.

The survey is available online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Shop2021>. The link is also available on the

Chamber’s Facebook page @ ElyChamberOfCommerce.

“We are asking one member per household in Ely, Winton, Babbitt and township areas to participate,” she said. “The survey has two parts, one for residents and one for those who own or manage a local area business.”

Local spending decreased nationwide as consumers moved to online shopping during the pandemic, according to Sebesta. “One of the major drawbacks with online spending is the revenue leaves the local business community and ends up elsewhere. Shopping locally creates an economic ripple in the community, first as revenue for the business, then its employees, and so on,” she said.

Gathering shopper information is just one part of a much larger

campaign for the Ely Chamber of Commerce. “We are also seeking a ShopLocal slogan and logo,” she said. Those interested in creating a slogan or logo can forward their ideas to director@ely.org or drop them off at the Chamber office. The deadline to enter is Friday March 5.

“We have some very creative minds in our community and we are very excited to review all the designs and slogans we anticipate receiving. We encourage community members of all ages to participate. Each contributor just needs to include their name, address, phone number, and email with their submission,” Sebesta added.

The Chamber’s board of directors will select the winning logo and slogan at their March

board meeting. Each winner will receive \$100 in Chamber Bucks. “The selected slogan and logo will be used for the official Shop Local campaign launch in May,” she said.

Additional components of the Shop Local campaign will also be released then. One of the changes, she said, is the shift from the traditional coupon book, typically available in mid-May to a coupon card. “The coupon card is far more eco-friendly and can be used from year to year, so the waste is vastly reduced. In addition, participating businesses will be able to change their coupon offerings more regularly, which is a win-win for both the business and its customers,” Sebesta said.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2021



winter’s cold and snow
a deep freeze rests upon us
life creeps in still air

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
OPEN AA - 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Saturdays, in-person, First Lutheran Church, 915 E. Camp St., Ely.
ELY WOMEN’S OPEN AA - Every Monday at noon at St. Anthony’s Catholic Church, 231 E. Camp St., 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.
CO-DEPENDENTS’ 12-step support group, noon Fridays, St. Anthony’s Catholic Church, Ely.
ELY FOLD SHELF - Third Wednesday each month, 15 W. Conan St.
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION GED - Study materials and pre-test available. Call 218-365-3359, 218-827-3232, or 1-800-662-5711.

ELY MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

Sydni Richards scores two goals on ‘home ice’

Ely senior is captain of E-G Golden Bears

ELY - Memorial High School senior Sydni Richards, who plays hockey for the Eveleth-Gilbert girls hockey team, scored two third-period goals on two shots to the net last Thursday night on her home ice here as the Golden Bears beat North Shore, 4-1 at the Ely Ice Arena.

Richards is captain of the team this year. She started playing hockey at the age of four, and said she loves the game “because of the intensity and the life lessons” it has taught her.

“I was excited to play at the arena where my love of the game of hockey began,” she added. The Golden Bears are 4-1 overall on the season.

Ely Memorial High School senior Sydni Richards is the captain of the Eveleth-Gilbert girls hockey team.
photo courtesy of Tara Larsen



HEALTH CARE

Ely Community Health Center to reopen in April

ELY - The Ely Community Health Center is reopening their weekly free medical clinic services on Thursday, April 8. The clinic will be open to in-person examinations and consultations, including a fluoride treatment dental clinic every other week.

“Clearly this is dependent upon the continued control of the COVID-19 infections and the continued improvement of the COVID vaccination process,” said ECHC Executive Director Jon Erickson. “There will be a registration process as well

as some specific COVID-related procedures, but we are happy to finally have the clinic opening on the calendar as we start to exit this dark period that has existed over the past year.”

Peggy Stolley, RDH, joined the Ely Community Health Center as their new Director of Dental Services. Stolley is a long-time Ely resident who has recently returned after retiring as a dental hygienist.

“We are ecstatic to have someone with the extensive experience and education that Peggy brings to ECHC,” Erickson said.

“Although she has only just started, she is working out the priorities that were established in the grant with Blue Cross/Blue Shield.”

Those priorities include:

- ▶ Develop relationships with local dental clinics to arrange for periodic use of their facilities on “off” days. These dental clinics will focus on providing dental services to patients on Medical Assistance (MA) and who otherwise cannot afford or do not have access to oral health care.
- ▶ Develop rela-

tionships with schools that provide oral health programs including the University of Minnesota and other local colleges and universities.

▶ Schedule periodic “Pop Up” Dental Clinics for patients who currently cannot afford dental care or do not have access to dental care.

▶ Work with local independent school districts to arrange oral health care education and services.

▶ Work with area assisted living and nursing homes to provide basic oral

healthcare services, including fluoride treatments.

“We are expecting to announce the initial schedule for the pop-up dental clinics soon,” he said. “We are hoping that they will commence in late April or early May. We wish to thank Blue Cross/Blue Shield for their generous grant and to the Carlton, Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties Community Health Board who facilitated the grant application for both Lake Superior Community Health Center and ourselves.”

Bids for Orr Bog Walk replacement opened

City council may face tough choices as four contractor bids come in on high side

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- Bids for the proposed Mickey Elverum Bog Walk replacement were opened on Wednesday, and all came in above the \$392,000 project estimate developed last year. The four bids received were:

- Pember Companies, Inc., Menominee, Wis. - \$421,360.
- Northland, Duluth - \$529,100.
- Solutions 101, LLC, Hortonville, Wis. - \$462,125.47 + \$90,561.
- Veit, Duluth, MN - \$814,930 + \$186,365.

The bids from Solutions 101 and Veit include an additional amount if aluminum was used for the framework rather than timbers.

Orr City Council members expressed concern at a prior meeting that escalating lumber prices could cause the bids to come in higher than the original project estimate. The city has received major funding from both the Department of Natural Resources and the Iron Range Resource and Rehabilitation Board

for the project, but would be hard-pressed to come up with more if the cost exceeds the amount of funds already designated for the project.

The city council will review and discuss the bids at a special meeting next Monday, Feb. 22, at 5 p.m. at city hall.

ATV trail

Those anticipating another outdoor project, a proposed ATV trail alignment extending north of Orr, got some unfortunate news at the Feb. 8 meeting of the Orr City Council.

Mayor Joel Astleford reported receiving word from Steve Koch with the Voyageur Country ATV Club that the trail alignment proposed to connect Orr to Cusson will not be built. Koch indicated that restrictions along Highway 53 and opposition from residents affected by the proposed trail were the reasons the idea was abandoned.

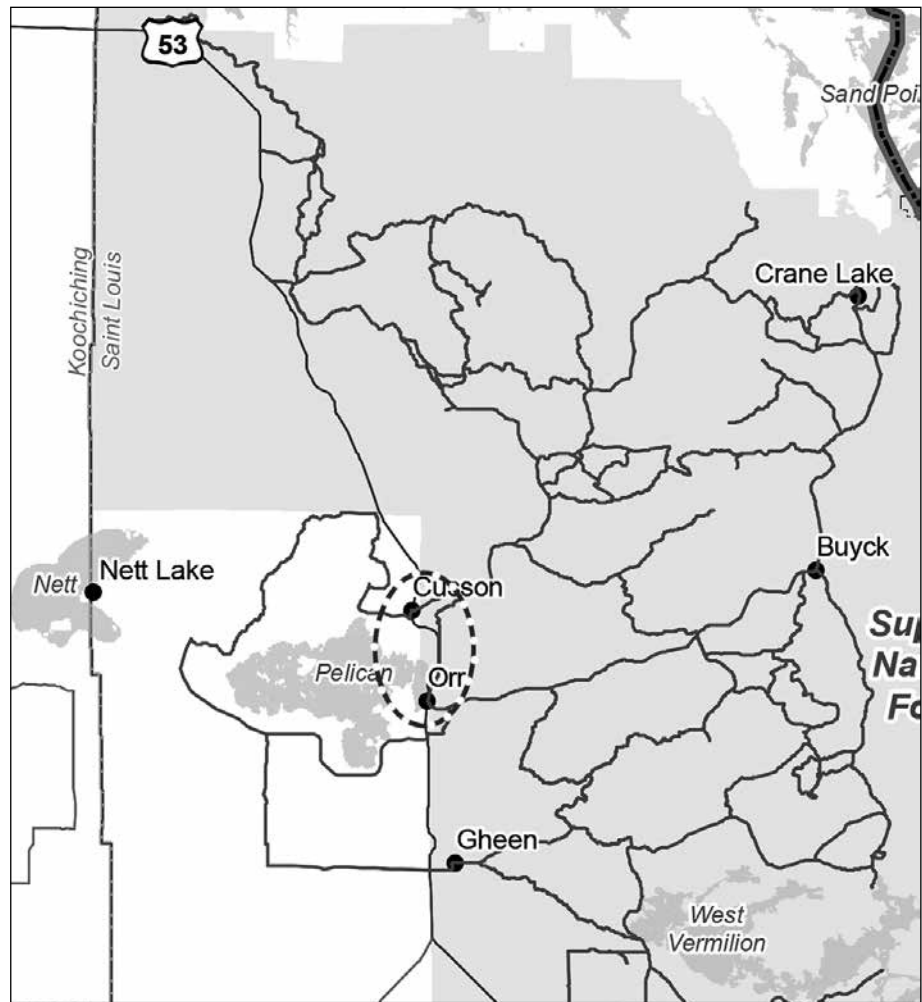
The 387-mile trail network proposed by the club is designed to connect several communities, including Kabetog-

ama, Crane Lake, Buyck, Orr and Cook. ATVs will still be able to access Orr from County Road 23. The club is also investigating the possibility of using the snowmobile trail south of Orr for ATVs to access the Dam Supper Club from town.

A public comment period on an Environmental Assessment Worksheet and supporting materials prepared by the Department of Natural Resources expired in January, but those interested in learning more about the ATV system project can still view the materials online at <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/environmentalreview/voyageur-country-atv/index.html>.

In other business, the council:

- Heard that the ORR Center is now calling in a burning permit every time they fire up their wood boilers so that the fire department doesn't get called out.
- Approved a motion to pay Bob Patrick \$54 toward gas for putting up the city's Christmas wreaths.
- Approved the pur-



This map displays the Voyageur Country ATV Club's proposed trail alignments, with the now-deleted Orr to Cusson alignment highlighted.

DNR map

- chase of a hose adapter for the fire department.
- Approved a building permit application for

- Jace Plerchee.
- Approved new by-laws for the Orr Ambulance service.

- Approved the purchase of new tires for the city's 2019 Chevrolet pickup truck.

Schools working to help COVID-stressed students

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- The strain COVID-19 has placed on children's emotional well-being and mental health has been evident from the outset of the pandemic last spring when school buildings shut down and distance learning became the norm. Cut off from direct contact with the friends and school staff and activities that were part of their daily routines and impacted by how parents and other family members were also being affected, school children had to embrace an isolated and uncertain world.

That concern has reached all the way to Washington, D.C., and Congress, but none know the challenges students face like the people who work with them every day.

Jill Stark has been the school counselor at North Woods School for 13 years, and while the school has had most students in classroom since the beginning of the year, the combination of masks and social distancing and many students in distance learning have made it challenging to assess this year in comparison with others.

"It just felt oddly quiet in my office," she said. "In other years you could walk down the hall and do a quick check in with a student, or they would pop in my office if they were needing something. We had so many kids that were distance learning that there just wasn't an easy way you could go and check in with a student and see how they're doing."

Stark has a new colleague this year, first-year social worker Tia Jansen. She's one of three new social workers in ISD 2142 hired into positions planned well before the pandemic. Jansen is off to a fresh but unusual start.

"I don't really know

North Woods students outside of a pandemic," she said. "That's made it kind of an interesting experience."

While being in school with friends and supportive staff have helped, the pair has little doubt that whether it's altered school routines or family circumstances, COVID-19 is still a threat to students' emotional well-being.

"Students are really struggling with all the different expectations of them this year, with social distancing, and wearing masks," Jansen said. "For older kids who have multiple classes, I think the differing expectations of different teachers have kind of put a strain on a lot of students' mental health. I've had quite a few just struggling and trying to keep everything straight."

Distance learners have even greater challenges because they're divorced from the structure school provides, Stark said.

"There's something to be said about having to wake up and get dressed and get out the door and get on the bus in the morning, at a certain time, and then go to your different classes," Stark said. "When you just wake up and sit on your bed or at your desk or your kitchen table at your house, well, they just struggle more to keep that structure of a school day."

Stark said she counsels students on techniques to recreate some of that structure, such as using their cell phones to set regular alarms for classes and using daily planners.

"Sometimes that's easier said than done," Stark admitted.

"I think that it's tak-

ing away some of that social aspect for both in-person learners and distance learners," Jansen said. "If you're in-person but half of your friends are distance learning, you're missing part of your social circle, and that can really affect a student's motivation in school and their levels of anxiety and depression."

Some in-person learners also struggle with the anxiety of possibly contracting COVID-19 and passing it on to family members, Jansen said. There have been numerous cases of COVID-19 in the school, and even more people who have had to quarantine at home after being exposed to the virus.

One of the most essential contributors to reducing the stressful impacts of COVID-19 has been the empathetic response among school staff, Stark said.

"We're so fortunate to have such a great staff, from everybody in the lunchroom, to the library, to the all of the teachers, to the office and support staff," she said. "Everybody is so supportive of our students and wants to make sure everybody does feel welcome and supported."

For high school seniors looking ahead to college, COVID-19 has introduced an unsettling air of uncertainty, Stark said. Most students couldn't take the ACT test last year, and while some colleges have already waived the test as an admissions requirement, others haven't. Meetings with college recruiters and college visits have largely been conducted via computer, rather than in person.

"It's really hard to make a decision about what you're going to do in a year when you don't even know what this is all going to look like when you go off to college," Stark said. "If I go to UMD, am I go-

ing to be able to go and be a freshman living on campus and go to class, or am I going to have to work on my computer the whole time?" And outside the school environment, students feel the impact of COVID-19 on their families. Jansen said she's worked with many parents who have lost jobs to connect them with financial resources to help pay bills, pay for childcare, and meet their transportation needs. Even if parents don't discuss their problems with their children, the students still feel the increased anxiety and tension, Jansen said.

Stark said that a common sign that a child is experiencing undue stress is when they start becoming more withdrawn and communicating less. When a teacher or staff

member begins to suspect a child is having emotional challenges, that's when it's essential to communicate with parents to determine where the source of the problem lies and come up with strategies for teachers or parents or both to fix it, Jansen said.

But during a time of excess stress, students are also reaching out to other students to provide support and encouragement, Jansen said.

"I have a pair of students I meet with individually, and once in a while they'll both come down to talk to me together because they're really good friends," she said. "And they have a lot of the same classes, so those two students also support each other academically, which I think is great."

Child mental health is among the pandemic

FROZEN FOOD



A heavily bundled volunteer prepares to direct traffic at the old Cook school last Thursday for the monthly Ruby's Pantry food distribution, sponsored by St. Paul's (Alango) Lutheran Church. Coordinator Julie Hindermann said that 24 volunteers working in the unheated building distributed 108 food shares, down between 40 and 50 from prior months and likely due to the subzero conditions.

Trinity Lutheran Church offers community meal on Feb. 25

COOK- Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook will be serving another of its free community meals on Thursday, Feb. 25 from 4 to 6 p.m.

The drive-through meal will feature a menu of rigatoni, salad, bread, and a brownie. The meal is free and open to the public.

**Read It
HERE**

CITY OF TOWER

Council gets an earful at listening session

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

Ambulance service members concerned with new business plan proposal

TOWER— Council members had billed Monday’s special meeting with the city’s ambulance staff as a listening session, and they got an earful from members who were concerned by a new business plan that laid out possible changes to the service’s current pay structure for its on-call staff.

The proposed change of most concern to ambulance personnel was one of three scenarios, drafted with assistance from Betsy Olivanti, of the Northeast Small Business Development Center, which called for full-time paid on-call staffing, but at a lower hourly rate of pay than at present. Council member Dave Setterberg had also proposed a fourth scenario for consideration as part of the business planning effort.

The city converted its ambulance staffing from an “all-call” system, under which every member was subject to page at all times and was paid for responding, to a paid on-call model in 2018. While many area departments have taken similar steps in recent years, in order to attract additional EMTs, Tower’s pay structure was substantially higher than other small services in the area, with pay rates of \$10.50-\$11.50 per hour. The council, back in 2017, agreed to the shift to paid on-call staffing and the relatively high wage rates with the promise by then-ambulance supervisor Steve Altenburg that an increase in the number of inter-hospital transfers would pay for the higher expenses.

Many of the ambulance personnel who spoke Monday night appeared to believe that the paid on-call system has worked well and that the service had maintained its level of profitability. “Why change the pay structure if the service has been profitable?” asked Dean Dowden, currently a paid on-call member of service.

Clerk-treasurer Victoria Ranua responded from a legal standpoint, noting that the ambulance service had not been operating in accordance with state law, which requires that all services maintain a written on-call schedule, with two staff in on-call status at all times, 24 hours a day... Even under the paid on-call system implemented in 2018, the service had on-call personnel scheduled only half the time, she said. That kept down the cost of the paid on-call system but left the service out of compliance. Staffing the system in compliance with state law would cost well over \$200,000 annually at the current on-call pay rate, on top of the per-run pay that ambulance personnel receive — an outcome that would never be economically viable for the service.

Even with half-time paid on-call staffing, the service has seen its profitability diminish significantly, according to the financial data outlined in the business plan — from an average of just over \$100,000 annually prior to the shift to paid on-call, to less than \$20,000 since.

While department revenues did increase with a higher number of transfers, the department’s expenses more than doubled with the higher payroll costs and related expenses, and travel costs associated with transfers.

The department is currently showing a \$13,000 operating profit for 2020, according to data in the business plan, but that does not include the cost of purchasing the department’s new ambulance. With associated equipment, the cost of the new rig reached \$250,000, a significant portion of which was paid out in 2020.

In the past, the service’s surpluses had helped to cover the cost of ambulance and equipment replacement, so the sharp decline in profitability is a

concern, unless the service can obtain grants or other revenue sources to cover those costs.

Robert DiCasmirro, a close friend of Altenburg, made it clear he wasn’t accepting Ranua’s explanation, the numbers in the business plan, or the need to comply with state statutes regarding staffing. “I don’t understand how you people think,” he said angrily to the council. “You want to comply with state statutes, but sometimes in a rural area, you need to bend a little.”

The state recently did provide rural departments additional flexibility, by allowing them to staff just one EMT, rather than the two previously required. Lesser-trained personnel, called emergency medical responders, or EMRs, are now allowed to be included in the schedule to make it easier for rural departments to meet staffing requirements.

DiCasmirro argued that the department would be doing better if it took more transfers, as Altenburg had proposed. “When Steve [Altenburg] was here, we did 40 percent of Ely’s transfers,” he said, and he suggested that the service accept fewer transfers because its personnel don’t have confidence in the city council. “People don’t want to do them because of what this council has done,” he said. “I’m so disappointed in you.”

The viability of Altenburg’s model has never borne out, however, as the financial data in the business plan makes clear. An extremely low utilization rate of its on-call personnel is part of the problem. On-call staff, on average, have had calls only seven percent of the time for which they’re paid, according to the financial data in the draft business plan. Most ambulance services seek to maintain their utilization rates at between 30 and 50 percent, to maximize

resource efficiency. While smaller departments generally see lower utilization rates, they make up for that by running as volunteer systems, or with a lower pay rate for on-call personnel.

City officials have also been advised by legal counsel that the current wage rates are a virtual acknowledgement by the city that the on-call hours are “compensable,” which means they could be subject to overtime pay after 40 hours. The ambulance service did not pay overtime under Altenburg, although the service could still face liability for back pay if any employees were to challenge that decision. More recently, the service has limited staff hours to 40 per week to avoid overtime liability, and that has already had an impact on the pay of its on-call personnel.

Several ambulance personnel argued Monday that any move to cut the on-call hourly pay would likely lead to the loss of personnel.

“Under the model you’re currently proposing, I’d be making roughly \$200 every two weeks,” said Steve Freshour, who says he joined the department last year because he wanted to help people. “Who do you know who could make a living on \$400 a month?” he asked.

Taunya Erickson, who lives in Buhl and covers staffing hours in Tower on Mondays and Tuesdays, said it wouldn’t be worth it for her to travel to Tower if the on-call wages were cut substantially. One of the scenarios in the business plan calls for reducing on-call pay to the \$3-\$4 range, which would be in line with the rates paid by the Cook and Orr services.

“This is my full-time job,” said Erickson. “Four or five dollars isn’t going to cut it. I’d be paying more in gas than it’s worth,” she said.

Yet, depending on the pay rate for on-call

personnel, it’s not clear that they would necessarily see significant reductions in overall pay under the lower hourly rate, at least compared to their present circumstances. That’s because the lower pay rate would largely resolve the city’s concerns about overtime liability, which would allow ambulance personnel to schedule more on-call hours, as many used to do prior to the enactment of the 40-hour limit. In addition, on-call personnel are not currently paid extra for ambulance runs, whereas they would receive the higher run pay, of \$25 an hour, under the alternative scenario. While the unpredictability of when runs occur could make for peaks and valleys in the paychecks of ambulance personnel, over the course of the year, it could leave them with equal or even higher pay than at present, depending on how many on-call hours they schedule.

On-call personnel are not required to be at the hall or at the ambulance residence but are free to remain at home or anywhere else, as long as they can respond to a call within ten minutes. Technically, ambulance personnel, like members of the fire department, are considered subject to call at all times as it is. But a significant number of the members have not regularly responded, leaving the bulk of the runs to just a handful of members, prompting concerns over burnout. The shift to paid on-call was supposed to address that concern, but it’s had mixed results as it prompted a number of previously responsive members to cut back sharply on their runs or leave the service altogether.

Information limited

Ambulance personnel might have benefitted from a better explanation of the business plan, but the business consultant Olivanti was not at the meeting, as some on the council had

expected, and it wasn’t clear why.

The council had delayed calling the meeting to order for several minutes after its scheduled start but opted to go on without her after it was clear she wasn’t coming. Councilor Setterberg told the ambulance staff that the council wanted to hear their concerns before making any decisions on any changes on the service. “We don’t want people to only express their concerns around the water cooler,” he said. “We want to get them out in the open.”

Setterberg said he was interested in allowing the department to conduct more transfers, which pay significantly more than emergency calls, although they typically require much more time. The transfers proved controversial with township representatives on the Ambulance Commission, who were concerned the extra wear and tear on the ambulances would require more frequent rig replacement. The townships contribute each year to pay for ambulance replacement. Last year, at the behest of the Ambulance Commission, the city agreed to contribute \$1.61 to the ambulance replacement fund for every mile an ambulance travels on a transfer. Those contributions have further reduced the operational profitability of transfers.

Setterberg suggested the ambulance service could use its own funds to buy a lower cost van to conduct patient transfers, essentially setting up a separate transfer business within the ambulance service, using ambulance staff who are seeking extra pay.

The council had seen no numbers on that option as of Monday’s meeting and they had no information to share with members of the ambulance department.

POLAR...Continued from page 1

sistent and bitterly cold air mass finally relented slightly on Monday, when the temperature reached one above zero, for the first time in ten days. It was the longest streak of continuous subzero temperatures to hit the North Country since 1971, according to Boulay. That is based on temperatures recorded at International Falls, which has the longest continuous temperature records in the region. Automated recording stations at several locations in northern St. Louis County reached one above zero between 2 and 3 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 15, thanks in part to brilliant sunshine and calm winds. The last above zero reading at those same stations was recorded in the late afternoon of Friday, Feb. 5.

Despite the extraordinary length of the cold wave, few places in northeastern Minnesota set record lows. One place that did was Snowbank Lake, at the end of the Fernberg Road, east of Ely, where

an active and automated weather station dipped to minus-50 degrees on Saturday morning, Feb. 13. If confirmed, that would set a new state daily record for Feb. 13, but it was one of relatively few records set during the cold snap.

Forties below zero were pretty commonplace on several nights around the region in traditional cold spots, but in many cases, that’s not cold enough to set daily records in the North Country. Those readings all reflect air temperatures — wind chills, in most cases, made it feel even colder.

The winds, which were persistent during most of the cold snap, actually helped keep overnight lows slightly warmer, noted Boulay, who said calm, clear nights offer the best opportunity to reach record-setting extremes. Cold air is denser and without the wind to keep it mixed, it naturally drains into low lying areas. Put a thermometer in one of

those low spots, and you can reach some awe-inspiring temperatures.

The extended bitter cold, combined with relatively limited snow cover, created challenges for some public utilities in the area. In Winton, a frozen water main burst, leaving the town of just over 100 residents without any water. In Ely, city officials were warning residents they may want to run their water to keep it from freezing. According to the Ely Utilities Commission, the generally accepted advice to prevent water line freeze up is to run a “pencil-width” stream of water from a faucet. And just because the weather has since warmed to more seasonal levels, the threat of water line freeze up is now likely to be a constant for at least the next couple months. “The chance of freeze up will be gone when the ice is off the local lakes in the spring,” said Ely Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski.

As a service to customers within the Ely city limits, the EUC will thaw private frozen water lines when time is available. “Signing of our liability release form is required from the property owner and tenant, if it is a rental property, prior to city of Ely personnel thawing the line,” Langowski said.

To schedule a water pipe thawing, call the utility billing office at 218-365-5900 during regular business hours Monday-Friday. For after-hours emergency service call 1-800-890-8713.

An extraordinary stretch

While multi-day periods of continuous below zero readings are hardly unusual in the North Country, this most recent stretch was exceptional for its duration, according to Boulay, even for the self-proclaimed Icebox of the Nation.

“The last time they went eight days in the

Falls was in 1979,” said Boulay. “The last time they had a ten-day stretch was in 1971.” That’s half a century ago. The area did experience an eight-to-nine day stretch (depending on the reporting station) of subzero readings back in 1996, which culminated in the new state record of minus 60, set in Tower on Feb. 2.

There are two other truly epic stretches in the record books in the Falls, noted Boulay. In 1912, residents of the border city endured 14 days with continuous subzero temperatures and went 13 days in 1924. That would leave this month’s stretch tied for the top three cold snaps, at least in duration.

There is one aspect of this latest cold snap that is both noteworthy and record-setting, notes Boulay. “It’s the latest that any of these streaks went into February,” said Boulay. The previous latest end of an extended cold snap was Feb. 12. By

mid-to-late February, the nights are shorter and the days are longer, and that makes it tougher to sustain subzero temperatures, particularly on sunny days. The area’s forests, dominated by dark pines, spruce, and fir, also help to warm the air on sunny afternoons, a phenomenon meteorologists refer to as “the pine tree effect.” While February is certainly a winter month in the North Country, the return of the sun, which is now as high as it is on Oct. 20, begins to make a considerable difference in daytime temperatures.

This extended cold snap could well put February 2021 in the books as one of the coldest months of February on record, and it comes on the heels of a December-through-January period that was record-setting for warmth. Which just goes to show that in Minnesota, if you don’t like the weather, wait a minute and... you know the rest.

CORONAVIRUS

Frigid cold snarls COVID-19 vaccine deliveries

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- State officials warned on Tuesday that bitter cold temperatures and winter storms affecting much of the nation will likely cause a temporary setback in efforts to vaccinate Minnesotans against COVID-19.

"With the storms that are occurring across the country, and in particular in the South, vaccine shipments are delayed this week," state Infectious Disease Director Kris Ehresmann said in a Tuesday press call. "Providers are having to reschedule appointments as they learn about the status of their shipments. So this may impact our timeliness metrics for next week, as providers are scrambling to reschedule and plan for this change in when their vaccine arrives."

St. Louis County Public Health Director Amy Westbrook echoed those concerns in an interview with the *Timberjay*.

"Most people aren't used to the winters that we have here," Westbrook said. "So, there are a lot of delays in the shipments getting to us in Minnesota. We anticipate that our

shipment is going to be delayed at least a day, maybe even two."

The likely delay comes at a time when Minnesota has expanded the number of vaccine providers and is in sight of having administered one million doses.

"We're now at over 927,000 total vaccine doses that have been administered to Minnesotans and reported into our immunization information system as of Sunday," state Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm said. "This is both first and second doses combined, and we expect that we will reach the one million milestone for total doses in the coming week. The number of people who've had at least one vaccine dose is now over 686,000, and 240,000 of those people have had both doses of the vaccine."

Malcolm indicated that there had been some minor glitches in getting registration systems operating for ongoing vaccinations at Walmart stores and a one-time 8,000-dose effort through Walgreens outlets, but that the issues were resolved, and vaccinations were not delayed.

Long-term care

Malcolm was eager to share positive news about the significant decline in

COVID-19 cases in long-term care facilities across the state.

"Looking at the most recent weekly data, we had just 15 cases reported in nursing homes," Malcolm said. "Even over the summer, when we were in a much, much better shape with long-term care, the numbers were well over this level. In fact, the last time we saw case numbers this low on a weekly basis was back in March at the very beginning of the pandemic in Minnesota. We see evidence that the vaccines are helping bring those numbers even further below where we had them."

Residents and staff of long-term care facilities were in the top priority group for vaccinations as elderly and ill people are considered high risk for severe cases of COVID-19, and 89 percent of the state's COVID deaths have been people age 65 and above.

Another sign of improving pandemic conditions can be found in the declining number of daily deaths attributed to COVID-19. Minnesota has reported fewer than 10 deaths on four consecutive days for the first time since Sept. 15-18. The state has reported an average of

10.3 deaths over the last seven days, which is lower than any week-long period since mid-October.

Regional data

For a second consecutive week, only six new positive COVID cases were reported across the six North Country zip code areas monitored by the *Timberjay*.

A total of 570 cases have been reported in the combined zip codes of Orr, Cook, Tower, Soudan, Ely, and Embarrass since the start of the pandemic, and the total includes cases reported by the Bois Forte Band. There have been 15 COVID-related deaths. Thirty-four cases have been associated with long-term care facilities, although that number could be higher because employment disclosure is optional during case interviews.

Although the Ely zip code accounts for the largest number of actual cases at 156, the highest concentration of cases has been in the Cook area. When converted to a comparative measure of cases per ten thousand people, Cook's rate of 702 is more than double that of Ely's 307. The other zip codes range from 447 to 532.

Westbrook said that while the cases per ten

thousand measure can be one useful data point among many in assessing the severity of the pandemic, it becomes less so as the size of communities shrinks.

"The rates are meant to even out the population factor, but when you have small populations, it is difficult to draw many conclusions," Westbrook said. "Even one sort of community outbreak or congregate care outbreak in a small community really impacts the rate. It could be a true representation of ongoing trends and transmission, but it's hard to know because the rates are so volatile with smaller populations."

Vaccination efforts in the county are going well, Westbrook said, although supplies of the vaccine remain limited.

"It's looking good," she said. "We're making the most of the vaccine we get. Across all systems that are distributing vaccine, we have close to 18 percent of our population vaccinated in St. Louis County."

Westbrook said that she wasn't aware of any cases in the county caused by the more-contagious UK variant of the virus but cautioned that the number of positive cases tested at the state public health

laboratory is only a small sample of all tests conducted. While the number of UK variant cases identified by the lab has grown to 40 statewide, Westbrook said it's possible the variant is present in the county but hasn't yet been sampled.

A newcomer to the vaccination effort for the general population 65 and older is Cook Hospital, which announced this week that it would be offering community vaccination clinics as doses are made available to them.

Director of Nursing Nichole Chiabotti said that the first clinic, to be held at the Cook Community Center, is tentatively scheduled for Feb. 24, by appointment only. However, shipment issues could interfere with that scheduling, and future clinics will depend on when more vaccines are allotted to the hospital.

"We do for sure know that we are getting vaccine for next week, but don't know if we will get any more after that," Chiabotti said. "We have been told that we will find out the Thursday or Friday before we get a shipment, which will arrive the following Monday or Tuesday, and then have 72 hours to get vaccinations administered."

HACK...Continued from page 1

Engebritson wrote. "While the school district is in the process of investigating this situation, sensitive information contained in W-2s, such as Social Security numbers, has most likely been acquired by an unknown third party."

The IRS first warned of the growing number of this type of phishing attack, targeting payroll departments of schools and businesses, in 2016. Known as a "spoofing" email, the fraudulent request for W-2 information appears to come from a company CEO, something

Engebritson confirmed for ISD 2142 school board members at a working meeting on Feb. 9.

"You couldn't tell in the email, but once the email was printed you can see the request came from me, supposedly," Engebritson said.

Engebritson emphasized that no personal banking information was obtained in the data breach, and employees were given links to identity theft webpages for the IRS, Federal Trade Commission, and FBI.

Employees have been advised to monitor their

credit reports and financial accounts as a precautionary measure, and Engebritson said that the district is working with an attorney, law enforcement, and its insurance carrier to address the breach.

"I have been working with an attorney who kind of specializes in this," Engebritson said. "He is reaching out to the three credit bureaus to notify them. We did have insurance coverage, so we are working with our insurance company. In Minnesota, we're only required (to provide employees with) one year

of data monitoring, but we're looking at the prices for two years."

The attack was similar to one that fraudulently obtained the W-2s of several thousand Bloomington Public School employees in 2017. Hundreds of schools, universities, and businesses have also been scammed in recent years.

Individual risks

According to the IRS, the most common use of the illegally obtained W-2 data is the filing of fraudulent income tax returns seeking refunds. If a scammer files a fake return before an individ-

ual files their legitimate one, the IRS will notify that individual that their tax return has been rejected. Resolving the tax refund fraud can take up to a year.

However, as the number of taxpayers filing returns online has risen, so have IRS efforts to identify fake returns when they are filed and before any refunds are issued. The IRS analyzes electronic returns using 193 filters based on characteristics of confirmed identity theft tax returns, including amounts claimed for income and withholding, filing requirements, taxpayer age, and filing history, according to a 2019 interim inspector general's report. In the first two months of 2019, 3,529 fraudulent refund returns were identified and 2,895 of them stopped before a refund was issued.

Another mechanism employed by the IRS to defeat fraudulent filings is for taxpayers to obtain

a unique PIN number from the agency that is necessary to file returns online. Engebritson said that ISD 2142 employees have been given the instructions for getting an Identity Protection PIN, which are available online at <https://www.irs.gov/identity-theft-fraud-scams/get-an-identity-protection-pin>.

Another threat from the exposed data can be if someone uses a Social Security number and other personal information to obtain a job. The IRS may determine that a taxpayer has unreported income based on what was reported for the fraudulent employee, and it may also impact how Social Security benefits are calculated and managed.

Identity theft of all types resulted in nearly \$17 billion lost in 2019 and affected one of every 20 consumers in the U.S., according to the credit agency Experian.

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ELY...Continued from page 1

the store closed immediately. The store remains closed indefinitely as an agreement to reinstate the license is negotiated with the owners.

Council members last week were amenable to giving the business a second chance, and established eligibility requirements for a conditional business license reinstatement. They hoped that an agreement could be reached between the Drop and Shop owners and city officials to reinstate the business license this week, but the resale shop owners have not come forward with a re-opening plan.

According to the resolution adopted by the council, the conditional reinstatement of the business license to the Ely Drop and Shop could occur if all the following conditions are met,

- Application of conditional reinstatement must specifically outline procedures the business will utilize to ensure no similar events occur,

- Submission of an updated owner and employee list, and licensee shall, within five days of a change of status, notify city officials as to the current employees and owners, and no employee or owner shall be of questionable moral character,

- Submittal to ongoing and random administrative inspections,

- No similar occurrences, and

- City Council will have complete discretion to review and approve conditional reinstatement terms prior to issuance.

Charges were filed

late last year in Sixth District Court in Virginia against Amanda Stevens, one of several co-owners of the retail thrift store, located at 204 E. Sheridan St., for Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree and Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Fifth Degree, both felonies.

Rumors that the thrift store was a source for illegal drugs have circulated in Ely for some time. In a statement to the city council, Ely Police Chief Chad Houde said the department began investigating the claims in earnest right after he was appointed police chief last May. Houde said an investigation he requested by the Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crime Task Force tended to support the reports circulating in town.

Chief Houde described for the council an illegal sale of methamphetamine in the downtown business, in which a confidential informant of the drug task force made a controlled buy from Stevens in the store on Oct. 7, 2020.

According to the probable cause statement attached to the criminal charges, the task force set up an undercover purchase of meth from Stevens last October, using a confidential informant who told officers he/she had previously bought meth from Stevens at the store. At that time, Stevens allegedly sold the informant approximately 1.61 grams of meth. A text message alleged to have been sent by Stevens to the informant read: "Come to donations. I'm at work. And please

don't be so loose when you text. That's how I ended up in prison last time."

The complaint further states that a review of Stevens' criminal history revealed a prior conviction for a second-degree controlled substance crime in 2009.

In a supplemental report, the St. Louis County Sheriff's Department indicates that prior to the undercover purchase by the informant, its deputies and members of the drug task force had "conducted numerous hours of surveillance and observed high amounts of suspicious vehicle and foot traffic to and from the business." The report also stated that officers had observed "multiple individuals that were the focus of an ongoing investigation into the use/sale of controlled substances, including but not limited to methamphetamine, frequenting the business."

Houde said further investigation revealed that Stevens was indeed a co-owner of the business.

"With the seriousness of the crime that was committed, I related this information to the attention of the council and mayor to consider revocation of the Drop and Shop's business license," he said.

Prior knowledge

According to Houde, the other owners of the business say they were unaware of the illegal activity until they learned of it recently. Krings, the business's majority owner, insisted in an interview with Houde that she knew nothing of Stevens' activity until late January,

when she was informed by Stevens about the charges she was facing. Two other minority owners, Casey Moravitz and Rosario Thole also indicated they were unaware that illegal drugs were being distributed through the store.

According to Ely City Attorney Kelly Klun, however, Krings was indeed aware of the activity.

"It should be noted," Houde told the council last Thursday, "that the confidential informant identified another owner, Kristen Krings (last October) as previously having knowledge of a previous sale of meth at the business."

In a surprising move, council members disputed the case evidence presented by law enforcement officials that the licensee, co-owners or employees had knowledge of the illegal drug activity in the store and failed to timely report the information to police.

Council members listened to impassioned oral arguments and written statements from as many as eight people, including other Drop and Shop store co-owners and employees, and community members, who asserted that Stevens' actions were isolated in nature and no one else ever had any knowledge of the illegal activity occurring in the store.

Council member Paul Kess sought to amend the resolution to remove the "prior knowledge" evidence as testified to by police. "I dispute those (law enforcement) findings," he said following the

presentation of numerous tearful pleas and statements of support for the community-minded resale shop. Council members agreed to the resolution amendment.

Ownership claims

Klun maintains there remains "significant discrepancy" over ownership of the Ely Drop and Shop.

"Amanda Stevens is still citing that she has ownership in the business," Klun said. "It is fair to say that there is no dispute in the evidence that an event did occur on Oct. 7 on the premises. And it is fair to say the Amanda Stevens is still claiming some ownership relative to the business."

Stevens claimed that she transferred her shares to another owner last year, but her statement contradicts the statements of the shop's other owners, who all agreed that Stevens owns 25 percent.

While Krings is the majority owner, and her name is the only one to appear on the business's license, Klun said the names of the other owners should have been included when Krings applied for the business license.

Stevens did not attend the public hearing last Thursday night. Instead she sent a letter to the city of Ely that Klun read aloud for the record.

"As a shareholder in this company, I will be asking to temporarily turn over the rights to my shares of the Ely Drop and Shop to a third party, Leslie Zupancich, who not only has 'business' experience but also a 'reputable name' in our community, (and

is someone who I trust will put the business and community best interests first and help ensure that no such future incidents occur at the business," Stevens wrote.

Stevens hopes to retain co-ownership in the businesses. "I am asking that once I complete my legalities and probationary terms, I will then be able to come back to the business rehabilitated and fulfill the obligations set forth to better continue to serve our community in the best way possible," she wrote.

Stevens faces a maximum of 20 years in prison and up to a \$250,000 fine for the third-degree charge of sale of a controlled substance. She also faces five years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine for the fifth-degree possession charge. Her next court appearance is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 22, according to court documents.

Any business license reinstatement must be approved by the city council, which meets again on Tuesday, March 2.

Council action

In other business at their Feb. 16 meeting, the council took the following actions:

- Welcomed two new city police officers (see photos on page 7).

- Appointed city resident Jeanette Palcher to the Planning and Zoning Committee.

- Granted a permit to city resident Cody Perkins to tap sap from up to eight maple trees on the 200 block and 300 block of Conan Street this spring.

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LOVE...Continued from page 1

mushers almost always starts the same way (unless you were born into a mushing family)... that is, with just a couple of dogs.

"I got my first two dogs in 2016," said Ryan, a natural resources instructor at Vermilion Community College. Miller moved to northern Minnesota from Idaho in 2016 to work for the U.S. Forest Service in Cook.

"I always really liked working with dogs," he said. "But I didn't realize mushing was a thing, and a whole community."

Ryan was no stranger to training dogs and had scent trained dogs for hunting.

Ryan started mushing with a co-worker, Tom Roach, who used his dog sled teams to bring supplies into the wilderness for forest service winter construction projects. "I realized you could have sled dogs and didn't need to do it full time," he said. "Got two dogs in 2016, a year later I had six." This year Miller has a kennel of 20 dogs at his home in rural Cook, and he started racing last year.

Ashley has been sled-dogging since she was a teenager in the Twin Cities, also starting out with two dogs. She moved to Colorado after high school and worked for a



Ryan Miller, a natural resources instructor at Vermilion Community College, moved here from Idaho in 2016. photo by P. Wattering

sled dog touring company before moving back to Minnesota. Her kennel in rural Tower currently is home to 23 dogs, but she was up to 41 dogs last summer. Eight of her dogs are now living in Colorado and giving tourists sled dog rides. Others are now with other kennels nearby. One of her dogs had a litter of nine puppies last summer, and six of those puppies are still with her and in puppy sled-dog training.

Ashley works part-time at the Vermilion Club on Lake Vermilion, "COVID-permitting," she

said, but most of her time is spent working with her dogs.

They both raced in the mid-distance Beargrease race last year, with Ashley coming in 12th, beating Ryan, who came in 14th place, by six minutes.

This year Ryan's team edged out Ashley's team by 90 seconds. The two came in 12th and 13th.

"We'd been close for the whole race," said Ryan, "but during the last leg. I hadn't seen Ashley all day, but about three hours into the final leg saw someone coming up behind me."

"Once I saw her coming, I pushed the dogs a little to stay in front. But she did get really close. It was a fun race at the end."

Ashley's team had some troubles in the race. Her lead dog, Willy, had a leg injury earlier in the season, and while he had seemed to be fully recovered, she saw he had started to limp early in the race.

"I dropped him at the first checkpoint," she said. "He was not happy with that." She moved a two-year old Finka up to lead for the next 60 miles.

"She really stepped up when I needed her to, but I don't know how much she really loved leading."

Race conditions for the Beargrease were tough. There was not a deep base on the trail, which meant mushers had to watch out for larger rocks poking up. The lack of deep snow meant it was harder to slow teams down on the downhills. And a pre-race storm left a couple of inches of powdery snow on the trail, which made it harder for the dogs to run as fast as they would like.

The two started training together last year and are hoping to combine their kennels at Ashley's Tower-area location this summer.

The couple has put close to 1,200 miles on

their teams so far this season. They ran the dogs behind ATVs on little-used gravel roads in the fall, and then many more miles were logged in the Boundary Waters once there was snow.

After a tough Beargrease, they are both looking forward to Sunday's race.

The Beargrease involves a lot of planning and supplies, along with handlers to help at checkpoints. The WolfTrack is mostly just fun, they both said, since it doesn't involve any overnight stays for them and the related additional logistics. They both had signed up for the longer 8-dog race, but Ashley decided to drop into the shorter 6-dog race while Willy is out recuperating.

The two said they were lucky to have signed up early for the WolfTrack, because all the slots were filled quite early. With so many races canceled this year, and travel out-of-country prohibited, race registrations filled up fast.

The two had been hoping to race in the Gunflint Mail Run race this year, but that was canceled. The Copper Dog, in Michigan, closed to entrants within a few minutes of opening up their registration process, Ashley said.

The lack of races means more time for trips into the Boundary Waters.

"We are hoping to do some more winter camping trips," they said.

The two expect the WolfTrack to be very competitive this year, with some highly-competitive teams entered this year.

"We are just in it for the fun," they both said, but they also are looking forward to meeting up with mushing friends at the race.

They will miss some of the race-related activities that have been canceled this year due to the safety rules put in place during the pandemic. The public is not invited to the pre-race vet checks, a popular way for folks to get up close to sled dogs. The public is not allowed at the start or finish lines. And the mushers will not have their traditional meetings and awards banquet.

The dogs, however, probably won't notice any difference.

"It was more relaxed at the Beargrease this year," said Ashley. "Less time was spent waiting for things."

But they both said they will miss seeing people get excited about meeting their dogs. And hopefully by next winter, that will be normal again.

RACE...Continued from page 1

afternoon."

The 2021 WolfTrack Classic, along with last month's Beargrease marathon, are the only races to take place in Minnesota this year because of public health concerns over the continuing coronavirus pandemic.

"This year's race will be different, but it was decided that it was important to run the race rather than cancel it," Cashman said. "In spite of the challenges that accompany planning and organizing a race during this pandemic, the race will run, unless additional restrictions are

put into place before race day."

With COVID-19 restrictions recently easing rather than increasing, the dogs will be yelping in Ely this weekend.

To comply with COVID-19 guidelines, including limiting public gatherings at outdoor activities to no more than 250 people, this year's race will be run without allowing spectators at the start/finish or any other points on the race route or musher parking area. The easing of recent sub-zero temperatures is not necessarily welcomed by the

mushers or their dogs, who prefer racing in cold temperatures, close to zero degrees, rather than conditions approaching the freezing mark. "Either way, they need to be properly hydrated and that is just as important in cold weather as warm weather," Cashman said.

Live race coverage will be provided by Ifan-TV Sports Network (<https://www.ifan.tv/page/show/872605-channel-6>), according to Cashman, along with live streaming by Mushing Midwest. Locally, WELY Radio will also be broadcasting

the race live.

In this challenging year, the WolfTrack Classic sled dog race needs sponsor support more than ever.

"Tens of thousands of dollars are needed to run these types of events, not including the extra money needed for the COVID-19 precautions. We have many major sponsors this year that stepped up to the plate," Cashman said.

"NutriSource Pet Foods, a division of KLN Family Brands, evolved from Tuffy's Pet Foods, and back during Ely's All American Race days,

they were always a major sponsor," she said. "They are still doing great things for dog sled racing. In fact, each of our racers will be receiving a 50-pound bag of their professional dog food at our musher's meeting."

As many as 90 volunteers are registered to help with the running of the dogs this year.

"We had a great volunteer campaign considering the times we're living in right now," Cashman said. "We are quite reduced this year because of the COVID restrictions. We are running with a skeleton

group. As always, the most important parts are our road crossings to keep the teams safe."

Communications will again be provided by the Vermilion Range Amateur Radio Club. The Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital assisted race organizers with developing the COVID-19 plan. Outward Bound and Wounded Warriors are contributing to road crossing safety.

For more information and race results, go to www.wolftrackclassic.com.

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BOYS BASKETBALL

North Woods routs Giants

Kleppe likes what he sees as team heads into the meat of the season

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

FIELDTWP- It's a little hard to fathom how a team that pummeled Mesabi East on the Giants' home floor and is averaging 94.5 points per game is still working on jelling as a unit, but North Woods boys basketball Head Coach Will Kleppe

saw some good signs that things are coming together in the Grizzlies' 110-57 win on Friday.

"I think the confidence is going up, that team chemistry is coming together pretty well," Kleppe said. "Our defensive effort was there right at the start. We made a lot of good passes and we moved the ball.

Everybody was very unselfish. If you play good defense, and you pass the ball well, you're going to get opportunities. We some great ball movement for some three pointers. We played a pretty complete game."

The Grizzlies spread the ball around on offense with four starters scoring in double figures. T. J.

Right: North Woods' Brenden Chiabotti eyes the bucket as he leaps for a shot.

photo by D. Colburn

Chiabotti led the way with 26 points, followed by Darius Goggleye with 21, Brenden Chiabotti with 18, and Jared

See **NW BOYS...**pg. 2B



GIRLS BASKETBALL

Ely stymies Grizz

Experience tops height as Wolves win 46-38

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ELY- The Ely girls basketball team held fast to one of the basic tenets of competition when they hosted North Woods last Thursday: When you get someone down, don't let them get up.

Even though the Timberwolves were outsized by the Grizzlies, they grabbed an early lead and then locked-in defensively to capture their first home and second overall win of the season on Thursday night with a score of 46-38.

"North Woods is young like us, so it was nice to get a win against a team we will likely be competing with for a while. I'm going to credit this win to solid defense. We played well," said Ely head coach Max Gantt.

The Timberwolves kept their opponents off balance with tenacious defense that held North Woods to barely half of the points the Grizzlies scored in their previous game against Northeast Range. The Timberwolves recorded seven blocked shots and three charges. Gantt gave a nod to the play of Laura Holmstrom

coming off the bench.

"When Laura was in, we were awesome on defense," Gantt said.

On this night, youth worked against the Grizzlies.

"We just struggled a bit coming together," North Woods head coach Liz Cheney said. "We had a couple of rookie young mistakes that we haven't made too many of this year, but we're ninth and tenth graders. Some key mistakes really kind of got in their heads."

Ely kept the pressure up on the offensive end, too, and shooting a better per-

Above: North Woods' Helen Koch dribbles down the court with Ely's Holly Dirks in hot pursuit.

photo by J. Greeney

centage from the free-throw line would have solidified the game much sooner. The Timberwolves made just seven of 29 charities on the night.

Grace Latourell led the Timberwolves with a smooth 16 points and five rebounds. Taylor Gibney was also a key component to Ely's success, not only scoring 12 points but

See **GIRLS...**pg. 2B

Wolves plagued by ball-handling woes

Turnovers allow South Ridge to crush Ely 67-18

by JORDAN PRICE
Contributing Writer

ELY — The Ely girls basketball team learned a tough lesson here on Tuesday night: You can't score if you don't have the ball. And South Ridge drove the point home as they held Ely to just 18 points in a 67-18 shellacking.

It was a rough outing, but

but Head Coach Max Gantt chalked it up to a learning experience for his young squad. "Yes, we struggled to get shots and make shots, but we are looking to put this loss behind us and keep building. They blitzed us early and as a result, we had unnecessary turnovers," he said.

Offensive stats were limited for Ely, as junior

Katrina Seliskar led the team with five points. Sophomore Madison Rohr added three points while her classmate Rachel Coughlin grabbed seven boards.

Adella Olesiak was the leading scorer for the Panthers, posting 28 points and five three-pointers. Svea Snickers also had a solid performance, with 21 points.

"South Ridge is a very good team. We are just building experience. We need to improve on protecting the ball and make overall better passes. We will keep moving forward," Gantt said.

The Timberwolves will be back at home against Silver Bay on Thursday, Feb. 25. Tipoff is at 7:15 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Wolves edge Rangers

by JORDAN PRICE
Contributing Writer

MT. IRON- The Timberwolves did just what they needed to win here on Tuesday, as they topped Mt. Iron-Buhl 58-53. Ely's Brock Latourell scored a season-high 22 points to keep Ely close and lay the foundation for a second-half Timberwolves rally.

"I thought he was the difference in the game as he hit four threes in the first half to keep us in it while we were struggling on the offensive end," said Head Coach Tom McDonald. Ely was down at the half-time mark, 26-29.

Latourell's scoring explosion was led from beyond the arc as he connected on five of eight treys for 15 of his points. Joey Bianco also had a hand in the win, tallying 16 points and seven rebounds, while Will Davies added eight rebounds.

"We did just enough on both ends of the floor to get the win," said McDonald.

The Timberwolves are scheduled to host Chisholm on Friday, with a 7:15 p.m. start. They head to Silver Bay next Tuesday to take on the Mariners. Tipoff is set for 6:30 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Grizzlies throttle Vikings

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- Scores on five consecutive trips down the floor shook the North Woods girls basketball team out of their early offensive doldrums and drove the Grizzlies to their largest offensive output of the season on Tuesday as they crushed visiting Littlefork-Big Falls, 85-54.

The Grizzlies' game plan of working the ball down low to capitalize on a height advantage was clicking from the outset, but the shots weren't falling as they fell behind 20-17.

But in a four-minute reversal of fortunes, a 19-0 run put the Grizzlies up 36-20, and the rout was on.

Madison Spears got the Grizzlies' streak going with three consecutive buckets and accounted for ten points in the run, with Talise Goodsky, Hannah Kinsey, Shyla Adams, Madi Dantes, and Brianna Whiteman also scoring points. The Grizzlies held a 14-point lead going into the half, 43-29.

North Woods kept the heat on in

See **NW GIRLS...**pg. 2B

PUBLIC HEALTH

Free “Living with Alzheimer’s” conference set

REGIONAL — The Alzheimer’s Foundation of America, or AFA, will host a free virtual Alzheimer’s educational conference for Minnesotans on Tuesday, March 16, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The conference is part of the organization’s 2021 national Educating America Tour. The conference, which is free and open to everyone, will allow participants to learn from, and ask questions of, health, caregiving and legal experts. To register, go to www.alzfdn.org/tour.

“Knowledge is a useful and powerful tool that can help make any situation easier to navigate, especially something as challenging as caring for a loved one with Alzheimer’s disease,” said Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr., AFA’s President and CEO. “Connecting families with useful, practical

information and support that can help them now and be better prepared for the future is what this conference is all about. Whether Alzheimer’s is affecting your family, you’re a caregiver, or just want to learn more, you can participate in this free virtual conference from the comfort of your home or office.”

Sessions during the AFA virtual conference will include:

►How Mindfulness Can Help Family Caregivers—Angela Lunde, M.A., Co-director for the Outreach, Recruitment, and Engagement Core with the Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center at Mayo Clinic Education, in Rochester will discuss what mindfulness is and the role it can play in the well-being and quality of life for both the caregiver and the person in their care. She will help participants identify shifts

in thinking that can lead to less stress and greater well-being. She will also help them experience a self-compassion mindfulness practice and provide information on local resources.

►Planning in Crisis — Having the necessary legal documents in place is extremely vital when a family is confronted with a dementia diagnosis. Hannon T. Ford, Certified Elder Law Attorney and Founding Attorney of The Ford Law Office, L.L.C., in Windom will talk about estate planning and medical assistance plans. He will discuss wills, trusts and powers of attorney, which are all vital in helping families to plan their long-term care. He will advise attendees on how to provide for their loved ones in the best way possible and protect their assets.

►It’s Not That Simple — Helping Families Navigate the Alzheimer’s Journey — Pam Ostrowski, Certified Dementia Practitioner, President and CEO of Alzheimer’s Family Consulting, L.L.C., and author, will provide quick tips on how to best cope with the legal, logistical, and medical decisions caregivers must make while also handling the emotional rollercoaster and communications challenges of being a caregiver. She will share her experiences as a caregiver for her mother who had Alzheimer’s and provide guidance for others who will benefit from her knowledge.

At the conclusion of the conference, there will be a special performance by the Giving Voice Chorus. Giving Voice, based in Bloomington, helps bring together people

with Alzheimer’s and their care partners to sing in choruses that foster joy, well-being, purpose and community understanding as they celebrate the potential of people living with dementia.

For more information or to register, go to www.alzfdn.org/tour. Those who can’t participate in the virtual conference or have immediate questions about Alzheimer’s disease can connect with licensed social workers seven days a week through AFA’s National Toll-Free Helpline by calling 866-232-8484 or web chatting at www.alzfdn.org by clicking the blue and white chat icon in the right-hand corner of the page. The web chat feature is available in more than 90 languages.

HOCKEY

Timberwolves blanked at Marshall

Friday’s game moved to Babbitt

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY — As the Ely High School hockey team (0-4) seeks their first win of the season, another game was canceled last

week because of the coronavirus. Perhaps a change in venue this week will put them in the win column.

The Timberwolves traveled to Duluth Marshall last Tuesday, Feb. 9, and came back home with a lopsided 9-0 loss.

As has been the case all season, Ely’s youth and inexperience was no match for a stronger, older foe. Ely did manage to

take eight shots on goal against the Hilltoppers, two in the first period, five in the second period and one in the final period.

The Timberwolves found themselves down 3-0 in the first five minutes of the game and in a 5-0 deficit after the first period. Marshall increased their lead to 7-0 after the second period and added two more goals in the last frame. They peppered Ely goalie

Chase Sandberg with 61 shots.

Ely was set to host Mora/Milaca on Saturday afternoon, but that game was canceled because of COVID-19 precautions for a Mustangs player. The game is unlikely to be rescheduled according to the ISD 696 Athletic Director.

The Timberwolves’ final home game of the season, slated for Friday, Feb. 19, was moved to

the Babbitt Arena to allow senior Jimmy Zupancich, who attends Northeast Range High School, to play on his home ice. That game against Bagley starts at 6 p.m.

Ely travels to Chetek, Wis. on Saturday, Feb. 19, and Moose Lake on Friday, Feb. 26.

NW BOYS...Continued from page 1B

Chiabotti with 16.

The team’s fifth starter, Alex Hartway, didn’t have a bucket in the scoring fest, but his performance on defense highlights what Kleppe believes is the key to this team’s ultimate success.

“We rely heavily on Alex,” Kleppe said. “We put him at the top of our defense and truly believe he’s one of the best in the section defending on ball and up at the top of the key. He creates a lot of problems for ball handlers, he takes offenses out of their rhythm. Even when he’s not scoring, he’s such a defensive asset that we keep him out there.”

In a COVID-shortened regular season, the 7-1 Grizzlies have reached the halfway point of their schedule. Ranked at the top of Section 7A, and with the highest-scoring

offense in all of Class A, the team has put up some impressive statistics. The Grizzlies have hit 47.5 percent of their shots, a number fueled in part by the number of layups they’ve scored in transition, thanks to an average 18 steals per game. North Woods has hit 31.2 percent of its three-point tries, a figure Kleppe would like to see closer to 40 percent. The team is hitting 68.4 percent of its free throws, and Kleppe would like to see improvement there, too.

North Woods has also been pulling down 42 rebounds per game and dishing out 21.3 assists. The Grizzlies have held onto the ball well, committing only 12.4 turnovers per game.

But no matter how good the numbers look right now, Kleppe is well



The Grizzlies’ Darius Goggeye dashes toward a loose ball during last Friday’s contest with Mesabi East. photo by D. Goggeye

aware that the team’s biggest tests lie ahead. Five of their remaining nine opponents rank in the top eight of the section.

“We’ve been pushing the boys hard with the

understanding that there are teams in the section coming up that are going to give us our biggest challenge,” Kleppe said. “We’re pleased with our progress, but certainly

in the second half of the season when we see those teams we’re going to have to have it all together before we run into them.”

Two teams in particular will provide matchup

problems that will force the Grizzlies to utilize all the tools in their arsenal.

“You’re not going to score on every team like we like to,” Kleppe said. “South Ridge doesn’t start anyone under 6-1. They’re 6-9, 6-5, 6-3, and 6-3 inside, and Nashauk-Keewatin the same thing. They’re huge. We don’t have the size matchup for those teams to get those easy buckets that we’ve been getting. It’s going to come down defensively to how we can stop those teams before they get it over half court, and try to get our baskets that way, with everything coming out of our defense.”

The Grizzlies will be at home on Friday against Virginia and will host Chisolm in a rare Thursday night contest on Feb. 25.

GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

also creating numerous opportunities by driving into the lane and dishing to teammates.

Madison Spears was the only frontline player able to capitalize down low for the Grizzlies, pumping

in 14 points. Guard Madi Dantes chipped in 10.

“We hustled and played really hard,”

Cheney said. “It just wasn’t coming together for us. I’d love to play Ely again and have a little bit

better mental game.”

Gantt’s overall assessment of the contest was succinct and to the point.

“First home win, felt great to get it,” said Gantt.

NW GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

the second half, running when they had the chance and pushing the ball down low to their bigs to keep building on their lead.

“That was definitely part of the plan for tonight, to take advantage of those mismatches and work the posts and let them go to town,” Grizzlies Head Coach Liz Cheney said. “Madison had 16 points, Hannah had 14, and then Talise, who’s kind of a

power forward, came in with 14, too, so those girls really came through with the scores tonight. We’re really fortunate in the fact that we have both an inside game and an outside game, and tonight clearly was a game for insiders.”

And while those were the only Grizzlies to score in double figures, all 11 North Woods players scored in the game.

The Grizzlies’ offen-

sive onslaught overshadowed a stellar game by Vikings junior forward Destiny Piekarski, who scored a game-high 37 points. Last year the Grizzlies used a box-and-one defense to try to contain Piekarski, Cheney said, but this time they stayed with straight man-to-man and held the rest of the Vikings to only 17 points.

Cheney said that she

was pleased to see many things they worked on in practice translate into game play this week, and said that she’s looking for the team to develop balance in upcoming games between playing fast and being more deliberate with shooting.

“We want to continue to build up their confidence in driving to the basket, their confidence in being able to read the defense,”

Cheney said. “That’s a little bit of what we were seeing tonight.”

The Grizzlies evened their record at 4-4 and were scheduled to be on the

road Thursday at Bigfork. North Woods will be on the road again on Tuesday for a rematch with Northeast Range, a team the Grizzlies beat 70-23 on Feb. 9.

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GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

Greenwood to look into bonding for broadband

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

Would raise local funds if federal, state grants are not awarded

GREENWOOD TWP—While there is still uncertainty about federal and state funding for broadband projects in the township, Greenwood Chair Mike Ralston said he was looking into having the township sell bonds to raise the money needed to make high-speed internet for the majority of Greenwood residents a reality.

CTC, a company that is providing broadband in this area, said they are interested in working with the township, Ralston said, and CTC is working on a budget for expanding broadband to the road-access portions of the township. Generally, these multi-million-dollar projects get funded using grants that cover about half the cost, and then the local company picks up the remainder, financing it by hooking up new customers. A study done by the area broadband group did show that providing broadband in the more densely populated areas of the township would be financially feasible.

Whether or not a project in Greenwood would qualify for either state or federal funding is an open question at this point. Questions have been raised about LTD Broadband, the company that just was tentatively awarded federal grant dollars to do projects in this area. Several groups knowledgeable about such projects are asking if LTD is capable of completing projects in this area, which require “wired” broadband instead of the wireless systems the company has installed in other regions. In addition, Frontier received state funding through the “Border to Border” program for a partial project in Greenwood Township that ended up not providing high-speed internet to homes but did install fiber optic cables in certain areas. Whether this would preclude Greenwood from receiving additional state grants is not known.

“We are still underserved,” Ralston said.

Bonding

The township would need to work with a financial firm that specializes in bonding and would be required to set up a special taxing district, Ralston said. This process, he noted, would take several months, if not more.

“It’s going to be quite a process,” he said. “We should start sooner than later.”

John Bassing, who has been

active on the area broadband committee, said a final decision on awarding the federal grant dollars should be made sometime this month. There is a chance that LTD’s application will be denied, if they cannot prove they can provide wired broadband in this area, said Bassing.

If LTD’s funding is approved, Ralston said perhaps Greenwood would be chosen as an early project.

“We have high density,” he said. “It is low-hanging fruit they should do first.”

But Ralston said beginning the process to be able to bond for funds now would give the township options if federal or state grant funds are not available, which should be known sometime later this year.

Ralston asked other board members if they would help with the legwork. The first step, he said, is to reach out to financial firms that work on bond projects.

2022 Budget

The board passed a motion to ask voters to approve a \$150,000 levy for 2022, plus an additional \$25,000 into a restricted fund to set aside for future broadband projects. The vote was 4-1 with Ralston voting against. The 2021 levy is \$150,000. Voters set the levy at the annual meeting, but the board is planning to ask that the annual meeting on March 9 be continued to June 8, when the weather should allow an outdoor meeting if indoor gatherings are still not permitted.

Interim treasurer Belinda Fazio put together two budget scenarios, one with the \$150,000 levy and the other with a \$200,000 levy. The higher levy amount did include \$25,000 for broadband.

Fazio noted the lower levy amount leaves the township with a budget reserve equal to 110 percent of expenditures, while the higher budget amount leaves a reserve of 129 percent. According to Fazio, the state recommends a budget reserve of 150 to 200 percent of their annual spending.

The new budget presentation did clear up questions raised about clerk and treasurer salaries, budgeting \$16,700 for the clerk’s salary in 2022 plus \$2,700 for additional training hours and \$500 for deputy clerk training; and \$11,000 for the treasurer plus \$2,500 for addi-

tional training hours and \$500 for deputy training.

The board passed a motion setting 2021 pay for the clerk position at \$16,700 annual salary and \$11,000 annual salary for the treasurer.

“It was confusing last year, and I apologize for that,” Ralston said.

The board did not set any limit on hours worked for either position.

Sue Drobac resigned from her position as elected clerk last August, after the board decided to cut her salary from \$2,316 a month to \$1,404 a month and limit her time on the job to 12 hours a week. Drobac had been keeping office hours for 20 hours a week.

Some residents raised questions last fall about the amount of pay the appointed interim clerk Debby Spicer was receiving, since that data was being redacted from the public claims forms that are part of the monthly meeting packet.

MAT attorney letter

Interim Clerk Debby Spicer told the board she had received an election mailing from Barb Lofquist, who is running for supervisor, and then either talked or emailed her questions about the letter to an attorney at the Minnesota Association of Townships. The letter included an application for an absentee ballot, though the letter erroneously said it was an absentee ballot (which Lofquist later realized was the wrong wording), and asked voters to vote no on Option B. Spicer said she was told “it is not illegal” to send out absentee ballot applications. But the letter, from attorney Steve Fenske, also weighed in to support the town board’s desire to adopt Option B, which gives the board the authority to appoint a clerk and treasurer, instead of having these positions elected by voters.

Spicer read at length from the letter, but it was not clear if she was reading it in its entirety.

A request by the *Timberjay* to get a copy of the letter so that the paper could accurately report on its contents has been denied by the township, at least as of this writing.

State Open Meeting law does require that any documents discussed at an open meeting be made available to review by

the public. Indeed, an advisory opinion issued in 2018 by the Minnesota Commissioner of Administration found that the Greenwood Town Board had violated this section of the Open Meeting law by not making such information part of the public packet.

After this reporter’s initial request for the letter the morning after the meeting, the clerk emailed back asking, “May I have your word you will publish it in its entirety without any changes?”

The clerk later stated since “it is part of the minutes, I will forward it to you when the minutes are approved.” She also said the paper should submit the township’s information request form.

The Open Meeting law does not carve out any sort of exception like this.

After the *Timberjay* contacted Ralston, he insisted that his only information was from the oral presentation from the clerk that is available in the recording, that he had not seen “the whole email chain correspondence,” and later added that he would have the clerk transcribe what she read from the tape of the meeting and release that information. Ralston also noted the board had refused similar requests when letters were read by individuals.

This letter was read as part of the “clerk’s report” on the agenda, and as such, does fall under the Open Meeting law.

Ralston did state he was forwarding his response to this request to Fenske and township attorney Mike Couri, but as of press time, the *Timberjay* was not granted access to the information the newspaper had requested.

Other business

► Heard that MATIT will review the township’s insurance status again in the summer. Until that time, the township will need to carry an additional policy from Western World. “They hope the nuisance suits will have been settled by then,” said Ralston. “The consistent frivolous suits are still costing the township a considerable amount of dollars.”

► Approved using ADP, a national payroll processing company, to process the township payroll and the quarterly tax filings. The setup cost is \$25 and monthly rate is \$150 based

on 30 employees. The township currently has 29 employees. Additional employees can be added for a nominal charge. Tammy Mortaloni, fire department administrative assistant, said this will eliminate the need to have both the clerk and treasurer entering the data into their own computer software. The paid-on-call and hourly staff would still need to have their data entered each month. Another benefit is that employees can opt to get automatic deposit instead of paper checks. Mortaloni has worked with ADP before and noted there are a lot of benefits to the service. ADP will provide phone support and training for township staff.

► Did not support raising the Tower Area Ambulance subsidy payment from \$15 to \$20 per capita for 2021.

► Discussed plans for the annual meeting on March 9. The meeting will open and a moderator will be elected. Then the meeting will be continued to June 8, with a contingency for bad weather. The meeting time is to be announced, potentially at 8:30 p.m., but the board needed to talk to election workers to find out when they felt the ballots would be counted. Election results will be announced at this March 9 meeting. Polls are open on March 9 from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. for the township election.

► Will hold their annual reorganizational meeting on Thursday, March 25 at 6:30 p.m.

► Heard that the interim clerk wishes to remove the clerk’s report from the monthly agenda.

► Declined to renew the township’s long-time subscription to *The Timberjay*.

► Discussed the possible road improvement project on the Birch Point Extension. The estimated township share of the project is \$62,000. Ralston said if the township does receive grant dollars for the project, the board would look into setting up a special taxing district to assess property owners along the road for the township’s share of the cost.

CITY OF ELY

Absentee voting starts next week for Ely primary

ELY—A recording of the Ely mayoral candidate forum held this week at City Hall can be viewed on YouTube (search for Ely Mayoral Candidate Forum 2021). The event was co-hosted by The Ely Rotary Club and the American Association of University Women-Ely Branch.

The event was held after the *Timberjay*’s deadline this week. Read a summary of the comments by the six candidates in the Feb. 26 issue of the *Timberjay*.

Ely resident Micca

Leider, a first-time candidate for public office, joins four current city council members, Angela Campbell, Jerome Debeltz, Paul Kess and Heidi Omerza, and former Ely mayor Roger Skraba on the primary ballot for an election on Tuesday, April 13. The top two vote-getters will face off in a general election on Tuesday, Aug. 10.

Absentee voting for the mayoral primary election begins on Friday, Feb. 26. Voters will need to complete an absentee ballot application, avail-

able in the Ely City Clerk’s office or the foyer in the entrance of City Hall. Voters can also call 218-365-3224, ext. 2, or email deputyclerk@ely.mn.us to have an application sent by mail.

The City Clerk’s office will be open Monday - Friday 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., on Saturday, April 10, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., and on Monday, April 12 from

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. for early primary election voting.

Absentee voting for the Aug. 10 general election will begin on Friday, June 25. For the general election, absentee/early voting opens on Friday, June 25. The City Clerk’s office will be open

Monday - Friday 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., on Saturday, Aug. 7, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., and on Monday, Aug. 9 from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. for early general election voting.

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Outdoors

Our lives in the
Northwoods

THOUGHTS ON A COLD SNAP

A week in the life of a below-zero adventurer

Going outside in below zero weather is not for the faint of heart. But I recently wrote here that there's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing, so I figured I would need to make good on those words by sucking it up and getting out there. That said, I truly underestimated the power of Mother Nature in the North Country.

Last Monday, I pulled up the weather app on my phone and there it read, minus 16 degrees. "Ok, Jordan. You've heard that there is proper clothing for this type of weather, but do you actually own any of it?" I semi-jokingly asked myself. After some quality



JORDAN PRICE

Googling, I realized it's more about light wool layering than anything. Fortunately, I did have the right clothing, so I knew I was ready for the cold week ahead of me.

The first activity I did this week was go for a 30-minute run. It may sound overly simple, but I tend to think of running as a summer activity. In all honesty, I was on the phone with my dad and asked him to give me an activity. "It's simple, Jordan. Go for a run," he said. "I'm

going to need different shoes for that, Dad. There's no way my Brooks can keep in the heat. Also, I think I'll look like the abominable snowman running

down the road," I responded. "Strap on some toe warmers, apply cream to avoid frost-bite, wear wool socks, and your feet will be fine. Don't forget your ski goggles," he warned me. To my surprise, I stayed warm the entire time, and got in a great run. If you think running is only for the warmer months, give it a try in the winter. You'll be pleasantly surprised.

On Wednesday, I went for a classic ski out at Hidden Valley with my friend Liz. For those following my adventures, you know that a few weeks back, I went backcountry skiing. I decided to try out the groomed trails this time and loved it. It was minus 8 degrees and before long I was actually sweating. I've never had my eyelashes freeze before, so that was a new experience. I

made sure to take a few pictures for the memory. It was amazing to see the number of people out skiing in below-zero weather. It just shows that many people in the area really embrace the cold weather. Just remember, it really is all about the clothing.

On Saturday, I was back outdoors, going ice fishing with my fiancé, my friend Clara, and her husband Bradley for the very first time. One trend that I've wanted to take part in this winter, while living in the North Country, was boiling water into "snow" on a cold day. With a real temperature of minus 15 degrees, I knew it was the day. The icehouse I was fishing in had a stove, so we boiled some lake water, went outside, and threw it high into the air.

Science alert: Why does

boiling water turn into "snow?" Well, first off, snow is not really being formed. Water quickly evaporates into a vapor that instantaneously condenses into a cloud; however, from the perspective of an outsider, it definitely just looks like a big snow cloud. Boiling water is actually closer to evaporating than ice-cold water, so when you throw boiling water into a very cold, dry atmosphere, the droplets are able to cool and evaporate in a cloud before they reach the ground. Note: If you decide to try this at home, make sure you throw the water well in front of you, or behind you, in case some of it doesn't freeze. It was definitely a fun activity that

See **BELOW ZERO...** pg. 5B



Left: A brightly colored adult white-throated sparrow, a member of one of two primary variants of this species, both of which are found here in the North Country during the warmer months. Other adult white-throated sparrows lack the bright yellow eyebrows, white throat and black and white head stripes. The two variants also have distinctive behavioral differences.

file photo

WILDLIFE

My favorite sparrows are weird. Who knew?

Every once in a while you read something new that changes the way you think about some aspect of our fascinating natural world. For me, a good example was a link my wife Jodi forwarded to me the other day.

She spends way more time browsing the vastness of Twitter than I, and she regularly comes across little nuggets that she thinks I'd like to read. After 40 years together, she knows me pretty well, and she scored a direct hit with a blog post from Audubon, by Ken Kaufman, about the fascinating sex lives of white-throated sparrows.

They, of course, are my favorite sparrow, with their "oh Canada-da-da" song that for many of us is as much a part of the North Country avian lexicon as the call of the loon or the croak of a raven. For years, I, and apparently many others, had assumed that all adult white-throated sparrows sported those bright black and white head stripes, yellow eyebrows, and prominent white throat. If you've paid attention, however, you've

undoubtedly noticed that some white-throated sparrows sport a more subdued plumage, with only a buffy hint of the stripes and eyebrows found on other birds. I had assumed these were immature birds, but as researchers have since discovered, they are actually a color variant, and the adults of this variety will never achieve the splashier colors I long associated with adult birds. It turns out that each variant makes up about half the population, and that they are divided roughly equally between males and females.

That's interesting, but it's the rest of the story that's really worth telling.

It turns out that there are distinct behavioral differences between the two variants as well. The two variants live side-by-side throughout their range, although their behavior is remarkably different. As you might guess, the flashier black and white-striped birds are the extroverts. They sing much more frequently as they defend their breeding territories and both the male and females of this variant

both sing in territory defense. And when singing isn't enough to ward off a rival, they're much more likely to get physical about it than their buffy-colored cousins.

While a stronger defense of territory would seem to make the black and white striped birds more fit as breeding partners, it turns out that buffy birds make more attentive parents, who bring more food to the nest than their flashier neighbors.

That may be one reason why mated pairs of white-throated sparrows are almost always comprised of one of each color variant. Females of either variant prefer the buffy males, because they make better dads, (they're also more likely to be faithful), so most of the available buffy males get paired to black and white striped females, because they're more aggressive in pursuing their attentions. The males of both variants tend to prefer the black and white striped females, which are more helpful in defending territory, but since most of the flashier females have already paired up with buffy males, it typically leaves the very unaggressive buffy females and black and white striped males left to pair up.

This is why as many as 95 percent of white-throated sparrow pairs that researchers have tracked were comprised of one member of each color variant. And in the five percent of cases in which two members of the same color variant mate, there's usually trouble—particularly if it's two of the flashier variety. They frequently spend too much time defending territory, or fighting between themselves, to provide for their young. Failed nesting is a frequent result.

Kaufman notes that the differences between the different variants are more typical of the differences between the sexes in most birds. He writes: "Looking at white-throats in the breeding season, we see four distinct types. To oversimplify, we could call them super-aggressive males, more nurturing males, somewhat aggressive females, and super-nurturing females. It's almost as if the white-throated sparrow has four sexes. That may sound like a joke, but it's actually a good description of what's going on."

These differences, not surprisingly, are genetically based, notes Kaufman. The buffy birds have two identical copies of

chromosome 2, but in the black and white striped birds, one copy of chromosome 2 has a large section inverted. It turns out that the mutations in this gene not only determine the color of head striping, but also provide for a whole range of behaviors. "The resulting effect is that the white-throat really does operate as a bird with four sexes," writes Kaufman, who adds that scientists have yet to find any other bird in the world with an arrangement like this.

Genetic mutations, which drive evolutionary change, are hardly unusual. Yet in most cases, a mutation that provides a survival advantage tends to become dominant in a population. In the case of the white-throated sparrow, the mutation seems to provide an advantage, but only when paired with a member of the population that doesn't share it.

I know one thing for sure. I'm going to be watching our white-throats a lot closer when they arrive in the North Country once again, sometime in April. Who knew they had such a fascinating story to tell?



MARSHALL HELMBERGER

BELOW ZERO...Continued from page 4B

I won't soon forget about. As for the ice fishing, well the fish really weren't biting. but I really wasn't disappointed whatsoever when we only had one bite in six hours. It was more for the experience. There's something about being in a small 50-degree house, surrounded by ice and snow, with your friends, playing games, and talking about life. As for the fish, I'll be back for you on a warmer day!

This week taught me three different lessons: (1)

There really is clothing for every temperature change. (2) You can be a runner in the winter months. (3) The majority of people in this area don't let the cold slow them down.

If you're someone who wants to get outside during the cold snaps, but don't really know where to start, make sure you have some good wool base layers and purchase some hand/feet warmers. Go at it with a positive mindset, and you'll be surprised where you end up.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather

Friday				Saturday				Sunday				Monday				Tuesday			
15 -7				20 8				28 14				34 22				34 12			
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.
02/08	-6	-34	0.00	02/08	-9	-36	0.00	02/08	-10	-34	0.00	02/08	-6	-29	0.00	02/08	-8	-41	0.00
02/09	-2	-34	0.00	02/09	-5	-37	0.00	02/09	-6	-34	0.00	02/09	-4	-20	0.00	02/09	-4	-41	0.00
02/10	-2	-30	0.00	02/10	-3	-32	0.00	02/10	-4	-30	0.00	02/10	-6	-20	0.00	02/10	-3	-36	0.00
02/11	-1	-35	0.00	02/11	-4	-38	0.00	02/11	-6	-35	0.00	02/11	-8	-29	0.00	02/11	-5	-39	0.00
02/12	-4	-36	0.01 0.2"	02/12	-6	-38	tr 0.1"	02/12	-8	-36	0.00	02/12	-9	-31	0.00	02/12	-6	-39	0.00
02/13	-6	-38	0.00	02/13	-9	-42	0.00	02/13	-11	-38	0.00	02/13	-9	-36	0.00	02/13	-9	-42	0.00
02/14	-7	-39	0.01 0.1"	02/14	-10	-40	0.00	02/14	-10	-39	0.00	02/14	-9	-29	0.00	02/14	-11	-42	0.00
Total			0.39 49.9"	YTD Total			0.62 35.9"	YTD Total			0.66 48.2"	YTD Total			0.38 NA	YTD Total			0.26 37.6"

We're your most reliable local news source!

Check Out These...

Snowmobile HOT Spots

Area Trail Conditions

Taconite Trail
Fair to Good Condition, Groomed 1-3" base, 7-17" snow on ground

Arrowhead Trail
Fair to Good Condition, Groomed 1-3" base, 6-16" snow on ground

1 **Norman's One Stop & Motel**

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218-757-3272
normansorrnmn.com

2 **Voyagaire Lodge & Houseboats**

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www.voyagaire.com

3 **Vermilion Park Inn B&B**

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5 **Bayview Bar & Grill**

SNOWMOBILES WELCOME

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FULL MENU & BAR

2007 Cty Rd 77, Tower, MN
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6 **SAMZ Place**

Happy Hour:
Mon-Thurs: 4-7 PM
Open 10 AM • 7 days a week

Saturday Happy Tabs:
Sat: 10 AM-3 PM

1225 Old Winton Road Ely, MN
218-365-4175

7 **VERMILION CLUB & POOR GARY'S PIZZA**

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Fri, Sat, Sun: Noon-Close
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753-5707 Pizza

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- 5-7 pm happy hour Mon-Fri.
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FIREWISE: A MONTHLY SERIES

Be firewise: tips for wildfire resiliency

by GLORIA ERICKSON
Firewise Coordinator

REGIONAL- Our abundant forests are what makes living in the Arrowhead region of Minnesota so great, but did you know those forests are at high risk for wildfire? In 2017, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) alone spent over \$25 million dollars fighting wildfires in Minnesota.

As residents in the Arrowhead, we have a tremendous responsibility to take charge of lowering our wildfire risk and better our chances of surviving a wildfire. As your St. Louis Firewise Coordinator, supported by your local fire departments, we want to help you identify actions you can take to improve your chances of surviving a wildfire. These actions will help fire fighters better protect the community and themselves



in a wildfire situation.

The number one concern I hear from our local fire fighters and emergency personnel is visibility of your property address sign and access to your property, which is critical when they are trying to respond to emergency situations. If you live in a rural area, please make sure you have a new, two-sided reflective 911 address sign that is installed perpendicular to the road. If you do not have that type of sign, it is easy to order one for \$35. In St. Louis County, contact Holly Olson at 218-726-2921 or email

addressing@stlouiscountymn.gov. When installing, the sign post should be placed within ten feet of your driveway access and be between four and ten feet high from the edge of the road surface. Make sure all brush is cleared around the sign for easy visibility, which can be worsened by smoke or nighttime conditions. A new sign is a small price to pay to protect you and your property.

If you live in a municipal area, contact your city clerk for instructions on obtaining an address sign if you don't have one, and regulations regarding the posting of your house number.

The second major concern for fire fighters and emergency personnel is obstructive access to your property. Fire trucks and other emergency vehicles are large pieces of equipment, but the lives and safety of our emergency responders is even more important. Every second counts in an emergency, and if emergency vehicles are unable to get down your driveway or maneuver a turn-around, it places them in danger. If you live in a rural area make sure your driveways are cleared of trees and overhanging branches, creating an egress at least 14 feet wide and 14 feet tall. Make sure there is plenty of clearance for fire trucks or ambulances to turn around and exit your property quickly.

Visit <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/firewise> for other valuable tools to help you, your property and your community become more wildfire resilient.

Are you interested in being notified regarding an emergency situation in your county? Register online for notifications that come straight to your phone. All information is strictly confidential.

Register For St. Louis County notifications at Northlandalert.com:

<https://member.everbridge.net/453003085616005/login>

Register for Lake County Emergency notifications <https://member.everbridge.net/453003085619442/login>

For more information, contact Erickson by email at gloria@dovetailinc.org or by phone at 218-365-0878.

Information provided by the St. Louis County Firewise Coordinator, Gloria Erickson.

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Habitat projects continue through the pandemic

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

REGIONAL- Sitting in an empty banquet room at the Mt. Iron Community Center earlier this month, Nathan Thompson looked a bit lonely. But the story the executive director of North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity told during their virtual annual dinner, with help from board members, volunteers, Habitat families, and donors was one of continued progress and success through an unusual year.

"This is supposed to be an event to inspire," he said of the annual dinner, which in 2020 raised over \$19,000 for area Habitat home builds. By the end of the well-produced virtual gathering, Habitat had raised about three-quarters of their 2021 goal of \$20,000.

Thompson explained that cash donations from area businesses had already brought in \$7,500, an amount that was almost matched that evening through private donations.

Other businesses, including contractors,

lumberyards, and home centers, also make significant in-kind contributions to help keep Habitat homes affordable for area families.

Board President Greg Krog said that the challenges created by COVID-19 did not hamper the group's mission of putting God's love into action by providing safe and affordable housing for families.

Progress on four homes was put on hold last spring, but by June the group had safety measures in hand so that construction could continue. All the



2019 projects scheduled for completion last spring were completed, and work on four new homes began in the fall.

"The ringing of Habitat hammers gives evidence that our volunteers, donors and staff are building the future," said Krog. "Together we have joined with Habitat to help over 100 area families with home ownership."

The local Habitat chapter, established in 1995, has provided home ownership to 131 parents and 218 children, Krog said.

"But our job is not finished. We know that there is an ever-increasing number of our neighbors who need affordable homes."

"It is harder and harder to find safe and affordable housing," said Thompson, who told a story of one applicant, now a Habitat homeowner, whose children would wake up in the cold of winter with their blankets frozen to the wall.

Habitat's homes are not only affordable, but also built to be as energy-efficient as possible making it easy for homeowners to budget for their utility bills.

The event featured a Habitat homeowner in Biwabik, a single mom who talked about how owning her own home has given her family, which includes two young boys, stability and confidence in meeting life's challenges.

"It's nice to know what my bills are going to be each month," said Kristine Edstrom. "We don't need to be using electric heaters [which are costly to run]." Edstrom said being able to budget for monthly expenses has meant she's been able to save money to have on

hand for emergencies.

Having a safe home during the pandemic has made her family's life more stable.

"It's enough when you are worried about what the world is doing," she said. "I am a lot less stressed than I would have been three years ago."

Being a homeowner also means she knows she is working for her children's future.

"Once the home is paid off, it will be our home forever," she said. "There is a tomorrow for them."

Edstrom said the process of building the house also grew her confidence.

"Most people think this is a handout," she said, "but it is really a tool. If you are not willing to do the work, it's not going to work for you."

She has put the skills she learned working on the house to good use and is now able to do minor renovations and repairs herself.

Providing families with a safe place to live, and the tools to stay in their home, is central to Habitat's mission.

"Our vision is to see a world where everyone has a decent place to live," said Thompson, "and to bring our community together to make that happen."

Habitat is able to keep home costs low by using mostly volunteer labor, including architectural work donated by area firms, discounts from area vendors, and professional contractor work provided at reduced rates. Homeowners are also required to commit to a substantial amount of "sweat equity" on their own project or at other Habitat builds. Homeowners are expected to contribute 200

hours of volunteer time per adult, plus an additional 100 hours from family or friends.

Marnie Maki, who is the group's family services manager, helps shepherd families through the application and home construction process.

The pandemic made this job more complicated, but she was amazed at how resilient this year's Habitat families were.

"Sometimes I think I have the best job," she said, "because I get to work directly with the families."

She also noted that Habitat families have been able to keep up with their mortgage payments during the pandemic. Habitat mortgages are generally 30 years and typically cost less than area rent payments and include insurance and property taxes. Habitat mortgages are a pay-it-forward financing tool; these payments are used to fund future Habitat projects. In addition, North St. Louis County Habitat helps fund the construction of Habitat homes in Mexico.

Learn more

For more information on Habitat for Humanity, including how to volunteer, donate, or apply to the home ownership program, visit www.nslchfh.org. You can also view the virtual gathering on the website or on the group's Facebook page.

Habitat finished a project in Ely last year, and this year the Tower Economic Development Authority is hoping to start the process of working with Habitat to build a home on a TEDA-owned lot in Tower.

You're invited to a

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Communities to benefit from CDBG grants; final approval still need by county

Projects in Tower, Breitung, Ely, and Cook

REGIONAL— Several area communities will see project funding through the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, assuming the St. Louis County Board approves the recommendations recently issued by a county advisory committee.

While the funding comes from Washington, D.C., the program is administered locally, typically by cities or counties. Among the local projects recommended for funding are the following:

➤ \$152,000 to the city of Tower to provide partial funding for a planned upgrade to utility infrastructure, roadway improvements and realignment, and improved

stormwater management along Pine Street surrounding the Tower Civic Center. The city has already received \$472,000 from the state Local Road Improvement Program and \$100,000 from the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation as part of the roughly \$1 million price tag for the project.

➤ \$100,000 to the city of Ely as part of a \$1.379 million water, sanitary sewer, and street reconstruction along Washington St., Lawrence St., West Chapman St., and 7th Ave. E. The CDBG funds will be earmarked for the work along West Chapman.

➤ \$100,000 to Breitung Township as part of a \$676,000 project to replace old and deteri-

orated sanitary sewer line along a stretch of 4th Ave. in Soudan between Gordon and Jasper St. The work is expected to reduce inflow and infiltration into the Tower-Breitung wastewater treatment system, which is close to capacity.

➤ \$40,000 to the city of Cook as part of a \$95,000 project to replace a main lift station pump that supplies the city's wastewater treatment facility.

The recommendations for funding are expected to go to the county board as early as March, once the county has received its official funding notification from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Obituaries and Death Notices

Wilbert W. Luhta

Wilbert W. Luhta, 95, originally of Waasa Township, peacefully passed into the arms of our Lord Jesus on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021, at his home in Ely. A gathering of family and friends to celebrate Wilbert's life will be held later in the spring. Interment will be at the Waasa Cemetery.

He is survived by his wife of 16 years, Joan Carlson Luhta; niece, June (Wesley) Boyle; great-niece, Tammy (Mark) Phillips; great-nephew, John (Sara) Robich; Joan's children, Karen (Craig) Thomand Donna (Leonard) Raati; grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Theodore W. Schreffler Sr.

Theodore "Ted" Woland Schreffler Sr., 89, of Ely, passed away on Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021. Visitation is at Kerntz Funeral Home from 4-7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 18, with funeral services on Friday, Feb. 19, at 12 noon. Family arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Vondalee Carpenter Schreffler; children, Shelby (Greg) Hochman of Bloomington, Ted Jr. (Heather) of Eveleth, Glen (Melodee) of Babbitt, Eugene (Robbie) of St. Paul, Roger of Ely and James (Tricia) of Ely; grandchildren and great-grandchildren; nieces and nephews.

Read us online at timberjay.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Bearville Township Annual Town Meeting Tuesday, March 9, 2021

The Annual Town Meeting for Bearville Township will be held on Tuesday, March 09, 2021, beginning at 6:30 pm at the Bearville Town Fire Hall, to set the levies, and to conduct any and all other business proper to be conducted when the Annual Meeting is convened. COVID-19 social distancing and face mask restrictions will be in place. Residents of Bearville Township that are eligible to vote in Bearville Township may vote at the Annual Meeting. All meetings are open to the public. The meeting will be available for teleconferencing. If you would like access please contact the Clerk at the number or e-mail below.

In case of inclement weather, the Annual Town Meeting will be held one week later on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at the time and place stated.

Kathy Cressy, Bearville Town Clerk
(218) 376-4495 bearvl@frontiernet.net

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19 & 26, 2021

TOWN OF EMBARRASS Annual Meeting Notice

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Embarrass Township, County of St. Louis, State of Minnesota, that the Annual Township Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 9, 2021. In case of inclement weather, the meeting may be postponed until the third Tuesday in March (3/16).

The Annual Meeting will commence at 7:00 pm to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law. This meeting will be held at:

Embarrass Town Hall, 7503 Levander Rd., Embarrass, MN 55732

Jennifer Boese, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19, 2021

LEIDING TOWNSHIP BOARD OF AUDIT

The Leiding Township Board of Audit will be held on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at the Leiding Town Hall at 6:30 p.m.

Marie Milan, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19, 2021

KUGLER TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Kugler Town Board will hold the Opening of their Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday, March 9, 2021, at 6 p.m.

The regular monthly town board meeting will follow. In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

Social distancing and mask-wearing will be followed.

Christopher Suikonen, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19, 2021

Notice of Election MORCOM TOWNSHIP

State of Minnesota, County of St. Louis NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that we will hold a township election on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at: BEAR RIVER COMMUNITY CENTER 12512 HWY 22, COOK, MN 55723

Polling place will be open from 4:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M.

TOWNSHIP OFFICES:
1 Supervisor, 3 year term
1 Treasurer, 2 year term

Sasha Lehto, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19 & 26, 2021

MORCOM TOWNSHIP ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

MORCOM TOWNSHIP ANNUAL TOWN MEETING will be held on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 following the closing of the Township Elections at 8:00 pm. Location: Bear River School, Hwy 22, Cook, MN 55723.

Sasha Lehto, Morcom Township Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19 & 26, 2021

VERMILION LAKE TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Vermilion Lake Township, County of St. Louis and State of Minnesota, that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 9, 2021.

In case of inclement weather, the election and meeting will be postponed until Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

The election poll hours will be open from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at which time the voters will elect by ballot:

One Supervisor for a term of 3 years
One Supervisor for a term of 1 year
One Treasurer for a term of 2 years

The Annual Meeting will commence at 8:15 p.m. to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

The Annual Election and Meeting will be held at the following location:

VERMILION LAKE TOWN HALL
6703 WAHLSTEN ROAD

NOTE: Board of Canvass will meet following the Annual Meeting.

Crystal Alaspa, Vermilion Lake Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19 & 26, 2021

Notice to the Voters of the Town of Crane Lake ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of the Town of Crane Lake, County of St. Louis, State of Minnesota, that the Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 9, 2021, at 5:30 PM at the Crane Lake Chapel Fellowship Hall to set the levies, and conduct all necessary business prescribed by law. In case of inclement weather, the Meeting may be postponed until Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

Jo Ann Pohlman, Clerk, Town of Crane Lake

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19 & 26, 2021

LEIDING TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Leiding Township, County of St. Louis and State of Minnesota, that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at the Leiding Town Hall.

In case of inclement weather, the election and meeting will be postponed until Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

The election poll hours will be open from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at which time the voters will elect by ballot:

One Supervisor for a term of 3 years
One Treasurer for a term of 2 years

The Board of Canvass will follow the election.

The Annual Meeting will commence following the Board of Canvass to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

The regular town board meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 10, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.

Marie Milan, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19 & 26, 2021

CERTIFICATE OF ASSUMED NAME

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333. The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable customers to be able to identify the true owner of a business.

Assumed Name: Red Fox Forestry
PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: 45 S Erie Street, Aurora, MN 55705 United States
NAMEHOLDER(S): Kelvin C. Tryon, 45 S Erie Street, Aurora, MN 55705 United States

By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

Dated: February 7, 2021
SIGNED BY: Kelvin C. Tryon
MAILING ADDRESS: none provided

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 12 & 19, 2021

CERTIFICATE OF ASSUMED NAME/ AMENDMENT TO ASSUMED NAME

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333. The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable customers to be able to identify the true owner of a business.

Assumed Name: Kara Polyner
PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: 766 E Madison St., Ely, MN 55731
This certificate is an amendment of Certificate of Assumed Name File Number 1954950-2, originally filed on 8/18/2006, under the name Border Country Sign Co.
NAMEHOLDER(S): Kara Polyner, 766 E Madison St., Ely, MN 55731

By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

Dated: February 16, 2021
SIGNED BY: Kara Polyner, Owner/President

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19 & 26, 2021

Find It Here

Keely Drange, Township Clerk, Township of Eagles Nest

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19 & 26, 2021

EMPLOYMENT



Retail Manager

Wintergreen Northern Wear creates quality outdoor apparel on the main street of Ely, MN and is looking for a friendly, outgoing and experienced individual to join our retail team! If you're looking for a dynamic position with competitive wages that will keep you busy full time and year round, contact by email at sola@wintergreennorthernwear.com or by phone at 218-365-6602. Customer Service or Retail experience required. Preferred experience: Manager experience, love of the outdoors and computer-savvy. Offering \$16 an hour starting wage for experienced individuals. Benefits included. Position is Full-time, 40 hours a week. Feel free to swing by the store 205 East Sheridan Street for more information and to meet some of the crew! 2/19



Boundary Waters Care Center is looking for motivated caregivers in the following positions:

Certified Nursing Assistant- Flexible Full-Time and Part-Time Positions Available. Benefits are available for full time positions, competitive pay up to \$18.36 per hour (with experience credit pay given to qualified applicants), paid time off.

Nursing Assistant in Training- Boundary Waters Care Center is offering Certified Nursing Assistant classes, free of charge to the student! We offer the opportunity to work in the facility as a Nurse Assistant while enrolled in the class to become certified.

Apply today at <https://boundarywaterscc.com/careers/>

For more information contact Sarah Spate, Human Resources, 200 W Conan St, Ely, MN 55731, or sspate@boundarywaterscc.com, or 218-365-8756. 2/19

SEEKING PART-TIME MANAGER ELY-WINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Ely-Winton Historical Society, located in the Fine Arts wing of Vermilion Community College, is seeking a manager for the day-to-day operation of the Ely-Winton Historical Society office and museum. Duties include responding to oral and written communications received, overseeing the Society's artifacts, displays, videos, books, and festivals, coordinating research with the public, grant writing, and communicating with both Vermilion Community College and the Ely Chamber of Commerce. Computer literacy a must.

Compensation: Rate of pay will start at \$12.00 per hour. Average hours: 20 hours per week. There will be a three-month probationary period after which the rate of pay will be determined.

Anticipated date of hiring is April 1, 2021

For more information or to submit a resume, contact Margaret Sweet, Ely-Winton Historical Society, c/o 1900 East Camp Street, Ely, MN 55731. 218-365-3226 or 218-827-2386, or email ewhsmuseum@gmail.com

Resumes will be accepted if emailed or post-marked by March 15, 2021.

An Equal Opportunity Employer
Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 22, Feb. 5, 19 & March 5, 2021

Office Manager

PT, Flexible hours. Competitive pay. Experience using QuickBooks and Microsoft Office.

To apply: Send resume to Immanuel Lutheran Church PO Box 466, Tower, MN 55790 or call the church at 218-753-2378 with questions. 2/19



Sewing

Wintergreen Northern Wear creates quality outdoor apparel on the main street of Ely, MN. We are looking for creative, talented individuals to sew our garments. Have previous sewing experience? We'll train you on our industrial machines. Livable wages and a cheery, clean work environment. Call 218-365-6602 or email sola@wintergreennorthernwear.com for more information. Apply by email or at our store located at 205 East Sheridan Street, Ely, MN. Position is Full-time, 40 hours a week. 2/19

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Range Funeral Home



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"Friends Helping Friends"

Super Crossword

Answers

I	W	A	S	B	I	M	O	D	A	L	B	E	T	H	M	O	B		
N	E	N	A	A	S	I	N	I	N	E	A	R	E	A	C	O	D	E	
D	A	N	I	E	L	O	R	T	E	G	A	L	E	A	V	E	N	E	D
I	S	I	D	R	O	O	T	O	N	I	C	K	E	L	O	R	E		
R	E	E	I	N	C	H	A	L	A	I	T	E	T	E					
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L	A	Y	A	W	A	Y	D	E	A	L	T	N	E	O					
A	D	A	M	N	E	V	B	A	R	R	E	L	O	R	G	A	N		
T	R	I	A	G	E	S	I	C	U	A	E	R	I	A	L	S			
M	A	R	Y	A	M	D	O	O	R	S	T	E	P	E	M	T			
S	G	T	L	U	C	I	L	L	E	L	O	R	T	E	L	H	A	L	
R	A	P	A	V	I	A	T	O	R	S	A	S	P	E	C	T			
I	P	A	D	A	P	T	E	N	F	U	E	L	R	O	D				
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T	S	E	S	A	V	O	R	B	D	A	L	T	O	N					
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O	V	U	M	E	S	A	U	D	O	R	S	O	O	N					
C	R	I	M	E	L	O	R	D	T	E	D	I	T	O	N	Y	A		
R	O	O	M	R	A	T	E	R	O	L	E	R	E	V	E	R	S	A	L
U	N	T	A	S	T	E	D	D	U	A	L	U	S	E	S	I	L	O	
D	I	A	E	E	L	S	A	T	W	A	T	E	R	O	L	E	G		

King Crossword

ACROSS

- Seize
- Butte's kin
- Cardinal cap letters
- "Othello" villain
- In — (lined up)
- Weeding tool
- Reality show for aspiring entrepreneurs
- PC key
- Minor quibbles
- Hospital sections
- Type of beam
- Pack (down)
- Reverberate
- Rubber wedge, say
- Small battery
- All better
- Actress Thurman
- Hoedown musicians
- Author Harte
- Seeing things
- Tubular pasta
- Tribal emblem
- Coffee, slangily
- Mess up
- Temporary
- GPS suggestion
- Last write-up
- Despot
- British verb

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38	39				40	41					
42				43	44				45	46	47
48				49					50		
51				52					53		

- Snatched
- Reply to "Shall we?"
- White wine cocktail
- Mornings (Abbr.)
- Piece of lettuce
- Exotic berry
- Elm, for one
- Low digits
- Union payment
- Bruins legend
- Portent
- Canape spread
- South Carolina uni-versity
- Decorate Easter eggs
- Actor Warren
- Beetle Bailey's rank (Abbr.)
- Garr of "Tootsie"
- Scraps
- Unite
- Museo display
- Showtime rival
- Jargon suffix
- Squealer
- Hosp. scan

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

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

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www.stlouiscountymn.gov
or call 218-726-2422

Equal Opportunity and Veteran-Friendly Employer 2/19

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• Bachelor's Degree preferred;
• Previous coaching experience preferred;
• Must be available for several practices/games per week from August through October, including some weekends and during school break periods.

Application and full job description is available at www.ely.k12.mn.us.

A complete application must include the following:
• District Application
• Resume

Mail materials to: Ely Public Schools, Attn: Superintendent, 600 E. Harvey St., Ely, MN 55731 or email mwognum@ely.k12.mn.us

Stipend: \$3,920

Deadline to apply: March 5, 2021; open until filled.
Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19 & 26, 2021

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VIRGIE HEGG HOSPICE PARTNERS can provide help for patients and their families in ways such as: comfort care, massages, last wishes and more. For more information, contact Program Director Becca Bundy at 218-780-5423 or vhhpdirector@gmail.com. This ad is paid for by Virgie Hegg Hospice Partners.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Ely AA OPEN GROUP MEETINGS- in person meetings, Wednesdays & Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, 915 E Camp St., Ely

MS SUPPORT GROUP- meets the second Friday of the month at 1 p.m. at the Babbitt Municipal Building, senior room. Open to all. For information contact Mary at 218-827-8327.

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

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

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

BABBITT AL-ANON- meets Thursdays at 7 p.m. in the upstairs of Woodland Presbyterian Church.

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

VIRGINIA AA WOMEN'S MEETING- Ladies by the Lake. Tuesdays at 12 noon. Peace United Methodist Church, 303 S 9th Ave, please use side door and parking.

AA OPEN MEETING- Thursdays at 7 p.m. at Woodland Presbyterian Church, Acacia Blvd. and Central Drive in Babbitt.

ELY WOMEN'S OPEN AA MEETING- Every Monday at noon at Ledgerock Community Church, 1515 E Camp St., Ely

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH DRUGS, give yourself a break. There is a way out with the help of other recovering addicts in Narcotics Anonymous. We have been there. For meeting or other information call 218-728-3199. (Narcotics Anonymous is a non-profit organization.)

HIV/AIDS? For confidential compassionate local support call the Rural AIDS Action Network, toll-free 1-888-647-RAAN(7226).

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King Crossword

Solution time: 23 mins.

GRAB MESA STIL
IAGO ARROW HOE
SHARKTANK ALT
NITS WARDS
LASER TAMP
ECHO DOORSTOP
AAA CURED UMA
FIDDLERS BRET
EYES PENNE
TOTEM JAVA
ERR SHORTTERR
RTE OBIT TSAR
ISE NONE YETI

SCRAMBLERS

solution
1. Wonder 2. Rescue;
3. Rebuke; 4. Dawdle

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Super Crossword

BACKUP FUNCTION

ACROSS
1 "When — your age ..."
5 Having two systems
12 One of the "Little Women"
16 Angry crowd
19 "99 Red Balloons" band
20 Really foolish
21 First digits dialed, often
23 * President of Nicaragua
25 Added yeast to, as bread
26 San —, Buenos Aires
27 Oklahoma tribe
28 * Rock yielding element #28
29 Riddle-me —
30 1/36 yard
33 Jai —
35 Head, to Fifi
36 * Historical French area
40 Way of being torn, thrilled or loved
44 Put aside for future use
45 Handed out
47 Prefix with soul

48 With 8-Down, 1859 George Eliot novel
51 Cal. neighbor
52 * Crank- turned instrument
55 Prioritizes, as patients
58 Hosp. area
60 TV antennas
61 Bond film actress d'Abo
62 Place for a welcome mat
66 CPR giver
67 Mil. officer
68 * An off- Broadway theater is named for her
71 Linden of TV
74 ice-T's music
76 Plane fliers
77 Viewpoint
79 Apple tablet download
82 A fifth of fifty
83 Nuclear reactor part
84 * Popular citrus fruit
88 "I solved it!"
90 Nile vipers
91 China's Lao- —
92 Fully enjoy
93 1966-2013 bookstore chain

96 Funny feline photo meme
99 * Musical group playing industrial drums
104 Egg cell
106 Genesis twin
107 Diana of "Dance Hall"
108 Ball or bass ender
109 * Mafia boss
113 Newsman Koppel
115 2017 biopic about an Olympic figure skater
117 Per-night cost to stay at a 105-Down
118 "Mr. Mom" plot premise (and what the answers to the starred clues have)
121 Like not- yet-sampled food
122 Two-function
123 Fodder tower
124 Day, in Spain
125 Squirmy fish
126 Lee who advised Reagan and Bush
127 Couturier Cassini

DOWN
1 Gandhi of India
2 Ferret's kin
3 Lennox and Potts
4 Uttered
5 "Nonsense!"
6 Kin of "equi-"
7 Old space station
8 Hip about
9 Related to food intake
10 African land
11 Meadowland
12 Island east of Java
13 Build
14 Stovetop whistler
15 Can't say no
16 Part of MSG
17 Polish river
18 See 48-Across
22 Big name
24 "Fanny" author Jong
28 San Fran NFLer
31 Tribal groups
32 Gordie of hockey
34 Verdi's title slave
37 Makeup brand
38 Pasta dish
39 Head of corn
41 Collects, as a harvest

42 River duck
43 Many heirs
46 Sprang
48 24-hr. "bankers"
49 Tow
50 Business of Delta
52 Chemistry lab tube
53 Ominous last words
54 Cup edge
56 Female bud
57 Rhea's kin
59 Fizzy drink
62 Fraction: Abbr.
63 — gin fizz
64 Vicious vortex
65 Lifesaving locs.
69 "Lady for a Day" director Frank
70 It flows in la Seine
72 Rent- — (security guard)
73 Classic Ford models
75 Ending for lime
78 Blueprints
79 Part of IHOP: Abbr.
80 Part of UTEP
81 Claim the truth of

83 Actress Edie
85 Colorado NHLers, to fans
86 Eminent
87 Coll. seniors' tests
89 Challenging
93 "Never on Sunday" rule
94 Person who is prospering
95 Opposite of east, in Madrid
97 Key next to a period
98 Disinclined
100 Dine away from home
101 Throat part
102 "Casino —" (Bond film)
103 Not digital
105 Roadside lodging
109 "Dam it!"
110 Rice-A- —
111 Greek vowel
112 Crimson and cherry
114 Boxer Oscar — Hoya
116 Roughly
118 Std. for a nutritionist
119 Deep groove
120 Suffix with Siam

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SNOWFLAKES
by Japheth Light

There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆
◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

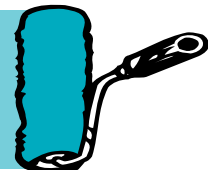
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1	4	7	6	5	8	9	2	3
8	6	9	7	3	2	5	1	4
5	3	2	1	4	6	8	7	9
7	8	1	9	2	5	4	3	6
6	9	4	3	8	7	2	5	1

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117										118			119	120				
121										122							123	
124						125				126								127



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Awe

DOWNER

Deliver

SECURE

Oppose

BEEKUR

Saunter

LAWDED

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is a new _____!"

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