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the TIMBERJAY

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LAND RIGHTS

Proposed road access roils Eagles Nest

Board to decide Tuesday whether to build road platted nearly a century ago

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

EAGLES NEST TWP— Township officials here are expected to decide next Tuesday whether to take possession of a small portion of land, dedicated to the public back in 1928, to build a road access for a fire department water source on

Eagles Nest Lake One. It might seem a small matter, but it's a proposal that has generated considerable consternation with nearby property owners who worry both about the cost of the road and, perhaps most importantly, that land they've essentially had to themselves for years could be opened up to regular public use.

Also at issue is several hundred feet of shoreline that lies in a narrow strip along the eastern shoreline of the lake, just off the Bear Head Lake State Park Road, the township's main thoroughfare. The shoreline, part of the same plat, was also dedicated to the public nearly a century ago, but was never accessible from the land, since the

platted roads were never built. It was all part of an unusual plat, known as Rearrangement Eagle Nest, which created dozens of tiny lots as part of a subdivision created by the late Mathew M. O'Meara. The lots that O'Meara expected to sell were located just off the lake and, as part of the

See...ROAD pg. 9



NEW BUSINESS IN ELY

Sweet bliss

Ely entrepreneur makes cakes and other treats

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – At the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic a year ago, while most businesses were pausing operations and people were pondering what the future would bring, one local entrepreneur took the giant leap of starting her own business.

While not a new idea in these parts, Erin Moravitz ramped up her hobby of making and decorating cakes and turned that passion into a cottage industry. "E's Taste of Bliss" seems like an apt title and description for her homemade cakes and treats. And she is having trouble keeping up with demand.

"I officially started the business about a year ago, but I would have to say my first decorative cake was for my nephew's 'smash cake' some seven years ago," she said. "After that, I started baking more and more cakes for family and friends and for a variety of celebrations."

The encouragement to continue came swiftly. Food



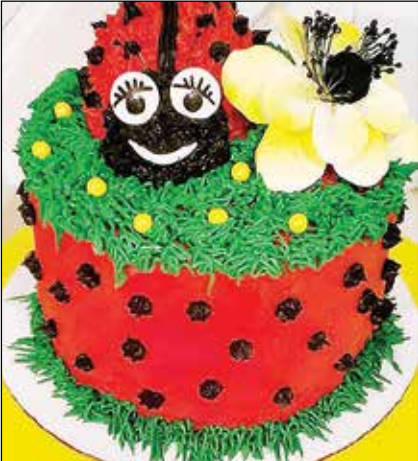
Erin Moravitz grabbed the economic downturn of the coronavirus pandemic by the horns and created her own cake-making business. E's Taste of Bliss has exploded in popularity around Ely in the last year. Local photographer Tara Larsen often uses Erin's creations, above, for "smash cake" settings for babys' first birthday photographs. photo courtesy of Tara Kay Photography

handling courses, a cottage food registration and other training allowed her to begin baking out of her Ely-area home.

"I guess word got around that I made cakes," she said. Erin said as she filled cake orders, she would mix more batter and make

cupcakes or smaller treats and created sample "pop-up boxes" that she posted as

See...CAKE pg. 11



GREENWOOD TWP

Firefighters banned from recording their meetings

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- As Greenwood Fire Department officials are awaiting a hearing in the election complaint filed over allegations they may have violated state election law, the Greenwood Town Board, Tuesday, approved a policy change that prohibits the tape recording of fire department meetings by members without prior approval.

Tuesday's decision marks a reversal of a township policy approved in 2015, that actually required the fire department to audio record and archive its meetings, a policy that apparently was never followed by fire department officials. Fire department member Jeff Maus, however, had been openly recording

See...BAN pg. 11

ISD 696

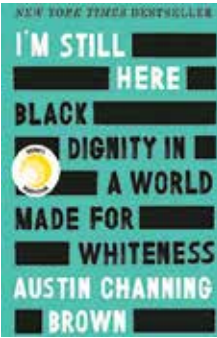
Parent objects to required reading title

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – At least one ISD 696 parent is objecting to the inclusion of a book in the required reading list for eleventh-grade English students, and he requested the school board remove the book from the list.

Parent Chad Davis made the request to the board during the open forum portion of their meeting Monday night. He initially asked for clarification on how the book title came to be donated to the school district, how the book title was accepted, and how the decision was made to have the book title included in the high

See...BOOK pg. 9



Bear River Fair looking at end to century-plus run

Leadership needed soon to save the event

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

BEAR RIVER- In the early 1900s, at least one regional newspaper, the *Virginia Enterprise*, regularly devoted space to extolling the virtues of Bear River and the surrounding area, touting not only its extraordinary beauty but the agricultural acumen and produc-

tivity of its farmers. One writer noted it was well worth the four-hour trek from Virginia to Bear River to take it all in.

In 1911, those skilled and artful farmers came together for an exhibition and farmers institute that began the storied tradition of the Bear River Fair, a treasured

See...FAIR pg. 12



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Community notices

Cottage Food Producer Food Safety Training available online

REGIONAL- Do you get rave reviews on your home-made breads, cakes and cookies? Are family and friends asking to buy your yummy home canned salsa and pickles? Have you considered starting a food business out of your home but are at a loss where to start? Join University of Minnesota Extension Food Safety Educators, Kathy Brandt and Suzanne Driessen at a Cottage Food Producer Food Safety Training webinar or take the online course. Both the webinar and online course meet the Minnesota Department of Agriculture food safety training requirements to register as a Minnesota Cottage Food Producer. Once registered, you'll be able to make and sell homemade non-potentially hazardous foods including baked goods, candy, home-canned peaches, pickles, salsa, jams, jellies and more. The specific conditions that must be met to qualify as an allowable Minnesota cottage food will be thoroughly covered.

The training focus is on food safety practices for all processes covered under the Minnesota Cottage Food Law (CFL) including drying, baking, confections, jams and jellies, acid and acidified fruit and vegetables, and fermentation. Participants learn how to produce, package, label, store, and transport a safe food product. Many details of the CFL will be covered, including who needs to register, where allowed cottage food can be sold, and the maximum gross yearly sales allowed.

Registration and \$50/person fee are required. To register for the upcoming webinar on Saturday, April 24, or for the online course, go to <https://extension.umn.edu/courses-and-events/cottage-food-producer-food-safety-training>. For more information, contact Suzanne at 320-203-6057 or driessen@umn.edu.

KELLY KLUN Attorney At Law

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HOSPITALITY

Northernair Lodge welcomes new management team

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – After a lost year in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, economic development is gearing up this year in the North Country, and many areas of progress, including new business launches and ownership transitions at existing businesses, continue to be highlighted in the *Timberjay*.

Rane Mickelson and Zach Klinkenberg are the new managers of Northernair Lodge.

Longtime manager Mike and Sara Fitzgerald are overseeing their training and the transition this spring.

Northernair Lodge is located four miles south of Ely off Highway 21 and is the only resort on Mitchell Lake.

Rane was born and raised in Minneapolis. She said Ely has always had a special place in her heart.

“After 25 years of my family vacationing at Northernair, my time spent in Ely helped shape the

person that I have become,” she said

Over many summers in Ely, Rane took her first boat ride, learned how to fish, and most importantly, developed a deep appreciation for nature and all it has to offer.

“The beauty and peace that surrounds guests at Northernair has been an unforgettable experience for me and I am ecstatic that I will soon be able to call it home,” she said.

Rane earned a degree in child psychology from the University of Minnesota in 2019 and has worked in early childhood education for nearly five years. Rane enjoys hiking, fishing, painting, ceramics, creating music, and spending time with her Italian greyhound, Luna.

Zach also experienced the beauty and grace of northern Minnesota at a young age, thanks to his parents. When they weren't in the Twin Cities, where Zach was born and raised, they were taking trips up north. Places like Ely, Grand Marais, and Grand



Zach Klinkenberg and Rane Mickelson are the new managers of Northernair Lodge. submitted photo

Portage left Zach yearning to return.

After attending college at the University of Minnesota-Duluth for creative writing, Zach went back to the cities where he met Rane.

“We shared the same dream of moving to northern Minnesota one day, and four years later we were able to make that dream a reality,” he said.

Zach, an avid people person, said he looks forward to taking his experience in the hospitality industry and creating memorable experiences for folks who also share his great

love of the North Country.

In his free time, Zach is passionate about being creative through photography and writing. He also enjoys fishing, hiking, and the enticing smell of a hot cup of coffee.

The Fitzgeralds plan to remain in Ely. Mike has plans to expand his marketing company, Wovenwood Studio, while Sara Fitzgerald will continue to work at Northernair in a management and operations role.

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LEGAL NEWS

Ely native tapped for Interior Department solicitor post

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

Robert Anderson is a member of the Bois Forte Band

ELY-RobertAnderson, who grew up in Ely and is a Native American law expert, was nominated by President Joe Biden last week to be solicitor of the Interior Department. The move underscored how the administration is putting a priority on placing Native Americans in charge of the agenda at Interior.

If confirmed, Anderson would play a central role in the department’s rulemaking and interpreting how it should apply federal laws.

Before joining the administration, Anderson, an enrolled member of the Bois Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, was the Oneida Indian Nation visiting professor of law at Harvard Law School and was the lead editor of



a leading Native American law textbook.

“Bob has extensive legal expertise with regard to Native American Tribes, public lands, and water—all of which will help advance Interior’s mission to steward America’s natural, cultural and historic resources and honor our nation-to-nation relationship with Tribes in accordance with the spirit and letter of the law,” Interior

Secretary Deb Haaland said in a statement.

Last month, Haaland, an enrolled member of the Laguna Pueblo, was confirmed by the Senate as the first Native American to lead a federal department.

Anderson has been Interior’s principal deputy solicitor since Biden took office Jan. 20. The Senate would have to confirm his new role.

A leading national figure in Native American law, Anderson has written that tribes should have more influence in federal decisions, like the controversial permitting for the Dakota Access Pipeline, that affect their lands and people. Former President Barack Obama’s approval of construction for the

Dakota Access Pipeline, which transports crude oil from the Bakken formation in North Dakota to Illinois, sparked protests over concerns that a spill would threaten the water supply for the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and other areas near the proposed path.

“Tribal input into most projects affecting tribal lands and water is advisory only,” he wrote in a 2018 law review article. “The [Dakota Access Pipeline] experience shows the shortcomings in this approach and should serve as a springboard for changes in federal law... It is not enough to be consulted if the permitting agency is free to reject tribal input subject to deferential judi-

cial review.”

Before Harvard, Anderson directed the University of Washington’s Native American Law Center for 20 years, according to a biography provided by the administration.

He was also part of the past two Democratic administrations, according to a resume on his page on Harvard Law School’s website.

From 2011 to 2013, Anderson participated in a five-person committee that reviewed the federal government’s management of \$4 billion in Native American trust funds and suggested reforms to the program. He also advised Obama’s transition team in 2008 and 2009.

He was associate

Interior solicitor for Native American affairs and a counselor to the Interior secretary during former President Bill Clinton’s administration.

Anderson graduated from the University of Minnesota’s law school and began his career at the Native American Rights Fund, a nonprofit advocacy group.

The solicitor is the chief attorney for the Interior Department and legal adviser to the secretary. The position oversees 430 attorneys and other staff.

Jacob Fischler, of the Wisconsin Examiner, contributed to this report.

CITY OF TOWER

Higher construction costs put water plant in deficit

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER— Sharply higher costs for concrete and steel have suddenly left city officials here with a more than \$2 million funding gap for planned upgrades to the community’s drinking water infrastructure.

As recently as a month ago, city officials were elated that a \$3.375 million grant from the Army Corps of Engineers had helped cover all but a small deficit on the estimated \$4.5 million project, which included a new drinking

water treatment plant operated by the Tower-Breitung Wastewater Board, and a new water main to serve the city of Tower.

But the city’s engineers have since pushed the estimate of construction cost from the original combined price tag of \$4.5 million \$5.72 million. That’s partly due to a change in plans to build a slightly larger facility, according to city engineer Matt Bolf of SEH. But recent bids on a similar plant in Cloquet came in sharply higher than expected, which prompted SEH to increase the cost estimates for both the drinking water

treatment facility and the new water main.

The funding gap for the treatment plan now stands at \$1.94 million, while the deficit for the water main has jumped from \$193,750, to \$376,517. That yields a total funding gap of \$2.32 million.

The higher projected deficit also reflects uncertainty over funding from the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation, which had been expected to provide \$187,500 toward the project. But those funds have to be spent within six months, which may no

longer be possible.

While the city has no real deadline for spending the Army Corps funds, the city will need to submit a partnership agreement and a statement of financial capability to the Corps by June. As it stands today, Clerk-Treasurer Victoria Ranua said she could not sign her name to such a statement.

Bolf suggested the city could apply all of its available funding toward the treatment facility, which would reduce the deficit for that portion of the project. The city currently has a public-facilities

bonding request before the Legislature, which could pay for the water main portion of the project.

But Ranua noted that the bond funding required repayment, which the city would have to pay off itself if it only applied to the water main. The treatment facility, by contrast, is a joint project that would be paid for by ratepayers in both Tower and Breitung.

Ranua suggested that the newly passed American Rescue Plan does include some funding sources for sewer and water improvements, which the city could possibly tap, and she asked

the council for help in exploring those and other sources of funding. “This is too important to drop,” she said.

The council took no action.

In other business, the council, after considerable discussion, voted 3-1, with Mayor Orlyn Kringstad abstaining, to rescind a 2018 council decision to rename Harbor Drive in honor of the late Herb Lamppa. Ranua explained that the prior council had made the designation but never instituted

See TOWER...pg. 5

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Editorial

Stauber's cultural divide

Eighth District Congressman talks endlessly about mining. He has nothing else to talk about.

Rep. Pete Stauber wants to make sure that no one in northeastern Minnesota forgets about sulfide mining. Stauber is doing his best to keep the issue front and center in the minds of Eighth District residents, as a way to detract from the economic reality that is likely to dog GOP politicians over the next 18 months and possibly longer.

Economists around the world are suddenly agog at what they see as the potential for astonishing economic growth in the U.S., beginning this year and continuing right into 2023. It kicked off last month with the Labor Department’s announcement that the economy gained 916,000 jobs in March. While still nearly 8.4 million fewer people are working today than prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the job gains in March demonstrate the impact of the latest COVID relief package, as well as the Biden administration’s efforts to get the pandemic under control, which have combined to get the economy moving again.

The prospect of passage of President Biden’s infrastructure package will further boost economic activity. The International Monetary Fund now predicts the U.S. economy will grow at a China-like pace of 6.4 percent this year, and provisions in the Biden relief package will help ensure that more of that economic wealth winds up in the hands of low- and middle-income Americans. The next two years, barring an unexpected event, are likely to yield an exceptional economic boom.

A strong economy, that’s putting real money in the pockets of working Americans, is far from ideal for the party out of power, especially when elected officials from that party have voted unanimously to oppose the very policies that put that money there. Rep. Pete Stauber, after all, voted against the COVID relief bill that provided an additional \$1,400 per person to folks in his district and he’s certain to oppose any infrastructure bill that comes close to the one proposed by President Biden.

Which is why Stauber is talking a lot about mining, or “our way of life,” as he likes to put it.

Let’s not mince words. Stauber’s focus on mining has nothing to do with jobs or the Eighth District’s way of life. Of the roughly 327,000 people employed in Stauber’s congressional district, about 4,500, or 1.3 percent, work in mining. If we’re defined by the jobs we hold, the Eighth District’s way of life centers

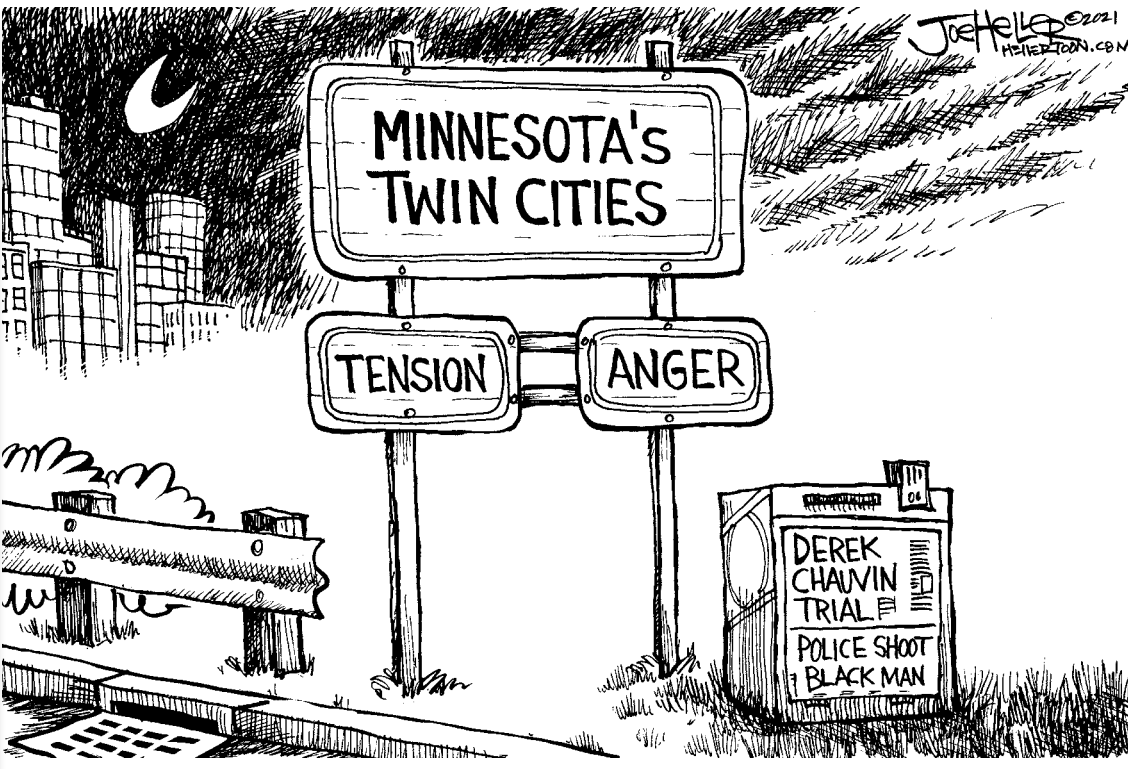
around health care, education, professional services, non-mining manufacturing, recreation, and construction, which account for a total of more than 200,000 jobs combined. And the vast majority of those jobs support middle-class families.

Stauber talks sulfide mining (an issue over which he has little influence) as a means of stoking the cultural divide, which Republicans have exploited for years to hold political power despite pursuing economic policies that do virtually nothing for the people they supposedly represent. With Republicans in charge, the economic policies are always the same: deregulation and tax cuts for the rich. Yet, more dangerous workplaces, dirtier air and water, and fatter paychecks for corporate executives accomplish exactly nothing to advance the interests of working people in northeastern Minnesota. U.S. Steel wasn’t going to employ one extra person because of President Trump’s big corporate tax cut. If they can spend less on worker safety at Minntac, the savings certainly don’t go to the folks in the pit or the crusher. Those windfalls all go to the boys in the suites.

President Biden has put real money into the northeastern Minnesota economy, and, if Republicans don’t block him, he’ll direct even more money here, for expansion of broadband, improving transportation, housing, and energy efficiency. Rep. Stauber has or will oppose all of those investments, which would actually make life better here in northeastern Minnesota.

Which is why Stauber and his GOP media allies are talking about sulfide mining. It is simply a surrogate for other cultural dividers, like the spittle over a couple Dr. Seuss books, who can use which school bathroom, or sports stars taking a knee for the anthem. In terms of our actual lives here in the Eighth District, these issues matter not at all, but they are cultural wedges that Republicans employ to keep Americans who should have common cause, divided. And they have proven remarkably effective at convincing many rural Americans to vote against policies that could make their lives better, out of fear of making life better for someone “on the other side” of that cultural divide. What a shame.

The day that Americans really incorporate the late Paul Wellstone’s favorite axiom that “we all do better when we all do better,” Pete Stauber and the rest of his party are in trouble. Real trouble.



Letters from Readers

Where is the transparency some promised in Greenwood?

Both Dave Fazio and Mike Indihar are heading towards a trial to determine if they violated election campaign law. The main piece of evidence of the alleged violation was recorded on audio tape at the fire department meeting just a week before the last election. As reported in the *Timberjay*, the accusation is that Fazio and Indihar used their supervisory positions as fire chief and assistant chief respectively to compel firefighters they supervise to become involved in political activity to influence the outcome of the annual township election. In response, they now seek to ban all audio recording by fire department employees and punish any person doing so with a written warning or termination.

On April 14, 2015, the Greenwood Town Board passed township policies which included a requirement that all board meetings and fire department meetings be audio recorded and saved for archival purposes. However, the policy to direct the fire department to record their meetings has been

ignored by Fazio. Why has the board not enforced the policies they set for the fire department? In the real world, if you ignored your boss’s direction for six years, you most certainly would have been reprimanded or fired. Right?

How can this kind of insubordination be allowed to continue? Is it because the board needs the votes of the fire department to stay in power and thus keep the public in the dark? Supervisor Carmen DeLuca attends most fire department meetings, so he should certainly have been aware of the lack of recording. Also, the board has dealt with lawsuits involving the fire department, and if there were tapes wouldn’t the board have accessed the tapes to assist them in the lawsuits?

Where is the transparency? Now, with an audio recording being used against them in this latest complaint, they seek to ban audio recordings in the fire department. Caught with their hand in the proverbial cookie jar, it now seems they are trying to destroy the cookie jar.

If that isn’t enough, the published Greenwood Township Board policies, which spell out such things as rental of the town hall and board meeting policies, were mysteriously modified on

the township’s website sometime between Jan. 25, 2021 and April 7, 2021, without board action approving a change in the policies. The website no longer matches the current printed version available in the Greenwood Town Hall offices as of April 10, 2021. Not surprisingly, the new website version of the policies was changed by the removal of the words “fire department” from the section that requires tape recording of all board meetings, special meetings and fire department meetings.

Is it me, or is someone having a problem with there being a record of fire department business that is paid for with your tax dollars? Your board has graduated from not allowing public comment, not reading public correspondence, denying access to public records, retaliating against those who do not side with them and now they wish to stop audio recording. What’s next, a ten-foot fence around the town hall? Let’s ask the man who ran for a board seat by promising transparency. Carmen DeLuca, did you ever intend to keep your word? Actions speak louder than words you know.

Rick Stoehr
Greenwood Twp.

Fighting for our local papers

On May 7 of last year, the *Hastings Star Gazette* printed its last issue. The paper’s first issue as *The Hastings Independent* was published in 1857, a year before Minnesota gained statehood. Generations relied on papers like this for local news—they told you who was born and who died, whose daughter just broke the county record for the 400-meter freestyle, whose Holstein won a surprise ribbon at the State Fair, and how your local leaders voted.

My dad was a Minnesota newspaper columnist and sports



SEN. AMY KLOBUCHAR

reporter. Even though he worked his way up the ranks to interview everyone from Mike Ditka to Ronald Reagan to Ginger Rogers, he was always, as his managing editor put it, “a champion of those on the outside.”

But today, newspapers of all sizes are struggling and closing.

The shuttering of the *Star Gazette* was helped along by the coronavirus pandemic, but long-term trends in newspaper ad revenue show that the *Star Gazette* and many local papers like

it were already on their last legs when COVID-19 struck.

Ad revenue for U.S. newspapers plummeted from \$37.8 billion in 2008 to \$14.3 billion in 2018. During that time, two other companies, Facebook and Google—worth over \$2.2 trillion combined—became advertising titans.

These two companies don’t just control the majority of online advertising; they’ve built power over the news, crushing local outlets along the way. It saddens me to think my dad might not have a job in today’s tech-dominated world, let alone a chance to interview a U.S. President.

See **PAPERS...**pg. 5

The winds long to play with your hair

I was recently given a copy of Yes! magazine chock full of fascinating stories. In one article Kendra Ward encourages us to awaken our ecological psyche, to “rekindle the deep memory of where we come from” and recognize that we are an integral part of the ecosystem of the Earth, not just observers, protectors, or destroyers. She believes our tendency to be human-centric



BETTY FIRTH

is at the heart of our ecological catastrophe. If we perceive intelligence from a human-centric position, we will (and do) place ourselves at the top of the heap, rating our type of cognition as superior to all other beings, often unaware of the intricate network of life surrounding us that we are a part of.

What about other types of intelligence, such as the ability of

an aspidochelone to weave an intricate web, perfectly designed for its location and stable enough to withstand wind, rain, and sun? What about the octopus who “thinks” through sensors on 2,240 suction cups on its tentacles, whose skin can change its color and texture so dramatically that it is unrecognizable, and who in its brief one-year lifespan can learn new behavior? What about the young loons who are able to find their way to winter habitats, even though the parents left earlier? Comparatively, we can get lost taking a wrong turn on a country road.

Ward says that if we undervalue the lives of other beings, it fits conveniently into our desire to consume, for they become expendable resources. As taught in Economics 101, human needs are limited, but human wants are unlimited, and we see the evidence of that all around us. How large a house do we need and how many? Even households of moderate means often own a house and a cabin, while the super-rich have homes with 20,000 square feet and three or more houses in different states or countries. My house is not grand, but certainly

larger than many individuals on the planet own. The subprime housing bubble and collapse was a prime example of consumeristic greed exploited and exploded. The layers of deregulation from the Reagan years on were orchestrated to loosen restrictions for the benefit of corporate entities and the wealthy. It fed the voracious appetites of speculators in mortgages and securities while enabling home buyers to get inadequately-secured financing

See **BIOLOGY...**pg. 5

In rural and small-town communities across America, we are seeing the impacts of this consolidation first hand—expanding “news deserts” where local coverage is increasingly difficult to come by.

We can’t stand by and watch

any changes to the harbor plat, which was already underway, and so the final plat still lists the road as Harbor Drive. Ranua noted that 911 designations are based on existing platted street names, so signing the road differently now would create confusion in the event of emergency calls.

Meanwhile, Ranua said she would pursue estimates for updating the signage on the Tower Civic Center, which was also renamed in honor of Lamma shortly after his passing. She noted that the previous council never included money in the budget for changing the signage on the building.

At the same time, Ranua suggested that the council could consider renaming another city landmark in honor of Lamma, who served as Tower's mayor, a St. Louis County commissioner, and a well-regarded teacher in addition to his work with Lamma Manufacturing. Ranua suggested renaming the city's mini-park in Lamma's honor, but she added that the city should consult with the Lamma family to see what would be an acceptable way of recognizing Lamma's contributions.

In other business, the council:

- Heard an update from council member Joe Morin on the status of joint talks with the town of Breitung over the future of law enforcement in the two communities. Morin and fellow council member Dave Setterberg have been meeting with Breitung officials to better understand costs, liabilities, and the needs of the two communities. "We want to be methodical," said

Morin, noting that the communities are currently paying for some patrol coverage through the St. Louis County Sheriff's office. "We'll be doing that through May," he said.

► Heard from Ranua on the impact of the American Rescue Plan. She said the city's direct allocation from the new law will total \$60,000, which will come to the city in two payments, with the first scheduled for early summer and the next one scheduled for early 2022.

She said the city can use the funds for a wide range of purposes, including revenue replacement, but could also establish programs to assist residents or businesses in the community.

► Heard a report from Morin on concerns he's heard from residents about truckers using their air

brakes as they enter the 30 mile-per-hour zone at the city's east end. Known as "jake-braking," the practice creates a loud noise, which has been irritating to some nearby residents. The council discussed ways to address the issue with truckers in the area and eventually approved sending a courtesy letter to local trucking operations, asking them to avoid the use of their air brakes when slowing at the city limits. Morin agreed to write the letter.

► Ranua asked for assistance from the council in developing a capital improvement plan for the Hoodoo Point Campground. "The campground has been an important revenue source to help fund the city's budget," noted Ranua. She said the city had implemented a capital improvement sur-

charge at the campground several years ago, but never developed a plan for the use of the funds. She said an actual plan would help prioritize improvements, establish timelines for those upgrades, and make it easier for the city to tap other funding sources. She noted that other area campgrounds have received IRRR funds for improvements to bath and shower houses, which is a significant need at Hoodoo Point.

Campground manager Randy Pratt said he supported Ranua's proposal and said the demand at the campground has grown steadily. "We are overly-booked already," he said. "It's truly amazing how busy this year is going to be, like last year."

► Approved declaring the campground mower as surplus property and advertising it for sale, with

a minimum bid of \$200. The council will accept bids through May 9, with a bid opening set for May 10.

► Approved a new fee schedule recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission that changes fees for many types of permits or land use applications.

► Approved allowing the Tower-Soudan Historical Society to keep the civic center lobby open during daytime hours so visitors can use the bathrooms when they're visiting the historic train and depot museum. The city will install an electronic lock on the interior door to the civic center to prevent visitors from accessing other parts of the building.

The council also granted Linda Haugen access to the civic center for a variety of functions that she oversees.

on properties with inflated prices that they knew they couldn't really afford. When the bubble burst, many lost their homes while the fat cat investors remained unscathed.

You may be asking, "What exactly does this have to do with spiders and loons?" It's all part of the integrated continuum that we are part of and that we so easily ignore. While climate change is now making it much more difficult to ignore, a substantial number of people astoundingly persist in denying that it exists. Many of these deniers may be the same ones who declare the sovereignty of humans over all else, giving them inalienable rights to multiply and use up the Earth's finite resources, quoting the Bible as evidence. I picture them throwing a tantrum, yelling at Mother Nature, "You're not the boss of me!"

Those with an ecological psyche are light years away from that kind of thinking or being. Author Ward encourages us to confront our attitudes about our

human ownership of everything and how that keeps us separate from the natural, living world. We are given a taste of our connectedness through a special relationship with a beloved pet, a treasured tree, or favorite lake, river, or ocean beach, which allow us to breathe easier. Or perhaps when we meditate and feel the edges of our human boundaries soften. Out under the night sky, we feel viscerally how inconsequential we are, yet part of it all. As I type, my very large, long-haired cat, Paco, came hovering by my feet, and I invited him up on my lap to get some attention, trying to keep his paws off the keys. Is that a one-way impulse, or is it reciprocal? Does he also recognize that I could use some nurture from his soft body and loud purr after giving that inert machine that never cuddles or purrs too much attention?

Ecological biology views organisms, such as ourselves, not as separate entities, but as integral parts of their environment with biological and sociological interdependencies.

Robin Wall Kimmerer, distinguished professor in environmental biology at the State University of New York, and author of *Gathering Moss* and *Braiding Sweetgrass*, encourages us to learn from the mosses that have persisted for 350 million years. She said the mosses teach the lessons of “being small, of giving more than you take, of working with natural law, and sticking together.” She believes that gratitude can help heal “our sick, capitalistic world” and advocates for “restorative reciprocity” with the natural world, appreciating the gifts and responsibilities we’ve been given.

Peter Wohlleben, a German forester, and author of *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate*, along with other researchers, sees a forest as a superorganism of unique individuals, not a group of loners standing side by side, competing for sunlight, water, and nutrients. Research reveals that trees of the same species are communal and will often form alliances with trees


of other species. Forest trees have evolved to live in "cooperative, interdependent relationships, maintained by communication and a collective intelligence similar to an insect colony." He explains that in every forest that is not too damaged, trees are connected to each other through underground fungal mycorrhizal networks. Trees share water and nutrients through the networks, and also use them to communicate. They send distress signals about drought and disease or attacks by insects or humans, and other trees alter their behavior when they receive these messages.

Trees also communicate through the air, using pheromones and other scent signals. Wohlleben gives the example of the wide-crowned umbrella thorn acacia on African savannas. When a giraffe starts chewing acacia leaves, the tree notices the injury and emits a distress signal in the form of ethylene gas. Upon detecting this gas, neighboring acacias start pumping tannins into

their leaves, which in large enough quantities can sicken or even kill large herbivores.

However, giraffes have evolved with acacias, so they're aware of this, so they browse into the wind, so the warning gas doesn't reach the trees ahead of them. If there's no wind, a giraffe will typically walk 100 yards—farther than ethylene gas can travel in still air—before feeding on the next acacia. They seem to know the trees are communicating.

He tells another story of a massive stump left 400-500 years ago when a tree was felled. The stump



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still lived, given nutrients by the surrounding trees through their roots. Yet we humans often live side-by-side with people we've never met and rarely know well. Albert Einstein said, "The measure of intelligence is the ability to change," so if we are such intelligent creatures, maybe we can learn from all that is evolving around us.

Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair.

Kahlil Gibran

MBERJAY

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

Week of April 19

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 April 20 .

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.

In-person shopping resumes at Tower Food Shelf, open on April 20
TOWER- The Tower Area Food Shelf will be open on Tuesday, April 20 from 2:30 – 5 p.m., the third Tuesday of the month as usual.
In-person shopping is now possible, with the requirement of masks, social distancing, and limits on the number of shoppers inside at a time.
They hope to serve many households again. Any questions, call Marge at 218-753-3503.

St. James Movie Night on Sunday, April 18
TOWER- St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower will host a free movie night on Sunday, April 18 at 6 p.m. The movie this month is “Beautifully Broken: Three Families. Two Worlds. One Incredible True Story.” Beautifully Broken is the true story of three families, from different countries, each struggling to find hope and safety amid the devastation of war. A refugee’s escape, a prisoner’s promise, and a daughter’s painful secret converge in this inspiring real-life story of hope. As three fathers



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Learn to be an Emergency Medical Responder

TOWER- The Tower Area Ambulance Service is holding an EMR Class (initial class includes CPR and EVOC training) starting Tuesday, April 20. The classes will be completed prior to the start of fishing season. There are approximately 24 hours of classes, held Tuesday and Wednesday evenings from 6 – 10 p.m. Two all-day Saturday classes will be

EMR classes to begin April 20 in Tower

held on April 24 and May 8. Final class and testing will be held on Wednesday, May 12.

To register or for more information, call Ambulance Supervisor Dena Suihkonen at 218-750-3002 or email ambulance@cityoftower.com.

This class is being sponsored

by the Tower Area Ambulance Service and City of Tower; the cost of the class will be covered for those joining the Tower Area Ambulance Service. Classes will be held at the Tower Civic Center.

LVCC quilt raffle fundraiser winner announced

SOUDAN- Quilter Jill Wagoner recently drew the winning ticket for the fundraiser that featured a Minnesota quilt she made to benefit the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center. Also pictured is Sue Ellis who coordinated the raffle and organized ticket sales. The project netted over \$1,000 for the LVCC, a project to which the two Soudan residents were happy to donate.

The winner of the beautiful handmade quilt was Linnea Weida of Litchfield. She purchased her ticket at the Vermilion Park Inn. When she was notified of her good luck, she was clearly excited.

“My birthday tradition is to travel to the Tower-Ely area for guided dogsled trips, cross country skiing, and winter hiking with snowshoes...This year I stayed in the newly-built Lake Vermilion State Park camper cabins...Since I dabble in stained glass, I also truly appreciate that these communities promote and highlight artistic culture. When I heard that the raffle proceeds were earmarked for the renovation of the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center, I knew I had to support the cause.”

Dillon Gorsma joins U.S. Air Force

SOUDAN- Dillon Gorsma has been officially sworn in to the United States Air Force. His mother, Carrie Reitsma, said “I could not be any prouder of this young man.” Dillon will graduate from Northeast Range High School this spring, and will be leaving in the fall for training in San Antonio, Tex. He is the son of Carrie Reitsma and Tom Gorsma.

Vermilion Lake Cemetery workday on April 24

VERMILION LAKE TWP- Vermilion Lake Township is hosting their annual Community Work Day at the Vermilion Lake Township Cemetery, 6499 Wahlsten Road, on Saturday April 24 beginning at 1 p.m. Help is needed to straighten headstones and raise grave markers. Many hands will make

quick work of the project. The township has only a few tools. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own shovels, etc. If you have any questions, please call Sarah Schmidt at 218-750-2425, Phil Anderson at 218-749-3462, or Frank Zobitz at 651-755-5946.

St. Martin’s Church removes capacity limits for worship services

TOWER- Effective immediately, St. Martin’s Catholic Church in Tower has lifted the capacity restrictions on attendance at church services. The

change is due to lifting of the limits set by the state. The change is also in effect at St. Mary’s in Cook and Holy Cross in Orr.

COMMUNITY NEWS

fight to save their families, their lives become intertwined in an unlikely journey across the globe, where they learn the healing power of forgiveness and reconciliation. The movie is rated PG-13.

Info session for parents of upcoming Kindergarten and preschool students set for April 21

TOWER- Parents of children who will be four years old or entering Kindergarten are invited to a special information session on Wednesday, April

21 at the Tower-Soudan Elementary School. Parents of children who will be four years old and eligible for pre-Kindergarten should come at 4 p.m., and parents of children who will be five years old and eligible for Kindergarten at 4:30 p.m. Both programs are in the school gym. Children are also encouraged to attend to tour the school and meet their teachers.

Coaches needed for T-Ball and Coach Pitch Little League

SOUDAN- Adult volunteer coaches are needed to lead this year’s T-Ball and Coach Pitch Little League teams for local youth ages five to eight.

Longtime coach Nate Dostert, who has been working with these teams since he was a teenager, will be coaching the older Little League teams this year.

“We need some coaches to step up,” he

said, “and also need an adult willing to help organize the program.” Dostert said he will work with any volunteers who step forward and guide them through the season.

The teams practice in Soudan, but play games throughout the area as part of the East Range Little League Association. Each team plays between eight and ten games during the season, which starts mid-May and runs through the end of June.

Coach responsibilities include bringing equipment to the games, running practices (mostly just for the coach-pitch level), canceling games and notifying families in case of inclement weather (thunderstorms), filling out rosters on game day, and coaching during the games.

“Practices are mostly just held in May prior to the games starting,” said Dostert. “And for the T-Ball team, no real practices are needed.”

“I am looking for a

parent of a player or any other willing adult to step up,” said Dostert.

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from games and practices. Joan Dostert, Nate’s mother, will be organizing the concession stand and will also be recruiting volunteers to help run the stand on game days.

Anyone interested in learning more about this fun and memorable volunteer opportunity should call Nate Dostert at 218-780-2242.

Parade float registrations required by May 8 to see if there is enough interest to hold a parade

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Lake Vermilion Events Board is hoping that there will be a parade on the Fourth of July this year. With the COVID-19 restrictions being loosened, and more citizens

getting vaccinated, things are getting closer to “back to normal.”

But for the parade to happen, the TSLVEB needs to get the public involved now!

The board needs to hear from all businesses, families, organizations, and individuals who plan on having an entry in the parade. The level of interest shown by all of you will be the deciding factor on whether or not a parade will happen.

Sadly, due to many issues caused by the pandemic, the high school marching bands have not had the opportunity to practice. It is most likely that these bands will not be marching in the parade this year.

Everyone who wants to participate in the parade this year should contact **Julie Johnson** at tseventsboard@gmail.com, or by phone/text at **218-750-7242** by **May 8**. This is the deadline the board has set to allow time to get all the aspects of the parade in place for Sunday, July 4.

Fireworks are being planned for Saturday, July 3.

Ely Community Health Center

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ELECTION 2021

Omerza, Skraba to face off in mayoral race

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – City Council member Heidi Omerza topped the 200-vote count in a field of six competitors in a special primary election Tuesday, and will be challenged by former mayor Roger Skraba, the second top voter getter with 146 votes, in an August special general election for the city’s top elected post.

Just 571 city residents voted in the primary, compared with 2,220 total votes cast last November when Erik Urbas defeated incumbent Chuck Novak in the mayoral race. Urbas dropped out of that race last August and declined to accept the position, setting up the special election this year.

Omerza received 203 total votes, 158 votes on election day and 45 absentee votes. Skraba received 133 in-person votes on Tuesday, and 13 absentee votes.

The other city council candidates and their vote totals include, Paul Kess, 127, Angela Campbell, 69, and Jerome Debeltz, 23.

Special general election set for Aug. 10



Ely election official Pat Koski distributed ballots Tuesday morning at the Ely Senior Center for the special election primary for mayor. Just 571 voters cast ballots. photo by K. Vandervort

Newcomer Micca Leider did not receive a single vote.

The winner of the Aug. 10 special general election will serve the remainder of the two-year term that began in January. Novak was appointed in January to serve as interim mayor until August. Ely voters will

also elect a mayor in 2022.

Omerza, 51, currently serves on the following boards and committees: Ely Economic Development Authority as president, Parks and Recreation, Employee Relations, Library, and Insurance and Negotiations. She also

serves on the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, and is leader of the Greater Minnesota Partnership.

Skraba, 59, previously served three times as mayor of Ely and twice as a member of the Ely City Council. He is currently the chair of the St.



Heidi Omerza



Roger Skraba

Louis County Board of Adjustment. The Ely native is a U.S. Army veteran and member of the Ely Honor Guard.

Absentee/early voting for the Aug. 10 general election will begin on Friday, June 25.

Echo Valley Stables to host open house

ELY – Hamilton Horsemanship and Echo Valley Stables will host an open house on Saturday, April 17 for those interested to learn about services at the farm, including horse boarding and riding lessons.

The open house will be held 2-3 p.m., rain or shine. Come dressed for the weather and in footwear you don’t mind getting dirty.

Echo Valley Stables is located at 2231 Robich Road. From Ely head west on 169 about 4.25 miles, turn left on Robich road, then turn right into the driveway with a wooden bear carving that says “Bailey Farm.” Head down the driveway toward the barn.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2021



gray and then raining
the big spring melt happening
move toward summer

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 FOOD 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.
CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS: Babbitt: 3rd Monday of Month: 6-7:30 p.m. at Carefree Living Ely: 4th Monday of Month: 10-11:30 a.m. at Ely-Bloomenson Hospital Conference Room B

ISD 696

Memorial school speech team to compete at Section 7A meet

ELY – The Ely Memorial High School speech team advanced to the Section 7A meet last weekend.

Maggie Dammann, Harry Dammann, Laura Holmstrom and Esther Anderson all qualified while competing virtually in the subsection meet, according to coach Donna Kari.

The Section 7A meet is scheduled for Friday, April 16.

Kari said Holmstrom advanced with a fourth-place sub-sectional finish in Extemporaneous Speaking. The Dammann students finished fifth in Creative Reading (Harry) and Extemporaneous Reading (Maggie). Anderson finished sixth in Extemporaneous Reading

Maggie Dammann came away with a first-place medal

in Extemporaneous Reading recently at the Blackduck virtual speech meet. Also medaling at that meet was Laura Holmstrom, who took fourth in Extemporaneous Speaking.

Esther Anderson and Laura Holmstrom received sixth place medals at the virtual speech meet hosted by Rock Ridge on March 13.

Ely student Maggie Dammann took first place in a recent high school speech team event at Blackduck. The Timberwolves team will compete in sectionals this weekend.
submitted photo



Our Community

Blood drive aids scholarships for Ely Class of 2021

ELY - The Ely Memorial High School Student Council will be hosting a blood drive on Wednesday, April 21, and Tuesday, April 22. Every donor will receive a free t-shirt and each donation will contribute money toward 2021 graduating senior scholarships.

The blood donation vehicle will be parked at Ely high school from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on April 21, and at the Grand Ely Lodge from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on April 22.

To schedule a donation appointment for April 21, visit the following link, https://www.mbcherohub.club/.../schedule/drive_schedule/66593.

To schedule a donation appointment for Thursday, April 22, visit the following link, https://www.mbcherohub.club/.../schedule/drive_schedule/67800.

For more information, contact Autumn Boedeker at aboedeker@ely.k12.mn.us.

Walk for Water on Saturday

ELY - The Ely Memorial High School Key Club will be hosting their annual Walk for Water fundraiser on Saturday, April 17.

Participants should meet at the parking lot of the Trezona Trail anytime from noon to 6 p.m. to raise awareness and money for the Thirst Project. All of the money raised will go toward providing people with safe, clean drinking water.

Ely Tuesday Group looking for new leadership

ELY - After twelve plus years at the helm of the Ely Tuesday Group organization, Steve Piragis and Steve Schon are stepping down as facilitators of the group.

“It’s been an amazing and enjoyable experience for both of us and we plan on continuing as participants as others step up to take the reins,” Schon said. “During the transition we will, of course, offer guidance and advice to the new leader(s)

as well as help in recruiting speakers as do many of our members.”

Piragis added, “Our thoughts are that the group will take a break after April or early May until we can meet again in person at the Grand Ely Lodge, hopefully sooner rather than later. If the new facilitators want to continue with zoom meetings this spring and summer that would be their decision.”

If you or someone you know would like to take advantage of this opportunity, please contact one of the two Steves at stevieschon@gmail.com or steve@piragis.com.

The upcoming Tuesday Group schedule is listed below. All talks are at 12 noon on Tuesdays.

All presentations are administered in a virtual presence until further notice due to the coronavirus

pandemic. Send email to stevieschon@gmail.com for more information.

► April 20 - Roger Powell - Fishers Boxed In. Find out what weasel expert Roger has been up to with one of his favorite critters this winter.

► April 27 - Kathryn Hoffman - CEO of Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) with an Update on the PolyMet Mine.

Seniors hosts drive-up shoe drive

ELY - The shoe-wearing public is invited to participate in a drive-up shoe collection to close out the Shoe Drive Fundraiser sponsored by the Ely Area Senior Citizens. Donations of gently worn, used and new shoes, boots, and sandals will be accepted.

In the U.S. alone, over 600 million pairs of shoes are thrown away per year. The materials used to manufacture a pair of shoes are created from chemical compounds that will create health hazards if left to disintegrate openly or in landfills.

By donating your gently worn, used and news shoes to the Ely Area Senior Citizens your shoes are given a second chance to make a difference.

Load up your vehicle, drive to the Ely Senior Center, 27 S 1st Ave E, on Saturday, April 24 from noon to 3 p.m., pop the trunk, and volunteers will gratefully collect donations

The amount of money raised is determined by the total weight of the shoes collected.

All donated shoes will be redistributed to micro-enterprise partners through Funds2Orgs, a for-profit social enterprise, and used in developing nations for impoverished people to start their own businesses.

Participants can still drop shoes at Zup’s in Ely, Babbitt, or Tower, Ely Northland Market, Ely Family Dental, or the Senior Center (mornings) through the end of April.

The purpose of Ely Area Senior Citizens, Inc., organization is to promote and advance the interests and welfare of all senior citizens in the Ely area and to contribute to the recreational, social and civic welfare of the community.



May the Fourth be with you

ELY - Get your blaster out and brush up on your Star Wars Trivia. The Ely Public Library will be hosting an online Kahoot! trivia game on the topic of the Star Wars movies on Tuesday, May 4. (May the Fourth be with you!)

Call the Ely library to register at 218-365-5140. They will need a separate email address for each person in your household who wants to play.

ORR CITY COUNCIL

Orr council takes action on airport projects

Citizen land use requests raise questions about boundaries and surveys

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- Taking advantage of favorable funding conditions, Orr City Council members voted Monday to move forward with two essential upgrades for the city airport. The first item to be considered was replacement of the airport beacon, which has not been functioning. As the issue has been addressed before, little discussion was necessary for the council to approve a grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to install a new beacon.

The total cost for the beacon, engineering, and electrical work will be \$21,456. State funds will cover 75 percent of that, making the city's contribution \$5,364.

An additional needed project to seal coat the runway, taxiway, and aprons generated more discussion as the council considered approving letting bids for the work and funding sources.

Alan Johnson, of Benchmark Engineering, said that the overall project will be broken down into alternative segments when it is put out for bids, to maximize what can be done within the projected \$250,000 budget.

"Right now we're

kind of guesstimating that probably there's not enough funds there to completely get all the aprons plus the runway and taxiways and all that," Johnson said.

The timing is good for getting federal FAA money to cover the lion's share of the work.

"Normally this is a 95-percent grant with a five percent city match," Johnson said. "Because the CARES money came through, they're doing all the ones that are eligible this year at 100 percent." Some apron areas around the hangars might not be eligible for FAA funding, and the alternate approach for bidding would allow the city to investigate the possibility of getting another MnDOT grant to cover 75 percent of those costs, with a 25 percent local match.

Propety issues

Two seemingly unrelated and straightforward property agenda items ended up generating much discussion when council members realized the possibility that an alley providing access to a small parcel of land could be compromised if lot boundaries aren't clearly established.

Jesse Manick and Hannah Smith submitted a request to purchase a city-

owned lot next to their property at 10681 Hillcrest Drive for additional room to build a house and possibly a new garage.

Councilors were agreeable to have Clerk Cheri Carter attempt to determine if the estimated market value assigned by the county of \$2,900 was appropriate, although they balked at the idea of having the city pay to have the lot surveyed.

When it came time later in the meeting to consider a building permit request from John Barto at 10671 Hillcrest Drive for a \$50,000 garage, it was noted that the east side of the garage could butt up against the platted alleyway.

"We don't want to block access to that land back there," Mayor Joel Astleford said.

There was conflicting information indicating that the proposed footprint for the garage might be 10 feet off of the property line, giving rise to discussion not only about the actual dimensions of that lot, but also the lot councilors approved for consideration to sell to Manick and Smith. Questions were raised about the need for accurate surveys of the lots versus the cost involved in obtaining them.

City Maintenance Supervisor Paul Koch left the meeting briefly to review



Cracks appear as horizontal creases in this picture of the taxiway at the Orr Regional Airport. A proposal to seal the cracks in the runway, taxiway, and aprons and then apply a fog seal to the finished areas is being readied to put out for bid.

Photo by D. Colburn

a plat map, and returned with the information that the platted alley was 30 feet wide, sufficient to allow access if the proposed garage did, in fact, border the property line.

In the end, council members voted on an amended motion to conditionally approve Barto's building permit, provided that all parties involved first come to an agreement on where the property lines lie.

The council also received a citizen complaint about two blighted properties on Pine Drive. Carter said the owner of 4720 Pine Dr., Jeremy Morris, and the owner of 4739 Pine Dr., Jeff Francke, received letters last summer.

The council discussed possible options and directed Carter to send follow-up letters to both parties. If either is unresponsive, the next step would be to have the city's attorney get involved in

the contacts.

In other business, the council took the following actions:

► Approved a contract with St. Louis County to provide fire protection for the area previously served by the Greaney-Rausch-Silverdale department that has disbanded.

► Approved receipt of a \$200 donation to the Ambulance Service from Willow Valley Township.

NWFA photo contest entries are being accepted through May 1

COOK- The deadline for entries for the Northwoods Friends of the Arts photo contest "Finding Light" is fast approaching.

Photographers have until May 1 to submit their 5x7, 8x10, and 8x12 prints at the NWFA Gallery at 210 S River St. for a chance to compete for the \$100 first prize as voted on by viewers of the exhibit from May 6 through May 29. Second place will receive \$50.

Since the event is a fundraiser for NWFA,

there is an entry fee of \$10 per photo, although students 18 and younger can submit three photos for free. Photographers are encouraged to submit written descriptions to be displayed along with their photos.

Photographers have the option to sell their photos during the exhibit at prices set by NWFA, with a portion of each sale going to the fundraising effort.

The theme "Finding Light" is suggested as a

guide for photographers to consider subjects that reflect what they've learned that puts light in the world as they know it, but the subject matter and photographic genres are not limited to the theme.

Entry forms may be obtained at the NWFA Gallery or downloaded from <https://www.nwfamn.org/art-events>. The gallery is open Wednesday, Thursdays, and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

North Woods senior signs up for military

COOK- Zuly Roach, a North Woods School senior, has enlisted in the U.S. Navy and will enter military service this coming fall.

Following graduation this spring, Roach will spend the summer working with the Forest Service fire crew in Ely before entering boot camp in Chicago in September. Roach will pursue training to become a naval aviation technician.

Her parents are Missy and Tom Roach, of Bear River.



Zuly Roach, of Bear River, will be joining the U.S. Navy this coming September.

Church to offer free meal April 22

COOK- Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook will be serving a free drive-through meal to the community on Thursday, April 22 from 4 to 6 p.m.

Meals will be prepared and delivered to patrons' vehicles by church volunteers.

This month's menu includes meatloaf and sides. As always, the public is invited and encouraged to participate.

NORTH WOODS SCHOOL THIRD QUARTER HONOR ROLL

A Honor Roll

Seniors

Monique Benner
Zachary Cheney
Megan Cote
Emily Fosso
Olivia Fultz
Zoe Kisch
Aubrey Koskovich
Joey Lakoskey
Brynn Simpson
Austin Sokoloski
Elijah Squires
Cole Thiel

Juniors

Erik Aune
Morgan Burnett
Joshua Copeland
Ty Fabish
Trey Gibson
Alex Hartway
Joseph Hoagland
Taylor Jones
Abby Koch
Jacob Panichi
Kaya Tschida
Olivia Udovich

Sophomores

Cooper Antikainen
Kohen Briggs
Grace Koch
Kaden Ratai
Karah Scofield
Elias Smith
Steven Sopoci
Emily Trip
Skyler Yernatich

Freshmen

Jonah Burnett
Annabelle Calavera
Brandon Cook
Addy Hartway
Evan Kajala
Helen Koch
Riley Las
Zefrym Mankowski
Autumn Swanson
Madison Taylor
Trinity Vidal
Jacob Whiteman

Eighth Grade

Rory Bundy
Addison Burckhardt
Alex Burckhardt
John Carlson
Ryder Gibson
Aidan Hartway
Sierra Schuster
Amber Sopoci
Lydia Trip

Seventh Grade

Lincoln Antikainen
Isaiah Briggs
Lauren Burnett

Josephine Carlson

Mya Gogleye
Isabelle Koch
Victoria Mathys
Marley Peak
Payton Scofield

B Honor Roll

Seniors

Christopher Chauklin
Jack Cook
Samuel Frazee
Shandra Hanninen
Tyrus Leinonen
Logan Nurmi
Andrew Peak
Zuly Roach
Cadence Saarikoski
Natalie Shantz
Zoe Trip
Cassandra Villebrun
Kory Zallar
Andrew Zika

Juniors

Tyler Chiabotti
JessieAnne Drift
Erik Hagen

Reuben Isham

Katrina Jackson
Sierra Jensen
Timothy Lilya
Michaela Luecken
Sean Morrison
Nathan Palm
Cole Snidarich
Arianna Swinson

Sophomores

Thomas Debeltz
Hannah Kinsey
Garrett Lappi
Kiana LaRoque
Angeline Lilya
Dillon Musakka
Alexandra Whiteman

Freshmen

Madison Dantes
Starr Davis
Sean Drift
Tehya Geyshick
Alexandra Holm
Victoria Olson
Jessy Palmer
Ella Smith
Destiny Weiss

Eighth Grade

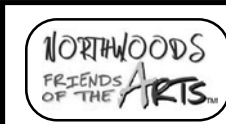
Kalvyn Benner
Nevada Gauthier
Talen Jarshaw
Mya Kinsey
Jasmine Munson
Louie Panichi

Richard Swinson

Adyson Van Tassell

Seventh Grade

Levi Chauklin
Brynn Chosa
John Danielson
Brittin Lappi
Rogelio Noyes
Isabel Pascuzzi
Sadie Spears
Megan Taylor
Tristan Vidal
John Warren



Voting/Judging: May 6-May 29
\$10 entry fee per photo, no limit
Students, up to 3 photos free
Enter your best 5x7, 8x10 or 8x12
(Categories: Adult, Student)
PRIZES Awarded by
People's Choice

FUN PHOTO CONTEST

Images that make you
happy, hopeful, peaceful.
Entry deadline: Saturday, May 1, 2021

Mail entries to:
PO Box 44, Cook, MN 55723
Or deliver to Gallery at:
210 S River St, Cook
Hours: Thur-Fri 10-4, Sat 9-1
Details at nwfamn.org
and our Facebook page



Area St. Louis County Solid Waste and Recycling Facility site hours

Ash River Trail Canister Site
11391 Ash River Trail
Summer Hours
Wed: 1pm-4pm
Sat: 2:30pm-5:30pm

Kabetogama Lake Canister Site
10150 Gamma Rd
Summer Hours
Mon. & Wed: 9am-noon
Sat: 10:30am-1:30pm

Sturgeon Canister Site
8380 Hwy 73
Hours
Sun: 10am-4pm

Orr Canister Site
4038 Hwy 53
Summer Hours
Tue: 9am-1pm, Thu: 2pm-7pm
Sat: 8am-noon, Sun: 10am-2pm

Portage Canister Site
6992 Crane Lake Rd.
Summer Hours
Mon & Tue: 2pm-6pm
Thu: 10am-1pm, Sun: 3pm-6pm

County 77 Canister Site
2038 County Rd. 77
Summer Hours
Tue: 1-6pm, Thu: 8am-1pm
Sat: 8am-5pm, Sun: noon-6pm

Cook Transfer Station
2134 S. Beatty Rd.
Hours
Mon: 10am-6pm
Tues thru Sat: 9am-3:30pm

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

Household Hazardous Waste Facilities
5345 Regional Landfill Rd., Virginia
Tue, Sat: 8am-1pm

3994 Landfill Rd, Hibbing
Sat: 8am-1pm

Summer hours effective April 15th through September 30th

**St. Louis County
Environmental Services
Department**

1-800-450-9278

Office hours 8-4:30 Mon. thru Fri.
stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle



ROAD...Continued from page 1

plat, O’Meara deeded land along the lakeshore as well as easements for streets to the public, apparently anticipating it could be used as common property by all of the owners he expected to purchase the lots in his new subdivision.

The 1929 stock market collapse and subsequent Great Depression ended such land speculation in the area for some time and O’Meara’s planned lake community never came to fruition. The lots eventually did sell, but as entire blocks, not as the individual lots that O’Meara had envisioned. Rather than dozens of summer homes, the subdivision is home to four summer cabins and a couple year-round residences.

But with the exception of one resident, none of the property owners in the subdivision actually own the lakeshore in front of their summer homes, although they have in most cases made use of the frontage as if it were their own, maintaining docks, boat lifts, or other improvements.

The situation was highly beneficial to the property owners, because they were spared the high taxes that typically come with lake frontage. In one instance, for example, a property owner ended up purchasing six parcels, totaling almost two acres, but pays anywhere from \$6 to \$20 dollars a year in property taxes on several of the parcels. They pay more on the parcel that includes a small cabin but in total the owners pay just \$450 a year in property taxes for all of their land. They don’t pay

anything on the public lot located on the lakeshore in front of their cabin, but they do maintain a dock there and effectively enjoy about 300 feet of shoreline as their own.

Adjacent properties in a neighboring plat pay several times that amount, mostly because they also own their lake frontage, which significantly inflates their land’s value.

While some property owners in Rearrangement Eagle Nest benefitted from the lower taxes the unusual plat made possible, they now face the unwelcome possibility that land they had long used as their own could be opened to at least some public use.

“They would put the road right in our front yard,” said David Kromer, of Ely, who has owned one of the properties in the plat for almost a decade. “We bought it for the privacy,” said Kromer, who noted that he can’t see any of the neighboring cabins from his yard. “It’s pretty unfair what they’re doing.”

Under the township’s plan, the road in question, named Spruce Street on the original plat, would be built to create an access to the lake for the township’s fire department, which is located right across Bear Head Lake State Park Road from the property. The road would run adjacent to the south side of Kromer’s property and on the north side of property owned by Ryan Asa, of Indiana, according to county records.

Kromer argues that the fire department doesn’t

need any more water. He said the fire hall already has a 10,000-gallon water tank and two other dry hydrants located within a few miles of the hall, in addition to almost 3,000 gallons of water on the department’s engine-pumper and tender. In addition, he said, the township has mutual aid agreements with neighboring departments which would respond with additional resources in the event of a significant fire.

Fire Chief Larry McCray disagrees. “A fully-involved house fire will take 20,000-30,000 gallons,” said McCray, or significantly more than the township has readily available. He said having quick access to the lake as a water source would provide the fire department with a virtually limitless supply of water.

While the township does have a 10,000-gallon tank at the fire hall, McCray notes that the tank still has to be refilled, something which cannot realistically be done with the well and garden hose available at the fire hall.

Access to the Eagles Nest lakes has traditionally been jealously guarded by local residents, who have opposed the installation of public landings in the past. That’s one reason that Kromer and a couple neighbors asked the township several years ago to vacate some of the platted roads designated in the plat. Kromer said he would prefer to take possession, and pay taxes, on the lakeshore property in front of his cabin, as well as the cor-

ridor designated for Spruce Street, but the township eventually declined their request for road vacation after some neighbors in the area objected.

The township isn’t proposing a public landing at the end of Spruce Street, although the installation of a dock has been discussed. Township officials say a dock could facilitate water evacuations from other parts of the lake in the event a wildfire cut off Walsh Road and prevented residents from leaving the path of the fire. Township officials have been among the most proactive in the area in pre-planning for wildfire events, in part because the township has dozens of dead-end roads that wind through otherwise nearly unbroken expanses of flammable forest.

For now, the controversy has centered on the construction of Spruce Street, but the township has also formed a committee to examine possible uses for the publicly-owned lakeshore in the plat, which is designated as park land. So far, the township hasn’t decided to accept the property or do anything with it, and town board chair Rich Floyd said he’s leaning against doing so out of concerns over the cost of maintenance. “Once we accept it, we are responsible for it in perpetuity,” he said. With two outstanding state parks nearby, Floyd wonders how much use the area would actually receive if the township made it into a park.

A committee appointed by the town board is

currently exploring those issues and is expected to make a recommendation later this year on whether the township should accept the park land and develop it for public use. That same committee has already recommended that the township develop Spruce Street, although Floyd said it’s not clear that was ever part of the committee’s mandate.

Questions raised

The controversy over the use of the lands in the plat has some township residents pointing fingers. In a letter to members of the Eagles Nest Town Board, which was also sent to the *Timberjay*, township resident Donna Carlson argues that the town board has failed to adequately determine the cost of building and maintaining the road along with a planned turnaround by the lake. At a meeting last year, Carlson suggested the road and related facilities could cost upwards of a million dollars.

Township officials put the cost of the road at a more affordable \$33,000, although opponents say that doesn’t include the cost of a survey and other expenses.

Carlson is also suggesting that the township’s fire chief has a conflict of interest in advancing the project. She notes that McCray owns land-locked property near the proposed Spruce Street, which she said would increase the value of his property by giving him access to lake frontage.

That’s unlikely, given that McCray’s access would

be no different from any other property owner in the township. And direct access to the frontage the current plat affords to cabin owners like Kromer and Asa, does not appear to have boosted their property values, which are set significantly lower than nearby properties in adjacent plats that actually include lakeshore.

Yet McCray doesn’t hide the fact that he thinks some of his neighbors have taken advantage of the circumstances of their unusual plat. “They’ve put docks in the water and boat lifts, all on land that doesn’t belong to them,” said McCray. “They don’t own the property. They don’t pay taxes. They have the benefit of lakeshore without having to pay for it. That’s their objection... that would be interrupted.”

Based on letters to board members, Carlson appears to be in the minority with her concerns. The town board asked the public to weigh in on the road proposal ahead of next Tuesday’s meeting. As of earlier this week, Floyd said the township had received about ten written responses from residents, all but one in favor of building the road.

As for the park lands, the future of those could remain in limbo for the foreseeable future. While Floyd said he’s leaning against accepting those lands for public use, he also doesn’t favor vacating the public dedication. “I’m not sure we would want to simply vacate those lands,” he said. “They’re worth a lot of money.”

BOOK...Continued from page 1

school junior-level English reading curriculum.

Funds were donated to the school district by a local advocacy group late last year, according to Superintendent Erik Erie. Decisions on specific books included in school curriculum are made by the school staff and administration.

The book in question is “I’m Still Here, Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness,” by Austin Channing Brown. The book was published in 2018 by Crown Publishing Group.

The New York Times bestseller is described, “From a leading voice on racial justice, an eye-opening account of growing up Black, Christian, and female that exposes how white America’s love affair with ‘diversity’ so often falls short of its ideals.”

Davis said he learned about a month ago that the title is currently a requirement to be read and discussed in the English 11 course.

“I read the book. (It is) a book filled with hate speech, racial division, anti-white rhetoric and cancel culture all rooted in critical race theory. This book isn’t written well, nor has it any literary value. It is one person’s jaded perspective about a specific race,” he said.

Davis continued, “Fighting hate with hate accomplishes absolutely nothing. It offers absolutely no insight or solution to close the gap between races. In fact, it furthers the divide.”

Davis sent an email describing his concerns to the English teacher, James Lah, 6-12 Principal Megan Anderson, Erie and the school board. A virtual online meeting was held late last month involving Davis, Lah and Anderson.

“Little to nothing was accomplished other than the book will not be removed and will continue to be required reading,”

Davis said.

Davis said he followed up with recommendations for alternative books for the English class.

“The public school classroom is not the platform for Austin Channing Brown’s book,” Davis said. “I along with many other members of this community are requesting the school board to approve the immediate removal of this book as required reading in the English Department. I would also ask the board to consider additional information be required when an individual or organization donates a book.”

According to ISD 696 school board policy, members are not allowed to engage in a discussion or debate on topics brought up by visitors during the open forum portion of the agenda.

The issue may be discussed at the school board’s April 26 study session, according to Erie.

Facility project

School board members approved spending as much as \$165,000 for asbestos removal and abatement procedures, along with air quality monitoring during the process, as part of the school facility construction and renovation project.

The lowest qualified bidder, ACCT, Inc., submitted a bid of \$99,990 for the job. Other quotes received were from AbateTek, Inc., \$116,000, and Bieniwk’s Abatement Services, \$185,000.

In addition, Institute for Environmental Assessment (IEA) was approved to spend up to \$65,000 for time and materials for on-site air monitoring and project management for the asbestos abatement during construction.

Erie noted that the project architect, Architectural Resources Inc., recommended that

discussions and decisions on funding the asbestos abatement take place after the bids are received, tabulated and approved (early next month) for the second phase of the \$20 million construction project.

Bids for the first phase of the project were approved by the school board at a special meeting earlier this month. A total of 111 bids totaling \$11,847,543 were received for the various segments of the project.

“That was within one-and-a-half percent of what (Kraus-Anderson) estimated. They were really pleased, considering what we have been hearing about construction costs. They are hoping the second round will be just as good,” Erie said.

He noted a couple of alternates received for the first phase of the project, including electrified glass that turns opaque for safety (during lockdowns) or distractions, moisture mitigation, if needed for the terrazzo floor installation, and the campus water main location and hookup.

“It should be noted,” said KA Senior Project Manager Mike Dosan in a letter to the school board, “that the contractor for the Gymnasium Equipment work scope is a non-union contractor (but) stated they will sign the Project Labor Agreement and will pay fringe benefits to the union. If a non-union contractor (H&B Specialized Products, Inc.) is not acceptable, then the second bidder would be H2I Group, and their bid is \$68,500 (an increase of \$18,600). H2I is a union company using carpenters to install the equipment.”

The school board also heard from Greg Crower, of Ehlers Public Finance Advisors, who said that the voter-approved bond sale, held Monday, for the school district’s deferred facilities maintenance and

indoor air quality improvements “was all good news today.”

Seven bids were received for the bonds. The low bid was from Baird Associates, of Milwaukee, Wis.

“That was a big number as there is still a lot of demand out there for bonds in the financial markets,” he said. “We received an interest rate that is about three-tenths of a percent lower than what we projected, which means a lower cost for borrowing, and a slight increase (\$45,000) in the funds available for the construction project.”

The interest rate on the \$2.7 million bond is 1.32 percent. Total debt service payments are estimated to be about \$11,000 lower than pre-sale estimates, according to Crowe.

COVID update

One new reported case of coronavirus was reported on Monday as all K-12 students returned to in-person learning and spring sports practices commenced at ISD 696.

“Right now we are up to two active cases,” Erie told school board members.

The 30 coronavirus cases reported in the school community from March 15 through the first week of April are no longer considered “active” cases, he said.

The lone case that was reported on Monday does not affect anybody as far as quarantine protocols because all students were in distance learning.

“We continue to track all cases and we have a lot of (COVID-19) testing going on,” he added.

The school district administrative team continues to have frequent consultations with the St. Louis County Public Health Department. The school district’s safe learning plan calls for the administrative team to make changes to the learning protocols after

consulting with the Ely Safe Learning Plan Advisory Council.

“However, due to timing related to our school calendar, like around Easter (break), we felt we needed to make some decisions before the Thursday advisory council meeting, so we went ahead and made some decisions on Wednesdays. We felt it necessary that our employees and families had a heads up on what we were doing,” Erie said.

As of Tuesday, April 13, the cumulative COVID-19 positive test count for the Ely school community is 46 for the school year.

Spring sports

With all students transitioning back to in-person learning, Memorial school students finally opened their spring sports seasons for baseball, softball, track and golf, as many as three weeks behind schedule.

“It was nice to hear the sounds of our teams getting their first practices underway,” said ISD 696 Athletic Director Tom Coombe. “The track runners were running through on the lower floors of the school because of the poor weather outside. The softball team was in the gymnasium getting their first practice going. The baseball team was in the gym later.”

Despite being sidelined while other schools were practicing and competing, Ely athletes will start competition as early as next week. The COVID-19 delays prompted numerous changes to the various spring schedules, according to Coombe. Games set for last week are postponed first, followed by contests set for this week.

According to the athletic director, the first games or contests for Ely students include:

►Baseball, Tuesday, April 20, home game against North Woods,

►Softball, Thursday, April 22, home game

against Chisholm,

►Boys and Girls Track, Thursday April 22 at Mesabi East,

►Boys and Girls Golf, to be determined.

Baseball field wedding

ISD 696 physical education teacher Max Gantt was given the “safe” signal by school board members to conduct his wedding ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Field on Sunday, June 6.

In a letter to the school board, Gantt said, “The baseball field is an outside space that has true sentimental value to me. To be married there would mean a lot to me. The baseball field is a place I take care of in the summer. I cut and water the grass. I keep the blacktop clean. I sweep the dugouts and fix the mound. The baseball field is my home during the summer. I coach kids and watch games there. I would love to get married there and add that to the list of memories I have in that place.”

Gantt assured the school board that a safe wedding celebration could be conducted with plenty of social distancing. As school will be done for the year, any liability for the gathering would be covered by the Ely Baseball Association, the group that manages the facility.

Gantt did not seek decorating help for the wedding celebration, however, Ely 6-12 Principal Megan Anderson said the Class of 2021 graduation celebration is scheduled for Saturday, June 5 at Veterans Memorial Field. “I encouraged Max to go with red and white as his wedding colors so the place would already be decorated for him. We’ll see what happens.” It was not made clear if Gantt’s in-laws will be occupying the visitors’ dugout, nor who will be calling balls and strikes, during the ceremony.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Strategies shift as vaccination pace appears to slow

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

Health concerns lead to pause of Johnson & Johnson shots

REGIONAL — Concerns over six cases nationally of a rare blood clotting disorder halted administration of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine in Minnesota on Tuesday, but the expected brief suspension may have little effect on a vaccination effort that is beginning to show signs of lessening demand in certain areas.

The Centers for Disease Control and Food and Drug Administration recommended the pause as they review data about an extremely rare and severe type of blood clot that has been discovered in six women between the ages of 18 and 48. The

clotting manifested itself between six and 13 days after receiving the one-shot J&J vaccine.

Gov. Tim Walz addressed the pause in a Tuesday morning press conference.

“This is the way the system is supposed to work — I expect this to be a short pause,” Walz said. “Your chance of dying of the virus is one in 560. Your chance of dying from this vaccine is one in a million.”

State Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm said that she is not aware of any blood clot cases connected to the 184,000 J&J vaccinations administered in Minnesota. She recommended individuals who have received the

J&J vaccine who experience severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks of getting the shot should contact their health care provider.

St. Louis County Public Health Director Amy Westbrook said on Tuesday that her department has administered only 270 doses of the J&J vaccine.

“The Johnson and Johnson vaccine hasn’t really gotten distributed very widely in Minnesota since we started receiving it,” Westbrook said.

The county has targeted J&J vaccinations, in part, for college students, and had intended to use it for an upcoming vaccination clinic at Vermilion Community College in Ely. The clinic will still be held, using a different vaccine, Westbrook said.

Bois Forte tribal clinics also had been administering J&J shots, and health officials there quickly announced on Tuesday that they were suspending the use of that vaccine and switching to the Moderna two-shot regimen.

demand for vaccinations.

The clearest sign is in southern Minnesota, where both Faribault and Martin counties have declined their scheduled allocations of vaccines because they are having trouble filling appointments. In the North Country, Cook Hospital announced a 60-slot vaccination clinic for this Friday on April 8. On Monday, four days later, the hospital posted a notice to its Facebook page that there were still appointments available, a different scenario from its three-day, 300-dose clinic in late February when slots were snapped up and there was a waiting list for appointments.

St. Louis County Public Health offered online registration this week for six vaccination events in the Duluth area, Hibbing and Eveleth, and a review of site registrations on Wednesday morning by the *Timberjay* found a large number of openings. The first clinic on Wednesday at Pike Lake was booked solid, but as of Wednesday morning 300 slots remained open for Thursday and Friday sessions at that location. A Thursday clinic at the Shriners Event Center had more than 250 open appointments. For a half-day clinic on Thursday in Hibbing, only the 9:30 a.m. slot was full, with room for 156 more patients. Friday’s six-hour clinic in Eveleth had openings across the board, with 460 appointments still available. While many of those slots will likely be filled, the pace of enrollment lags significantly from similar online registrations for other vaccine providers just a few weeks ago.

Westbrook acknowledged that the demand

for vaccinations, at least through large community clinics, appears to be slipping. “I think that’s definitely happening, at least what we’re seeing with our clinics in the northern part of the county, and we’re also seeing that start to happen in the southern part of our county,” Westbrook said. “We’ll probably end up shifting in the next few weeks, we’ll likely move away from the larger sites and do more targeted vaccinations.”

More than 2.1 million Minnesotans, 48 percent of the population age 16 and over, have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, and last week state officials initiated a concerted effort to reach targeted groups of essential workers, beginning with food service employees.

As of last Saturday, 91,000 residents of St. Louis County had received at least one dose of vaccine, and Westbrook said that a targeted approach to educate different groups about the benefits of vaccinations will be helpful.

“There’s a lot of benefits to employers promoting vaccines, because people who are fully vaccinated now don’t have to quarantine if they’re fully vaccinated and are exposed, so there’s a financial benefit there when people don’t have to take time off of work,” she said. “For students, we want to see them enjoy their graduations and their sports teams and their proms, so that also is an incentive to get vaccinated. We’re doing some targeted outreach to those groups specifically.”

trends in the county and statewide this past week, with numbers similar to concerning levels recorded in October. But with initial vaccination efforts in the state focused on the elderly, it’s now the younger part of the population driving the increase.

“We’ve seen our numbers sort of flipped on the edges,” Westbrook said. “We haven’t seen a huge shift in the percent of cases of 20 to 64-year-olds, but we’ve seen a dramatic drop in 65-plus cases, and that is being replaced by the under 20 group. We’re seeing our hospitalizations increase, and the age distribution is younger. We’re not seeing as many people go into the ICU, which is great.”

Schools and sports-related activities are among the factors fueling the increase in the school-age population, Westbrook said.

“We haven’t had a ton of change in health behaviors among the 20 to 64-year-olds, but we have seen a shift in the behaviors of adolescents,” she said. “More kids are in school, sports are going on again. In sports for younger kids we haven’t seen that as much as we have with school-associated sports.”

County trends now appear to be driven by case increases in the central and southern regions, as the spike that hit the Ely area has mostly subsided, with only eight new cases reported last week, ten fewer than the week before.

“2021 didn’t start off very well for the Ely community, but it’s getting better,” Westbrook said. “Forty percent of Ely’s total cases have been reported in 2021. But the trend for the past couple of weeks, since late March, has been that cases are decreasing, so that’s good.”

NO NEED TO PANIC!

Both Federal and MN have extended the income tax deadline to May 17, 2021. However, the estimated payment deadline of April 15 remains the same.

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CAKE...Continued from page 1

available on her own social media. Just a few months ago she created a dedicated social media presence and her popularity snowballed.

“I was blown away by how word got around,” she said.

Erin also maintains a full-time job at the Ely office of the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

“So I bake in the evenings after work, sometimes till 1 a.m. I’ll bake or whip up a batch of frosting before work. I also bake on the weekends. What started out as a hobby has turned into this,” she said. “I simply love it.”

When this whole pandemic started and everybody was staying at home, Erin said she wanted to do something fun, especially for kids who were trying to deal with the changes of not seeing their friends and going to school.

“I made up cupcake kits that included the cupcakes, a couple of tubs of frosting, sprinkles and such, and held drawings for them,

then a friend drove me around and we delivered them,” she said. “I thought it might be a fun activity.”

Recently, Erin promoted her new business with spring baking baskets and various drawings on her E’s Taste of Bliss Facebook page. She donated items for recent fundraising auctions in the Ely area.

“My calendar is booked up right now and I have so many cakes on the list, but if somebody calls and needs something next week, I’ll fit in what I can. I hate to say no,” she said.

She has the never-ending love and support of her husband, Pat Moravitz, and her step-daughter, Ella Perish.

“She is my taste tester and really likes to help out,” Erin said.

The Taste of Bliss creations are all made from scratch.

“I use all real ingredients and everything is truly made with love. I take pride in what I take out the door,” she said.



Erin Moravitz is the owner of E’s Taste of Bliss cake business. submitted photo

Erin makes round six-inch and nine-inch layer cakes, along with square cakes, sheet cakes, cupcakes and even wedding cakes. She offers a variety of flavors and frosting combinations.

“I have people contacting me now for wedding cakes in 2022,”

she said. “This is just so amazing and overwhelming in a good way. This is way more than I could have ever expected.”

A recent pop-up event on the day before Easter was sold out in the first hour.

“There were so many people. I made so much stuff, and it was

gone so quickly,” Erin said. “I am so grateful for the opportunity.”

Check out Erin’s Facebook page for an opportunity to “taste bliss.” For more information, call her at 612-360-1962.

BAN...Continued from page 1

department meetings for some time. His recording of a March 2 meeting is the primary evidence in the ongoing legal action against fire chief David Fazio and assistant chief Mike Indihar.

The board acted on several fire department related issues during the three-hour-plus meeting, conducted via teleconference, which often made discussion difficult as board members tried to debate issues, but instead were often interrupting and cutting each other off mid-sentence.

The board voted 3-2, with Sue Drobac and Barb Lofquist voting against, to change the board policy first adopted in 2015 that required audio recording of fire department meetings.

The policy, which was usually annually updated, is posted on the township website. But at some point recently, the policy on the website was edited to remove fire department meeting recording.

Clerk Debby Spicer presented an updated policy list for board approval at the meeting. The updated list clarified some wording on township rental policies, as well as procedures for getting items placed on the meeting agenda. But it also removed the wording stating that fire department meetings were to be recorded.

Drobac questioned Spicer on why the policy on the website had been changed without board action.

“What is the reason for the change?” she asked. Spicer responded that fire department officials had told her they didn’t know they were supposed to be recording meetings and wanted it taken off. Spicer said she checked with the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT), and they said such recordings were not required.

“So, we can change it if we want to,” Spicer said.

“I am wondering how a clerk can change our policies after talking to MAT,” said Drobac.

Spicer responded she was just doing what was requested.

“If we want to change it, I don’t care,” Spicer said. “I was asked to put it out there.”

Lofquist noted that such township policies are a board decision.

“It was a board decision to request all meetings recorded,” she said. “Recordings are accurate, not just written notes. Why are they not comfortable with being recorded?” Lofquist asked.

Drobac asked all board members if they had direct-

ed Spicer to change the policy on the website, but Spicer again spoke up to say that she had done it after talking with MAT.

Chairman Mike Ralston then asked Spicer to explain her actions.

“I did not realize I needed a motion,” she said. “I changed it because the fire department wasn’t doing it. That is why this was put on the agenda.”

A member of the public had apparently asked Spicer for copies of recordings of the fire department meetings, pointing out that published township policy stated the meetings were being recorded.

A motion to require recording of fire department meetings failed on a 2-3 vote, with Ralston, Paul Skubic, and Carmen DeLuca voting against.

A motion to accept the amended policy that only requires recording of town board meetings passed 3-2, with Drobac and Lofquist voting against.

The board then discussed an addition to the fire department SOGs (standard operating guidelines) that added a new requirement that audio and video recording of meetings, trainings, and emergency response by members is prohibited without prior approval of the chief. Any member violating this policy is subject to disciplinary action including termination.

Chief Dave Fazio said members had approved this change, but the board has final say on the SOGs.

“This had been brought up informally for years,” Fazio said. “We had an individual taping the meeting. Several feel it undermines trust and morale in the fire department.”

“These are not public meetings,” Fazio said. “I wish this was done long ago.”

Lofquist asked if board members are allowed to attend these meetings. Fazio said it was permitted. Ralston said the department should post the meetings, in case more than two board members attend, to comply with the open meeting law.

“We were turned in for that already,” said DeLuca.

Drobac told the board that two former fire department administrative assistants, Ellen Trancheff and Julia Maki, recorded fire department meetings to help with preparation of minutes.

But Fazio said it was never a general practice.

“We have nothing to hide,” Fazio said. “It [recording] restricts our members from talking freely, for fear of lawsuits.”

Ralston said he agreed with the change, noting the fire department has been

operating “efficiently” for the last five years without recording their meetings, so the policy was not necessary.

A vote to pass the amendment to the SOGs to prevent any recording passed 3-2 with Drobac and Lofquist voting against.

The board also agreed to increase the fire department annual pension amount from \$2,500 to \$3,000 per year of service. The fire department pension fund is managed through PERA. A PERA analysis said the current balance in the account could fund a pension amount between \$3,300 and \$3,700 at this time.

Lofquist questioned Fazio as to why the pension amount for Greenwood firefighters is so much higher than neighboring departments, which range from \$500 to \$2,000 a year.

“Why are you worth so much more than anybody else?” she asked. “I support the fire department... But I think this is greedy.”

Drobac asked if there was any increase in job duties for department members.

Fazio said the money in the pension account does not go back to the township if not used up.

Lofquist noted that the township was responsible for funding the pensions

if the investments in the PERA account went down, such as during a stock market crash.

“A lot of people call the department a pension club,” Lofquist said. “You require two calls a year and attending 12 meetings. That doesn’t call for an increase.”

Lofquist said the department wasn’t volunteer service.

“Everybody gets paid for everything they do,” she said.

Ralston said the amount that township residents pay on their taxes to support the fire department is more than made up by savings in their homeowners insurance due

to the department’s fire rating (ISO).

“I’m all for it,” he said. “I want to keep the department active and morale high.” He said department members go out in the middle of the night in bad weather to respond to fire and medical emergencies.

“I want to keep it that way,” he said.

A motion to increase the pension to \$3,000 a year passed on a 3-2 vote, with Drobac and Lofquist voting against.

The *Timberjay* will report on the rest of this lengthy meeting in its April 23 edition.

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Wildlife Camp at Castaway Club

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FAIR...Continued from page 1

and anticipated hallmark event for the community and region.

But in the early 21st century, the fair is in danger of seeing that long run come to a screeching halt unless new blood can be found to rejuvenate it.

Like any youngster growing up in Bear River many years ago, Jane Bartlett loved going to the fair, but she moved away from the area once she grew up. She moved back to Bear River ten years ago, just in time to take the reins as chairperson of the fair’s centennial edition. She’s had that role ever since, assisted by co-chairs in recent years, but at 74 years old, it’s time for new leadership.

“Right now, there will not be a fair,” Bartlett said. “We’re worn out, we’re old, and it’s time for somebody to step up, and they’re just not doing it.”

When the fair has rolled around every August, there’s been no shortage of people willing to help out wherever they can, Bartlett said. The challenge has come in finding people for the organizing committee, which includes a woman in her 80s and has an average membership age of 74.

The committee met last week to decide what to do with the money in the fair’s bank account, hopeful that new volunteers would show up to keep the fair going. Only one person did, and that person didn’t feel up to the task of being chairman, Bartlett said. Two others who subsequently indicated interest in helping on a social media post have yet to get in touch with Bartlett.

The operation has run so smoothly in years past that the advance efforts to plan and organize the fair may have been obscured for attendees, but Bartlett is all too familiar with the work involved. The two-day event has included a softball tournament, a bazaar and market, food booths, musical entertainment, a Saturday night hog roast and Sunday Swedish meatball feast, bingo, a scavenger hunt, an outdoor worship service, and more.

And if that’s not enough, there’s the fair’s signature feature, the exhibits. While entries have decreased over the years, people still bring a healthy array of fruits, vegetables, baked and canned items, sewn and knitted goods, and arts and crafts to be awarded ribbons, small awards, and as Bartlett put it, bragging rights.

From obtaining liability insurance and a liquor license to organizing the annual raffle, everything has to be planned and executed by the committee, and it all needs to be coordinated by a chairperson. Now, there is no active committee, there is no chairperson, and there will be no fair this year unless those roles are filled by June, Bartlett said.

Losses aplenty

Without the fair that has figured so strongly in Bear River’s identity over the years, many things will be lost, first among them the sense of community created among those who make attending each year a chance to reunite with friends and family.

“We have a family that actually lives 150 to 200 miles from here, Mom and Dad and grown kids and grandkids who have been doing the food concession stand for the last few years,” Bartlett said. “He grew up in this area, so the fair has always been on his radar. They feel so strongly about having that community event in an area like this where they can allow their young grandchildren to run around freely and play.”

“One of the best things about the fair,” Bartlett continued, “is the Sunday afternoon dinner. All you have to do is look around and see all these old timers that come back; it’s sort of like a homecoming or a community reunion. And along with that, the little local Bear River Lutheran Church does a pie social in the afternoon, and people stand in line waiting for

that slice of homemade pie. That to me is the benefit of the fair, getting these friends back together again. And that’s going to be missed by us older people.” The fair has also been a moneymaker, and while the committee has been careful to reserve enough each year for the next fair, the proceeds have been used to support community needs, including upkeep of

the former school building and grounds that host the event.

“One year, we did \$4,000 worth of electrical upgrades,” Bartlett said. “Another year, we replaced the front door on the building. We often also donate a little bit of money to our first responders in our community.”


While Bartlett would love to see the fair continue,

she suggested it could be an event that time has finally passed by.

“I just don’t know that it’s a viable event anymore,” she said. “I don’t know, we get a lot of people who come back and enjoy it, who, like me, remember it from their younger days and it’s sort of like a homecoming. But for the young families that live right here in the area? They don’t participate. That’s not


to say that they don’t show up once in a while.”

Of course, Bartlett and the other committee members aren’t quite ready to give up just yet. While the group decided on making donations to first responders and to the area broadband project, they kept enough money in reserve for a fair this year, if anyone will step to the fore and take over.



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
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


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PUBLIC SAFETY

DNA tests raise questions about claimed bear attack

2019 incident led to shooting of bear that may well have had no connection to attack on jogger

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

ELY — Back in July of 2019, a 16-year-old girl prompted a Department of Natural Resources advisory here after she reported she had been bitten by a bear while jogging near White Iron Lake. The reported incident made headlines around the state and prompted a DNR conservation officer to shoot a young male bear in the general vicinity later

that evening. At the time, the DNR reported that the bear had been sighted near a resort dumpster and failed to show adequate fear of the officer, who then shot and killed the animal. But DNA results obtained by the *Timberjay* raise doubts about the reported bear attack and raise questions about why the DNR never clarified the story once the agency obtained the results, back in October of 2019.

DNR officials had hoped to use tissue samples taken from the dead bear to link the animal to the attack on the jogger, who was treated and released from the Ely hospital for injuries to her thigh. In addition to the tissue sample from the bear carcass, the DNR sent the ripped pants worn by the jogger to a California laboratory for testing. The results came back with a surprise. According to the lab report,

issued Oct. 22, 2019, swabs taken from the ripped area on the back left leg of the girl’s jogging suit found no evidence of bear DNA. Instead, the lab reported the swabs found only the DNA of a dog. While the presence of dog DNA does not definitively link a dog to the attack on the jogger, the results, combined with the lack of any sign of bear DNA, certainly raise the possibility that the jogger was the victim of a far more routine kind of attack.

According to the DNR, just eight serious, unprovoked bear attacks have been reported in Minnesota since 1987. By contrast, government sources estimate the number of dog bites in the U.S. at more than 4 million annually, with approximately 800,000 victims requiring medical attention. The DNR did not issue a press statement on the lab results and when the *Timberjay* inquired

See **ATTACK...**pg. 2B



SIGN OF THE TIMES

Tower’s Post 245 disbands

Like many such organizations, aging membership proves fatal

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER — The motto of The American Legion is “For God and Country.” But for the hundreds of Legion posts that dot small town Minnesota, the motto really should be “For God, Country, and Community” and that’s why the community here will feel the loss of American Legion Post 245. With only three remaining active members, the youngest of whom is 88, the Tower-based post recently surrendered its charter. The post is one of many in Minnesota, and nationwide, that has ceased operations, due mainly to aging membership. The post closed its building back in 2015 and has been mostly inactive the past ten years. “Minnesota once had 137,000 members and now has 64,000,” said past National Commander Dan Ludwig in this month’s Minnesota Legionnaire magazine. Legion posts sprang up in Minnesota after World War I, with 360 posts representing 35,000 members recorded in 1919. By 1920, there were 470 posts in Minnesota, and currently there are 539 posts registered in the state. While Post 245 still has dozens of members on the books, only three had been active in keeping the

organization going, even in its limited capacity. Those members can now choose to join other posts if they choose. “We sent letters out to all our members telling them they could join whatever post they wanted,” said member Don Reinhardt. Both Reinhardt and Post Commander Ramon (Ray) Berg have joined Legion Post 248 in Ely to maintain their memberships but aren’t traveling to meetings. Member Roland (Charlie) Fowler is continuing to be a member of the Babbitt post. Berg joined the Legion at the urging of his brother,



Top: Post 245 members Don Reinhardt (center) and Roland Fowler chat with a well-wisher at a 4th of July event. The post regularly provided the color guard for the Tower 4th of July parade and other events.

Above: Post Commander Ray Berg is all smiles as he mans the grill at one of the post’s many pancake breakfasts.

Below: The longtime post headquarters on Tower’s Main Street, which the post sold several years ago.



“We sent letters out to all our members telling them they could join whatever post they wanted.”

Don Reinhardt

charge after a service-related illness caused him to lose his left kidney. He was one of four sons in his family to serve in the military. He took over as Commander of the post after the death of John Morin. Jack Brandt also served as a longtime commander of the post. The late Paul Hendrickson was a very active post member, along with his wife Loretta, who served in the auxiliary. Reinhardt joined the post

See **LEGION...**pg. 2B

SPORTS



Grizzlies slip 12-5 to Virginia

North Woods Grizzlies pitcher Andrew Zika zeroes in on a Virginia Blue Devils batter in the Grizzlies’ rain-soaked season-opener on Friday on the artificial turf diamond at Mesabi East. Zika blanked the Blue Devils in the first inning as the Grizzlies manufactured a 1-0 lead, but the Virginia battery came alive after that, hammering North Woods hurlers and claiming a 12-5 victory. With cancellation of games scheduled at Silver Bay, Littlefork-Big River and Wrenshall, the Grizzlies will hope for better weather for a scheduled April 20 tilt at Ely. photo by D. Colburn

Hoops players get all-conference nods

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- North Woods and Ely High Schools were well-represented among those named to the All-Arrowhead Conference basketball teams recently. The North Woods Grizzlies boys, third-ranked in Section 7A with a season record of 14-6, scored three awards. Junior T.J. Chiabotti was tabbed for first team honors, sophomore Jared Chiabotti was named to the second team, and senior Darius Goggeley received honorable mention. “It’s nice for our three players to be recognized with all-conference honors,” Grizzlies Head Coach Will Kleppe said. “They are all hard working players who made their mark throughout the season which led

to their recognition by the coaches of the Arrowhead Conference. T.J., Jared and Darius bring a lot of energy to practices and games and I’m sure that energy is what stands out in the coaches’ minds as they are doing the voting.” Ely sophomore Joey Bianco led a trio of Timberwolves honorees by landing a spot on the mythical starting five after spurring the Timberwolves to a 12-7 record in a run ended prematurely by COVID-19. A pair of T-Wolves seniors, Emmett Faltesek and Will Davies, received honorable mention. While both Ely and North Woods girls teams had a tougher go of it this season, the play of Ely’s Grace LaTourell caught the attention of conference coaches, netting a spot among the honorable mentions.



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COUNTY SCHOOLS

Distance learning likely out for next school year

Board, superintendent express strong preference for all in-person model

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- ISD 2142 School Board Chairman Dan Manick spoke in a tone blending frustration with defiance on Tuesday when talk during a study session turned to the topic of in-person vs. distance learning in the 2021-22 school year.

“Why don’t we just announce we’re going to be in-person next year, and maybe some other school districts will join us in announcing that?” Manick asked. “We’re sitting waiting for Gov. (Tim) Walz to tell us it’s okay. How about we just tell Gov. Walz we’re going to be in-person next year? Obviously, that’s just me speaking, but that’s the message I’d like to send to our parents, that we’re in person and it’s there for everybody to know. If Gov. Walz has a problem with it, we need to let our people know. We’re not going to sit here until July 29, or 27 or whatever it was last year, waiting.”

Manick was responding to Superintendent Reggie Engebritson’s opening comments that the district’s administrative team has been looking ahead to next year’s learning format.

“We’ve had some informal discussions about this,” Engebritson said. “Our numbers for distance learners have gone down, and we are seeing more kids come back into school. If the

governor releases his executive order that mandates us to have to offer distance learning, we would like to see us become an in-person school, and the principals are also in support of that. I’d like to be able to get that word out to parents because if they don’t want to come back in-person and they want to still continue doing distance learning, they may have to look at an online provider.” While no plans have yet been put forward by the Department of Education, Engebritson said there has been discussion in the state Legislature about allowing districts to do distance learning voluntarily. Another proposal would limit schools to offering distance learning only to students who live in their service boundaries, which would prohibit families from getting distance learning services from a neighboring district and force them to turn to other online sources, of which there are many.

Board members collectively voiced their support for the district moving ahead with a commitment to in-person learning for next year, although no vote was taken since this was not the board’s regular monthly meeting.

Board member Chris Koivisto also noted that this year’s experience with distance learning gives the district the ability to pivot quickly and effectively to distance learning if health concerns would warrant a

temporary return to it.

Social worker

Engebritson told the board that she would be recommending the district hire another social worker to cover the Northeast Range and Tower-Soudan schools. The benefits observed from having new social workers at North Woods, Cherry, and South Ridge this past year, along with the continuing availability of COVID support funds, weigh in favor of the move, Engebritson said.

“It’s really been successful and I heard a lot of positive comments from staff,” she said. “One of the resounding things that teachers said (in a 2019 survey) is that they’d like more social-emotional support for our students. And so, we’ve done that with, I feel, great success. So far, it’s been a great team effort with the social worker, the counselor, the dean of students, and the principal.”

Business Manager Kim Johnson estimated it would cost between \$68,000 and \$75,000 including benefits, which would come from federal money the district receives through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund established by the CARES COVID relief act passed last spring. The district has started receiving its second round of ESSER funds, and Johnson said a third round will be coming.

“One of the things, like Reggie said, that the COVID funds can cover directly is anything to address the physical, mental, social, and emotional health needs of students. This one is listed point blank there. And with all of the success we’ve got at the other schools with having a social worker in the schools, working with the administration team there and directly with students is an excellent use of those funds. We’ll have ESSER 2 and ESSER 3 funds to pay for those over the next two years, and then we can reevaluate, because what we’d have to do then is pay that through the general fund.”

Engebritson noted that an additional social worker also would offset some of the expense for services the district currently contracts for with Range Mental Health Services. ISD 2142 is also one of three districts statewide that has been invited by the Department of Education to participate in a five-year project intended to develop additional social-emotional support mechanisms for students. While still awaiting final confirmation that the project will move forward, Engebritson said a staff of social workers supporting all schools in the district would be of great benefit to the district’s participation.

Board members expressed general support for the proposal, which will be acted on at an

upcoming regular board meeting.

COVID funds

Johnson reported that the district received \$962,900 in the first round of CARES Act funding that was spent by Dec. 31. \$543,000 was spent on air handling “scrubbers.”

“We were able to get those installed in each of the schools by the end of December,” Johnson said. The units, purchased from Johnson Controls, use an ionization process to clean the air circulated by the schools’ heating and air conditioning systems.

Other uses of the funds have included additional school and bus cleaning and increased costs for extra substitute teachers resulting from COVID-19, Johnson said.

The second ESSER allocation to the district is \$1.14 million and must be spent by Sept. 30, 2022, Johnson said. Third-round funding could be as much as \$3 million, but could also be less depending on possible changes in funding allocation formulas that have yet to be determined.

Personnel actions

The board held a five-minute special meeting prior to the working meeting to act on personnel issues.

A retirement request from North Woods Kindergarten teacher Jeani Swanson, effective Aug. 31, was approved. The resignation of Tower-Soudan van driver Spencer Addington was accepted, effective April 6.

LEGION...Continued from page 1B

in 1996 after moving to the area. He was a graduate of Ely High School and served in the Navy for four years, doing three tours during the Korean War. Reinhardt worked as an electrician on Martin Mariner twin-engine rescue planes, which did open-water rescues when pilots were shot down. They also patrolled and bombed enemy submarines. After his first four years, he was on inactive duty for four more years.

Berg wasn’t sure how old the Post 245 was but has fond memories of when the Legion post met in the VFW Building (now the *Timberjay* building) on Main Street. The dance floor was upstairs, and drinks were served in the basement where Berg worked as a bartender. He remembers watching his grandparents dancing upstairs. He wouldn’t admit to dancing, saying he was too young then, but did find his lifelong sweetheart. Shortly after he returned from his service, he married his wife Lorraine, got a job in the mine, and they raised their family in Soudan.

Back in those days, there were many service clubs in Tower, including a Moose Lodge, the VFW, and the Masons, they said.

The post eventually bought the closed Masonic Hall for a dollar, and both Berg and Reinhardt were on the “fix-up crew” that brought the building back to life.

The Legion post has struggled with finding active members for many years, but over the past 30 years was a visible presence in Tower-Soudan. The post raised funds by selling pull-tabs, hosting bingo, regular pancake breakfasts, and rummage sales. The funds they raised helped with expenses for their building, but any extra funds were donated to both community and veterans causes.

The pancake breakfasts were a major fundraiser in the post’s later years, helping raise money for building upkeep and ongoing expenses.

Fowler said he was the group’s dishwasher, and occasionally got to mix up the pancake batter, but the actual pancake cooking

and flipping was left to others. Fowler belonged to Legion posts in both Tower and Babbitt. He was in the service, U.S. Army, at the same time as Berg and Reinhardt. Fowler was a member of a canine corps that served in Korea, bringing along 54 German Shepherds.

The Legion also participated as a color guard in the Fourth of July parade, during community and school events, and at veterans’ funerals.

For years they were a major funder of the town’s Fourth of July activities, sponsored the Memorial Day program, helped fund afterschool activities like unicycling, donated money for new playground equipment, and made regular donations for veterans’ homes in both Minnesota and elsewhere.

Their community Thanksgiving dinner involved roasting seven large turkeys, said Reinhardt, who along with his wife Judy (who was an active auxiliary member) also made homemade stuffing and many of the pies.



The kitchen crew during one of the post’s many pancake breakfasts, which were long a Sunday morning fixture in Tower. file photo

“We served a free meal,” said Reinhardt, “but were always surprised with how much people donated.”

The post also delivered meals to several dozen shut-ins each year.

St. James Presbyterian Church took over the community Thanksgiving meal after the post was unable to, due to a lack of members.

And other local groups and businesses have stepped up to continue

some Legion traditions. Good Ol’ Days now offers free hot dogs to children after the parade, and the Tower-Soudan Civic Club took over the annual Fourth of July pancake breakfast and organizes the community Memorial Day program. Tower-Soudan

Elementary now hosts the annual Veterans Day program.

The post also had an active Legion Auxiliary, most recently led by Delores Clark, which disbanded several years ago.

ATTACK...Continued from page 1B

about the test results last year, Dave Olfelt, director of the DNR’s Division of Fish and Wildlife, responded only that the results did not show the presence of bear DNA, which made it impossible to link the dead bear to the jogger attack. His response did not mention that the test had revealed dog DNA. The DNR never revealed the identity of the jogger, so further questioning of the jogger or her family is not possible.

While the lab results were available as public record, the DNR had little incentive to announce them and made no effort to do so. The agency had used the incident as a case-in-point in their ongoing campaign to discourage residents in the Ely area from feeding bears. The agency has long argued that bear feeding

habituates bears to humans, creating the potential for negative interactions.

Some in area unhappy with shooting of bear

The DNR’s decision to shoot a bear in response to the claimed attack hasn’t set well with everyone in the area where the incident took place. Carla Arneson, who made a data request for the lab results last month, said she was shocked to see that the jogger attack may not have involved a bear at all. She complains that the DNR has been too quick to shoot bears as the solution to too many bear complaints. “I think they need to have a different attitude when they send somebody out,” she said, adding that it is humans who are creating the attractions that get bears in trouble.

Arneson said she now believes the bear the DNR

shot was the same bear that had been seen with a plastic ring around its neck for several weeks earlier in the summer. That bear, dubbed Ringo by many residents around Farm and White Iron lakes, had been a regular visitor to cabins in the area, raiding bird feeders and other food sources. Arneson said Ringo had visited her yard more than once to graze on dandelions and once showed up on her deck, looking for bird seed. She said she had interactions with the bear and never found him to be hostile, although he clearly had little fear of humans. “He was a cool animal. I don’t think he would hurt anyone,” she said.

Arneson said she saw him last on the Friday before the claimed attack on the jogger. Two days

later, the DNR conservation officer dispatched a male bear about the same size as Ringo, not far from Arneson’s cabin. “I’m quite sure it was Ringo,” she said.

While the dead bear did not have a ring around its neck, Arneson and others in the area believe the bear had managed to get the ring off sometime in early July, which was the last time anyone reported seeing the bear. By that time, the bear and its plight had attracted national headlines and a substantial following in the community.

It had also attracted an informal Facebook group, led by Karen Pilipuf Matus, who reported the last sighting of Ringo on July 2. She also reported a sighting of a bear that an observer believed to be Ringo, without his ring, on July 5.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Breitung accepting applications for police chief

by STEPHANIE UKKOLA
 Staff Writer

BREITUNG- At Breitung Township’s special meeting on April 8, the board took care of police business, everything from opening the mail to posting an opening for a new chief of police. But the future of police service in Breitung is still undecided.

The board asked Clerk Di-anna Sundahl to post an opening for the police chief position with an application deadline of May 2. The posting will be on-

line on the police P.O.S.T. board and in two issues of the *Duluth News Tribune* and the *Mesabi Tribune*. Tomsich figured it would be about 90 days between advertising the position, candidate selection, and interviews before they could hire someone and that by then the police committee should have a recommendation to the board for the future of policing in Breitung.

Tomsich reported he has been working with the city of Tower to create a schedule for St. Louis County patrols in the

Tower/Breitung area. The two communities are splitting the cost for random patrols equally in April and May. Tomsich said that the patrols with St. Louis County have been going well so far and that they have been covering the entire township, including the more remote areas. The board asked Sundahl to contact Tower and ask them to propose a schedule for June and have it back to Breitung in time for their regular April 22 board meeting.

The board opened three applications for the full-time offi-

cer position that had been posted earlier this year. Sundahl will send the applicants a letter explaining that the chief resigned and will ask if they would like to keep their applications open.

Breitung will ask Tower if they can keep possession of the police squad owned by Tower until a long-term solution is determined. In the Breitung/Tower police contract termination agreement, the two communities had agreed that Tower would have its property back within 60 days. The squad car is the only property that Tower

owns and the equipment inside belongs to Breitung.

The board heard a report from the Tower/Breitung police committee that the committee has been meeting weekly and gathering data to determine needs, options, costs, and liabilities.

The township will seek legal guidance on what to do with evidence, incident reports, confiscated property and records held in the police department.

Obituaries and Death Notices



Donna K. Hill

Donna K. Hill, 88, a lifelong resident of Soudan, died on Friday, April 9, 2021, at The Waterview Pines in Virginia. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, April 16 at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Soudan, with Pastor Greg Anderson officiating. A gathering time for family and friends will begin one hour prior to the service at the church. Family services are provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower.

Donna was a kind and caring person and touched the hearts of many. She will be deeply missed by all. The family would like to give heartfelt thanks to the staff of Waterview Pines for the excellent and compassionate care Donna received. She made many friends while she was there.

She was a gifted knitter, loved to read, and enjoyed walks, the outdoors and her flower gardens.

Donna is survived by her husband of 66 years, Jim Sr. of Soudan; sons, Jim (Pam) Hill and Dan (Corrine) Hill, both of Soudan; sister, Tina Chiabotti of Stuart, Fla.; brother, Lee Branwall of White Bear Lake; granddaughter, Jodi (Nick) Levens; great-grandchildren, Jackson, Elliot, Neva and Nixon, all of Tower; along with numerous extended family members and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Ernest and Mary Branwall.



Carol M. McIntire

Carol Myrtle Boleman Saari McIntire, 83, of Tower, a loving daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother, aunt and friend, passed away peacefully to the heavenly realm while at Essentia Health in Virginia on Wednesday, April 7, 2021. A memorial service will be held at a later date with a visitation to be held prior to the service at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tower.

In lieu of flowers or memorials, the family requests donations to Recycled Lives at recycledlives.org, Lutheran World Relief at www.LWR.org, and Cure Progressive Supranuclear Palsy at PSP.org. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

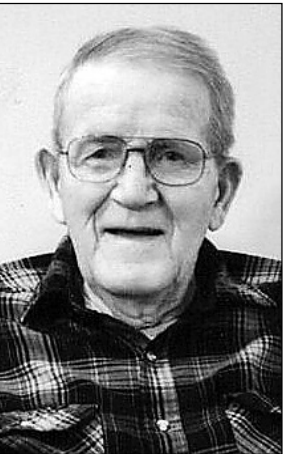
Carol was born on Dec. 18, 1937, in Osceola, Wis. She received her Bachelor’s Degree in Education from St. Cloud State University. She served the community with dedication as an elementary teacher at several area schools and helped

her husband in operating Northern Insulation in Tower for over 40 years. She was very active in the community, volunteering with local literacy initiatives, and serving in a wide range of roles at Immanuel Lutheran Church.

She enjoyed traveling the world and the U.S., observing nature, birds and wildlife, and enjoyed spending hours walking through the woods. An avid student of history, she would spend hours reading about famous people and places. She enjoyed working with people, playing games, and spending time with her family. She loved to knit and crochet.

Carol is survived by her husband of almost 50 years, Lloyd McIntire; daughters, Charlotte (Al) Kennedy and Cathleen (Eric) Vought; grandchildren, Clair Kennedy, Cole Kennedy and Lissette Vought; siblings, Lee (Ricky) Boleman, Norma Strand, Wilma Kennedy and Roger (Joan) Boleman; and numerous cousins, nieces, nephews and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Lloyd Lemoyne and Hazel Lucille Boleman; and her first husband, Clifford Saari.



Willard Pearson

Willard Pearson, 97, of Cook, passed away at the Cook Care Center on Monday, April 12, 2021. A visitation will be held from 5-8 p.m. on Friday, April 16 at Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook. A funeral service will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 17 at the First Baptist Church of Cook, with visitation for one hour prior to the service at the church. The family respectfully requests that masks be worn. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook.

Willard was born on Nov. 14, 1923. Years later, this property became the location of CareFree Living and the Cook Care Center, where he spent the final years of his life. He took great comfort in that connection, often telling others that he had “come home again.” He was united in marriage to Helen Sikkila on Sept. 14, 1946, in Virginia. They were married for 66 years at the time of her passing in 2013. Willard was a proud veteran of the U.S. Navy, having served during WWII. He achieved the rank of Machinist Mate 2nd Class, serving time in the Caribbean and the Pacific Northwest.

Andrea Strong

Andrea Strong, 32, passed away on Friday, April 9, 2021. A wake was held at the Bois Forte Wellness Center on the Vermilion Reservation in Tower on Tuesday, April 13. A funeral service was held on Wednesday, April 14, also at the Wellness Center.

Lee Tessier

Lee Tessier, 83, of Winton, a proud veteran, passed away at Essentia Health-St. Mary’s Medical Center in Duluth on Friday, April 9, 2021. Family arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

Darell Bartell

Darell Bartell, 85, of Babbitt, passed away at his residence on Saturday, April 10, 2021. Family arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

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...Please Note

Greenwood Supervisor DeLuca and Assistant Fire Chief Mike Indihar defy the governor’s order to wear masks in indoor public spaces while attending the April 6, 2021, fire department business meeting.

How does this protect our township emergency services and are we now ready for in-person board meetings, Supervisor DeLuca?

Paid for by Jeff Maus

St. Louis County Solid Waste Facility Area site hours

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

Summer hours effective April 15th through September 30th
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Outdoors

Our lives in the
Northwoods

‘TIS THE SEASON

Hatchery back in business

Operations underway, although facility remains closed to the public

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

PIKE RIVER — Hatchery operations got underway here this week, with a goal of collecting 500 quarts of walleye eggs for use in stocking operations around the state.

While the hatchery’s operations have been an annual rite of spring for

decades, the facility, operated by the Department of Natural Resources, was closed last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the facility is operational this year, the hatchery remains closed to the public and the traditional sale of white suckers, which are netted in the Pike River along with walleye, won’t be held this year for the

second year in a row.

This year’s quota of 500 quarts is down a bit from past years, but the number is based on the stocking needs around the state, according to Tower Area DNR Fisheries Manager Edie Evarts.

A large majority of the fry that will be hatched here in the coming weeks will be stocked within the Hudson

Bay drainage, while the rest will go to lakes in southern Minnesota or to private growers who will raise the fry to the fingerling stage for later stocking by the DNR.

Last year, the DNR undertook almost no stocking in the state’s lakes as a result of the pandemic. That includes Lake Vermilion,

See HATCHERY...pg. 5B



The DNR’s egg-processing platform was back in place this week and egg gathering is underway. Work is likely to wrap up by the weekend.



WAITING FOR WATER

When winter gives way

As the North Country waits for open water, waterfowl gather

As a regular photographer of wildlife, I’ve learned that there’s usually a relatively narrow window of opportunity to capture images of waterfowl— at least doing so easily.

Each spring, waterfowl chase the retreating ice north and as the ice disappears the ducks, geese, and swans have a supply of open water that expands almost daily. The more open water, the harder it is to get close enough to photograph them.

Which is why I’m always on the lookout for that early open water, which tends to attract an abundance of waterfowl, typically in relatively confined areas. Small rivers and beaver ponds make up much of the early open water, so that’s when I like to don my camo, grab my big lens, and keep my eyes open.

You never know what you’ll find, but I’m rarely disappointed. I still remember the time I visited a beaver pond near my house where about two dozen ring-necked ducks were hanging out. I worked my way up on them, keeping the beaver’s

dam between us to block my approach. Eventually I slowly stuck my head above the dam and was able to reel off several good shots before a couple of the ducks saw me move. Yet, rather than fly away, the sudden movement made them curious. I guess spending your day hanging out on a beaver pond can be pretty uneventful, because as the word spread that something interesting was happening over my way, the ducks got very animated and all made a beeline to my location to check out what had just become the talk of the pond. Soon I had two dozen ring-necked ducks, crests raised, nearly tripping over themselves trying to get a better look at me. In my camo, which includes a hat and veil, they obviously didn’t view me as a human, and it gave me the opportunity to get some of the best duck shots I had taken up to that point.

Recently, it was the disappearance of ice on the West Two River, just west of Tower, that provided

See WATER...pg. 5B

Top: A pair of trumpeter swans fed along the West Two River, just west of Tower, last week. The river had opened up the day before, attracting significant numbers of waterfowl.

Below: A male (r) and female hooded merganser, also found on the river

Bottom: A trumpeter swan and mallard swim past each other.

photos by M. HelMBERger



WILD RICE



EPA: State must list impaired wild rice waters

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL—The federal Environmental Protection Agency has “disapproved” a portion of the state’s new list of impaired waters for failure to list certain streams and lakes impacted by sulfates.

That decision was announced to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in a March 26 letter from the EPA’s regional office in Chicago. The story was first reported this week by *MinnPost*.

Tribal officials and environmental groups have pushed for years to have wild rice lakes and rivers that have higher levels of sulfate, mostly from mining discharges, added to the list of impaired waters. Yet, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has thus far refused to do so.

Sulfate, even at relatively low levels, has been shown to lead to the loss of wild rice in many cases. Minnesota is home to much of the wild rice found naturally in North America, which prompted state officials in the 1970s to adopt a strict wild rice standard for sulfate pollution in order to protect the unique resource.

But the 10 milligram per liter standard has not been enforced since its adoption and northern Minnesota tribes have been pushing the state for more than a decade to take a tougher stand in protecting wild rice. But the state’s mining industry has refused to accept regulation of the pollutant. Instead of limiting discharges of sulfates, the Legislature passed a series of laws beginning in 2015 that prohibited the MPCA from regulating sulfate pollution until it can create a new, less strict standard.

In objecting to the MPCA’s failure to list impaired wild rice waters, the EPA is contending that the laws enacted by the Legislature violate the Clean Water Act. That’s a position that tribes and environmental groups have argued for years.

The state is required to update its list of impaired waters every two years and the EPA

See WILD RICE...pg. 5B

WINTER’S RETREAT

Most small lakes now clear; some ice still lingers on larger lakes

REGIONAL—A mild late March and early April has helped to clear many area lakes of ice weeks ahead of normal, but most larger lakes in the region still had some ice cover as of midweek.

And with cool temperatures and light winds



Ice was lingering at McKinley Park on Lake Vermilion late Tuesday and more ice was visible further out on Big Bay.

expected into the weekend, further ice-out progress is likely to be somewhat limited.

Updates on ice condi-

tions were hard to come by this week, as most pilots were kept grounded by days of heavy clouds, fog, and sustained rain or snow.

Most smaller lakes from Ely to the west have been open since April 10 or even earlier in some cases.

Among the area’s large

lakes, it appears Pelican Lake cleared of ice on April 9. But, as of Tuesday, large areas of ice still lingered on Vermilion and Burntside,

with small patches still visible on Shagawa. Based on past history, lakes to the east of Ely likely remained ice covered as of mid-week.

Outdoors in brief

DNR: Renew your boat registration early this year

REGIONAL—The DNR is advising boat owners to give themselves enough time to renew their watercraft registration if it has expired.

As a result of COVID-19 and an increase in requests, the DNR License Center currently is requiring up to nine weeks to process mail-in boat registration renewals. Additional staff have been pulled in to help with the backlog.

To avoid the wait, the DNR is encouraging boaters to renew boat registrations online or at a local deputy registrar’s office, rather than by mail. Those who renew online can print out the confirmation page as a temporary permit. They can also write down their temporary authorization number from the confirmation page.

Your registration card and expiration decals will then be mailed to you. To renew online, visit the DNR website and click

on “Get Started” and follow the prompts. To renew in person, visit a deputy registrar. Deputy registrar locations are available on the Minnesota Department of Public Safety website.

Stream trout season opens this Saturday

REGIONAL—Minnesota’s popular warm weather stream trout season opens Saturday, April 17, with quality fishing opportunities in every region of the state. Brook trout and splake fishing also open April 17 on Lake Superior and its tributary streams.

“Minnesota has some excellent trout fishing and anglers help pay for trout habitat and access improvements with their fishing licenses and trout stamps,” said Benji Kohn, volunteer mentor program coordinator with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. “If you haven’t given trout fishing a try, it can be a relaxing, challenging and exciting way to fish. And you don’t need a boat to fish for trout.”

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST from NOAA weather

Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
48 26					49 24					49 28					41 23					41 24				
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.
04/05	72	28	0.00		04/05	71	28	0.00		04/05	68	31	0.00		04/05	75	30	0.00		04/05	71	28	0.00	
04/06	74	29	0.00		04/06	74	29	0.00		04/06	77	31	0.08		04/06	59	36	0.00		04/06	76	32	0.00	
04/07	61	39	0.13		04/07	60	37	0.17		04/07	54	35	0.04		04/07	50	41	0.01		04/07	56	32	0.20	
04/08	46	39	0.86		04/08	46	39	0.74		04/08	43	35	0.49		04/08	45	39	0.80		04/08	47	39	0.65	
04/09	47	40	0.10		04/09	49	41	0.10		04/09	43	36	0.21		04/09	46	39	0.19		04/09	47	43	0.11	
04/10	51	37	0.13		04/10	52	36	0.18		04/10	47	35	0.30		04/10	45	36	0.00		04/10	51	35	0.20	
04/11	44	36	0.02		04/11	44	36	0.04		04/11	44	35	0.00		04/11	45	37	0.00		04/11	41	35	0.00	
Total			3.50	68.3"	YTD Total			2.74	49.2	YTD Total			2.74	66.8"	YTD Total			2.50	NA	YTD Total			3.48	54.5

HATCHERY...Continued from page 4B

which saw increased fishing pressure this past summer.

But Evarts said Lake Vermilion is well-positioned to weather a few years without artificial stocking. She notes that the lake has an abundance of large female walleye that provide substantial brood stock for the lake.

“There are so many big spawning

females, the lake probably doesn’t need much help,” said Evarts.

Test netting on Vermilion last fall also confirmed that the lake is currently home to some of the highest walleye numbers on record, thanks to a series of strong year classes.

And Evarts notes that stocking

can be a balancing act at times. “If there are too many fry, they may compete with each other,” noted Evarts. If so, that can limit the first summer’s growth of the young walleye, which can reduce winter survival.

WATER...Continued from page 4B



The gray face and neck on this trumpeter swan shows it's an immature bird.

the attraction. I had struck out on my original plan to photograph wood ducks that I had seen the day before on the East Two River. But the woodies were nowhere to be seen, so I was headed back home when I spotted a handful of hooded mergansers on the West Two River, which had just cleared of ice the day before.

While not quite the oh-my-god glory of a male wood duck, a male hooded merganser is a beauty, nonetheless, so I parked a bit down the highway and dropped down into the cedar swamp there to work my way

back to the river edge.

By the time I commando-crawled to a decent vantage point, the mergansers had moved off a bit, only to be replaced by a pair of trumpeter swans, which had no idea I was propped against a cedar snag near the river’s edge, which gave me an unobstructed view as they actively fed along the river’s opposite shore. When I get such an opportunity, I’ll spend lots of time, even after I’ve taken every conceivable image. After all, how often do you get to watch such magnificent wild birds at close range while they go about their business unaware of your presence?

I will say that trumpeters may not be as cautious as other waterfowl, which allowed me to adjust my position to ward off kinks in the neck or other places that can come from holding odd positions for extended periods. Trumpeters, after all, are protected, so they don’t have to be as wary as those species that could end up on a dinner plate if they aren’t careful. And trumpeters, at up to 30 pounds and with an eight-foot wingspan, are also large enough to fend off all but the biggest predators. So, it’s understandable that they weren’t as wary as some of the ducks that were also feeding in the river.

In fact, while geese and ducks

typically take turns feeding, so at least one member of their group keeps an eye out for danger, these trumpeters took no such precautions. And they frequently had their heads underwater for a minute or more, which also gave me plenty of time to adjust my position.

After watching what I assumed to be a mated pair, a third swan flew in and joined them. The lingering gray around the neck and head told me this was an immature bird that probably hadn’t found a mate yet. But trumpeters can live 25 years, so this young bird should have plenty of time to get to that.

As I watched the swans, other ducks flew around, coming and going. With Vermilion at that time still locked in ice, this little bit of open water was a busy place. Eventually, a pair of hooded mergansers moved in just close enough to get a few marginal images before they moved out of sight around a bend in the river.

When I eventually decided to leave, I dropped down slowly and commando-crawled my way back out until I knew I would be out of sight if I stood. It had been such a peaceful scene down there on the river. I wanted to leave it just as I had found it.

WILD RICE...Continued from page 4B

has the authority to either approve or deny the list. States are also required to describe plans for clean-up of impaired waters.

With the MPCA refusing to take action, the EPA announced in its March 26 letter that it will be producing its own list of sulfate-impaired waters in Minnesota, which it will be providing to the MPCA before the end of April. The

EPA will then hold a 30-day public comment period on the proposed list.



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CITY OF ELY

Ely council slow to act on delinquent rental unit licenses

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – City Council members here are reluctant to initiate civil enforcement citation processes on more than 20 properties that have expired rental dwelling licenses.

On April 13, the city’s building official, Doug Whitney, presented a list of 21 properties in the city where the owner is delinquent in paying required license fees. When asked by Mayor Chuck Novak at the last council meeting for a motion to act on the issue, council members remained mum.

Council member Paul Kess suggested that the enforcement of the long-term rental licensing city code “is a very tough job.” He added, “Considering that the names of the delinquent license fee payers are now part of the public record, we could let this ride for a week or so and give them time to respond.”

The portion of the City Code related to Licensing of Rental Dwellings has been in effect for a decade, since June 2011. It states, “No person may operate a rental unit or rental dwelling unit in the city without a license for each building, subject to limited

exceptions.”

In his letter to the city council, dated March 30, 2021, Whitney said, “We know of about 200 long-term rentals.” He attached a list of 21 letters sent to the owners with no response received. “We have sent two letters this year and have sent letters every three to six months in past years,” he said.

Failure to respond within 30 days of the date of the letter may result in civil penalties of up to \$100 per week.

The Ely City Code also states, “Failure to obtain either a provisional license as required, or an operating license, will subject the owner of a dwelling unit to an administrative service charge up to \$250.

Continuing violation of the Civil Enforcement Citation process could result in charges being assessed to the property. Whitney said that no charges have yet to be accessed to the current list of violations.

The list of expired rental licenses includes the owner, rental units address(es), amount due, and years in arrears:

► David A Smrekar, 224 S 2nd Ave E, \$250, 203 E. White St., \$250, two years.

► Rachel L. Vandenberghe, 915 E White St., \$650, six years.

► Dale Rever, 143 E Harvey St., \$310, 25 S 2nd Ave E, \$250, two years.

► Michael T. Loe, 428 E. Camp St., \$350, three years, 239 W Harvey St., \$550, five years.

► Ryan Quick, 726 E Camp St., \$510, four years.

► Rae Bentz, 105 W. Conan St., #1-4, \$510 (paid \$400 on 3-31-21), four years, 319 E. Camp St., \$470 (paid \$400 on 3-31-21) four years.

► Neil Lepisto, 538 E Washington St., \$550, five years.

► Eric C. Urbas, 647 E James St., #1-3, \$590, five years, 558 E Washington St., #1-2, \$570, five years, 11 E Conan St., \$550, five years.

► G.I. Property Group, 614/618 E Pattison St., #1-2, \$570, five years.

► Steve Anderson,

1347 E Washington St., \$350, three years, 44 W Chapman St., #1-2, \$370, three years.

► Shane M. Belehar, 36 E White St., \$370, three years.

► Bryan Rusco, 1406 E Camp St., \$250, two years, 305 S Central Ave., \$250, two years.

► LuAnne Bialik, 626 S 6th Ave E, #1-2, \$570, two years, 634 S 6th Ave E, #1-2, \$570, five years.

Novak suggested that any decision on acting on the building official’s recommendation to initiate civil enforcement procedures could be postponed until next month.

Council member Jerome Debeltz suggested that any property owners “who are having a tough time” making the required license fee payment could contact Whitney to explore payment options.

The council meets on Tuesday, April 20.

EMPLOYMENT

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Published in the Timberjay, April 16 & 23, 2021

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Super Crossword

Answers

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

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Repast
5 "Ben- —"
8 Lawman Wyatt
12 "Frozen" snow queen
13 "Right you —!"
14 Computer brand
15 Slightly
16 Actress Long
17 Hindu royal
18 Tidy up
20 Toto, to Dorothy
22 Peyton's brother
23 Commonest English word
24 Easter entrees
27 Vinegar variety
32 X-ray's cousin
33 Chopper
34 Hostel
35 "Becoming" author Obama
38 Read quickly
39 Knock
40 Wildebeest
42 "Yippee!"
45 Held up
49 "Mamma Mia" group
50 Gardner of Hollywood
52 Actress Kate

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18				19			20	21				
			22					23				
24	25	26			27	28	29			30	31	
32					33				34			
35			36	37					38			
		39					40	41				
42	43				44		45			46	47	48
49					50	51			52			
53					54				55			
56					57				58			

- 53 Fibs
54 Diarist Anais
55 Footnote abbr.
56 Minus
57 Young fox
58 Till bills
6 Swiss canton
7 Harvest
8 Sultry singer Kitt
9 Campus figure
10 Gambling mecca
11 Bluenose
19 Chicago transport
21 UFO crew
24 "Let me think ..."
25 "Exodus" hero
26 Germs
28 Rocker Rose
29 "Shampoo" Oscar winner
30 — pickle
31 Blitzer's channel
36 Badger
37 Clean-air org.
38 Hand in
41 "Forget it!"
42 Corridor
43 Theater award
44 Tug
46 Innocent one
47 Ms. Brockovich
48 June honorees
51 Half of XIV

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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PUBLIC NOTICES

CITY OF TOWER
CALL FOR
SEALED BIDS

The City of Tower is calling for sealed bids on a 2014 John Deere D150 Riding Mower. Sold as is, Where is. Needs Mower Deck Replacement.

Questions? call Randy at 218-753-6868

Minimum bid: \$200

Sealed Bids Due Monday, May 10 at 12 Noon, City Hall Outside Drop Box or Mail to PO Box 576, Tower, MN 55790.

Bids to be opened Monday, May 10, 2021 at the Council Meeting.

Published in the Timberjay, April 16, 23, 30 & May 7, 2021

KUGLER TOWNSHIP
REGULAR MEETING NOTICE

The Kugler Town Board will hold their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. Mask-wearing and social distancing protocols will be followed.

Chris Suihkonen, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, April 16, 2021

LOCAL BOARD OF APPEAL
& EQUALIZATION
TOWN OF CRANE LAKE
St. Louis County, Minnesota

will meet at
The Crane Lake Chapel Fellowship Hall
on Thursday, April 29, 2021 at 1:00 PM

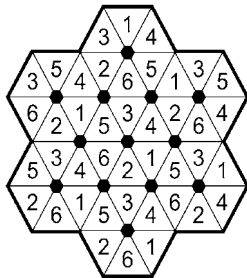
The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether taxable property in the town has been properly valued and classified by the assessor.

If you believe the value or classification of your property is incorrect, please contact your assessor's office to discuss your concerns. If you disagree with the valuation or classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may appear before the local Board of Appeal and Equalization. Please email info@cranelake-twp.com or mail Town of Crane Lake, P.O. Box 402, Crane Lake, MN 55725 with your concerns, if possible (rather than appearing). The board will review your assessments and may make corrections as needed. Generally, you must appeal to the local board before appealing to the County Board of Appeal and Equalization.

Jo Ann Pohlman, Clerk, Town of Crane Lake

Published in the Timberjay, April 16 & 23, 2021

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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 Embarras 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).

King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

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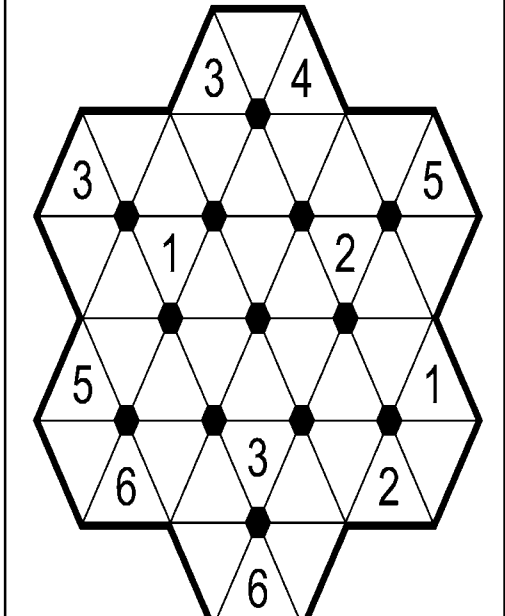
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VERMILION CLUB and BAYVIEW NOW HIRING for all positions: pizza cooks, servers, bartenders, dishwashers, line cooks, and dock attendants. Apply in person at the Vermilion Club, 3191 Old Hwy 77, Tower. 4/9

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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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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- ACROSS**
1 Insurance giant
6 Italian side dish
13 Govt. media watchdog
16 Once lived
19 Cheek makeup
20 Put out of memory
21 "Impressive!"
22 Skiing peak
23 "Glamorous" singer who's a member of the nobility?
25 Dodgy
27 Not disproven
28 "This Old House" airer
30 Hot and heavy
31 Size above med.
32 Kind of camera, for short
33 "Raise Your Glass" singer being scandalous?
36 Cheese variety
38 With 82-Across, Tour de France, e.g.
39 Resident doctor
40 "Kiss From a Rose" singer after lots of coaching?
44 Inits. on an ambulance
45 — Romeo
48 "Marat/Sade" playwright Peter
49 With 35-Down, short, easy putts
50 Cup edge
51 Lowly
53 Hostelries
54 Tilted text: Abbr.
56 "Material Girl" singer of high birth?
58 "— chance!"
59 Neither's partner
60 Bit of dust
61 Galena, e.g.
62 Ending for peer
63 "Every Breath You Take" singer working as a spy?
68 — -TURN (traffic sign)
71 Suffix with mountain
72 Writer Haley
73 Clutch sitter
74 Moby Dick's pursuer
78 "Have You Ever?" singer doing commercials for Mac computers?
81 Brazilian soccer great
82 See 38-Across
83 Make an exit
84 Negatives
85 In the style of
86 Readily bent
87 — -deucy
88 Needle hole
89 "Yeah!" singer as a deacon?
92 Cheese variety
95 Co. leaders
96 Cry of pain
97 "Hot in Herre" singer on edge?
100 Vehicle navig. aid
101 Bar bill
104 UFO pilots
105 Outer: Prefix
106 Decided by ballot
109 Deviate
111 "You Were Meant for Me" singer whom everyone treasures?
114 "Sort of" suffix
115 Sharp bark
116 Most ethereal
117 Popular font
118 No longer active: Abbr.
119 Ocean
120 Frightful flies
121 Shabby
122 Frightful flies
121 Shabby
DOWN
1 Paula of pop
2 Tossed
3 "Filthy" gain
4 Court champ Arthur
5 Emeril, e.g.
6 Stole stock
7 Deduce
8 Olympic racer
9 Atop, in odes
10 "It" game
11 Easel, often
12 Last non-A.D. year
13 Rival
14 London's — Garden
15 Cavalry cry
16 Be part of a queue
17 Ailey of dance
18 Bit of dust
24 "Wake Up Little —"
26 Hitter of high notes
29 Revealing, as a bikini
33 Dial or Coast
34 Actor Linden
35 See 49-Across
36 Africa's Guinea- —
37 ER workers
38 Not fake
40 Bed size
41 Nevada city
42 "— I a stinker?"
43 Ringo who was knighted
44 Downy duck
46 Air blowers
47 "Ah, me!"
50 Kind of paint
51 Nautical
52 Shangri-la
54 Seeing red?
55 "— is human ..."
56 — -dovey
57 Super 8, say
60 Sculpts
64 At no time, to bards
65 Lake craft
66 Crop off
67 Too gaudy
68 Not a thing
69 Big oil gp.
70 Northeast, on a map
75 Doth own
76 It's a pain
77 Lager, e.g.
79 Time between flights
80 "Do I have a volunteer?"
81 In addition
85 "Hey, sailor!"
86 Filmmaker Jean- — Godard
88 Nav. rank
89 Cartoon pic
90 Cowardly evasions
91 Shucks
93 Fiscal sums
94 Oz resident
95 Leachman of "Phyllis"
97 Lowest point
98 "Beloved" actress
Kimberly
99 Yank in Europe, say
100 Skein bird
101 "Namely ..."
102 Really got to
103 Tummy
106 Connections
107 Open a bit
108 Lynn or Miles
110 Hot tub site
112 Afore
113 Op. — (kin of "ibid.")

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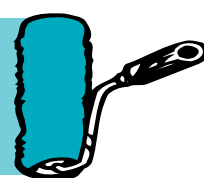
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