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# The **TIMBERJAY**



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## CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

# COVID surge continues unabated in county, state

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

Fourth wave pressures hospitals to provide non-COVID ICU care

REGIONAL- While the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has started to wane in some areas of the country, case numbers in Minnesota and St. Louis County showed no signs of abating this past week, and that's creating extreme pressure on healthcare systems throughout the state.

New records for COVID benchmark measures for 2021 continue to be set, topped only by the numbers seen during the massive coronavirus spike in November and December of last year.

Tuesday's test positivity rate of 8.3 percent was the highest since last December, and the



weekend total of 7,942 cases left Minnesota just shy of 750,000 cumulative cases since the pan-

demic began.

Only 45 of the state's 1,158 intensive care hospital beds were available as of Tuesday, with COVID patients filling one out of every five occupied beds. The surge of COVID patients is making it difficult for hospitals to provide ICU care to non-COVID patients. Duluth area hospital

representatives said in a Tuesday teleconference that they're on the verge of being overwhelmed.

"Across Essentia Health we had 129 patients hospitalized with COVID-19, and of those nearly half, 59 of them, are hospitalized here at St. Mary's Hospital," said Dr. Anne Stephen, chief medical officer of Essentia Health's East Market. "This is the highest

See...COVID pg. 12

## MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN

# Awareness ...

## Then Change

Native American justice project launched in Ely

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

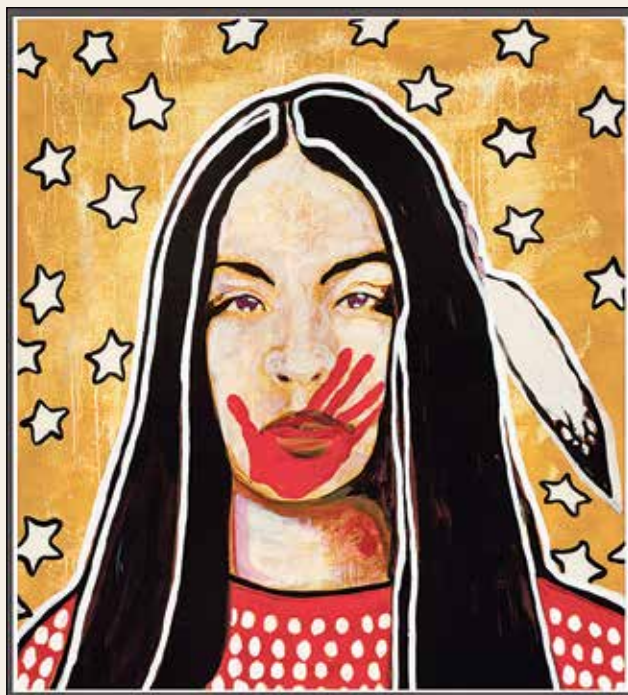
ELY—"Although American Indian women and girls make up just one percent of the state's population, from 2010 through 2018, eight percent of all murdered women and girls in Minnesota were American Indian. From 27 to 54 American Indian women and girls in Minnesota were missing in any given month from 2012 to 2020."

Those statistics drew gasps of disbelief and hushed murmurs from an overflow crowd at the Grand Ely Lodge here this week as State Sen. Mary Kunesh cited findings from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Task Force in Minnesota report she helped develop recently.

See...CHANGE pg. 12



Minnesota State Sen. Mary Kunesh, above, was in Ely this week to support a Native American justice project. An Honor Dance, below, was held at Vermilion Community College. photos by K. Vandervort



"Survivor II," created by Ely artist Shaun Chosa



## CITY OF TOWER

# Report clarifies Tower ambulance fund balance

Answers critics' claims of misappropriations

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

TOWER— For nearly three years, city officials in Tower have faced allegations that they "stole" nearly a million dollars in apparent profits from the city's ambulance service to finance city projects and other spending.

Annual reports from the city's auditors appeared to bolster those allegations, as they indicated huge fund balances in the ambulance fund, which tipped the scales at nearly \$900,000 in 2018.

In some cases, residents of both the city and neighboring townships that pay into the city's ambulance replacement fund, were calling for the city to repay the money to the ambulance service.

Yet, following several months of investigation, including lengthy discussions with the city's auditors and a review of more than 33,000 journal entries between 2006 and 2018, city officials revealed at Monday's meeting of the city council that much of the fund balance never existed.

Rather, it was a case study in how the rules of government accounting don't mesh easily with a medical payment system where the bills that providers send to insurers rarely coincide with the actual payments that the provider will ultimately receive.

"What the auditors record in the fund balance is the amount billed for ambulance services," according to a city council agenda item report drafted by Acting Mayor Dave Setterberg with support from Clerk-Treasurer Victoria Ranua. "When we bill

See...TOWER pg. 11

## ISD 696

# Ely School Board takes over decision-making on COVID-19

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

Rescinds school superintendent's authority to set pandemic policies

ELY—ISD 696 school board members Monday night rescinded the authority of the superintendent here to implement COVID-19 public health mitigation strategies and will approve

all changes to school safe learning policies regarding the coronavirus pandemic themselves.

The board gave the authority to Superintendent Erik Erie in the 2020-21

school year as a way for the school district to quickly implement COVID mitigation strategies in the face of rising or decreasing cases in the school and community. The board adopted the same

resolution in August for this school year, but has now reversed course in light of pushback from some in the community who oppose the face-mask mandate implemented at the beginning of

the school year.

The face mask mandate remains in place for both Ely school buildings.

Recommendations to make changes to the school's COVID-19 miti-

gation efforts will continue to be developed by the ISD 696 administration in collaboration with the safe school advisory council and local medical professionals.

Board member Tony

See...ELY pg. 10



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## Community notices

### Writing workshop for teens with author Mary Casanova

REGIONAL- Are you a Northeastern Minnesota teen who loves to write? The Arrowhead Library System invites you to join award-winning Minnesota author Mary Casanova in a four-week long virtual writing workshop experience from Oct. 26 to Nov. 18.



With a small group of other teen writers, you'll create new work, share with others and discuss the writer's craft and journey. This free workshop experience is for teens ages 13-17; registrants will meet every week on the same day and at the same time via Zoom. Workshop size is limited and a waiting list will be created if need be.

Pre-registration is required for this event. To sign up, please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Fall2021ALSWritingWorkshops> or call ALS at 218-741-3840. Zoom login information for each session will be sent out 24 hours prior to the first session. The registration deadline for this event is Sunday, Oct. 24.

Casanova is the author of thirty-nine books, ranging from picture books to historical fiction, including *Hush*, *Hush Forest*, *Frozen*, and *Ice-Out*, published by the University of Minnesota Press. Her numerous awards include an American Library Association "Notable," Aesop Accolades from the American Folklore Society, a Parent's Choice Gold Award, Booklist Editor's Choice, as well as two Minnesota Book Awards.

Following the workshops, participants are encouraged to submit their writing to *Hometown Focus*, a community-driven newspaper in the region, by visiting [www.hometownfocus.us](http://www.hometownfocus.us) or emailing [tucker@htfnews.us](mailto:tucker@htfnews.us).

This program, sponsored by Arrowhead Library System, was funded in part or in whole with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. To learn more about Arrowhead Legacy Events, please see the calendar at [www.alslib.info](http://www.alslib.info), follow ALS on Twitter @ALSLibraryNews, or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/alslibinfo](http://www.facebook.com/alslibinfo).

### Juniper's workshops to be held online

REGIONAL- Juniper offers evidence-based programs to people throughout Minnesota to help adults take charge of their health. Evidence-based programs are developed and verified by researchers to promote self-management of chronic health conditions (such as diabetes and chronic pain), prevent falls, and foster individual well-being. Juniper classes also help people overcome the challenges of self-isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Online classes are live on easy-to-use and HIPAA-secure video conferencing. If you need assistance with Zoom or do not have video-capable devices, please contact the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging or ElderCircle.

- Upcoming online workshops include;
  - Stay Active and Independent for Life held online via Zoom on Mondays and Thursdays from Nov. 1 to Jan. 20 at 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
  - Stay Active and Independent for Life held online via Zoom on Tuesdays and Thursdays from Nov. 2 to Jan. 20 at 9 -10 a.m.
  - Live Well with Chronic Conditions held online via Zoom on Tuesdays from Nov. 16 to Dec. 21 at 10 -12:30 a.m.

To register or learn more, contact ElderCircle at 218-999-9233 or register online at [www.yourjuniper.org](http://www.yourjuniper.org) and search by zip code and class type.

It's easy to see all classes and register. Go to [yourjuniper.org](http://yourjuniper.org) to see course offerings or call 855-215-2174 to speak with a Juniper specialist. Then register for your desired course. Participants will receive an email with a link to join the class.

Juniper is a statewide network rooted in individual communities. Area Agencies on Aging— six regional and one tribal entity—act as hubs for community organizations, healthcare organizations, and class leaders. The network offers evidence-based health promotion classes to improve health and wellness across Minnesota. Learn more at [yourjuniper.org](http://yourjuniper.org).

## PREVENT THE FLU Drive-thru flu shots available in Ely

ELY – The Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital is offering a free drive-thru flu shot clinic at the St. Louis County Public Works Department facility in Ely. The garage is located off Hidden Valley Road on the east end of town.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step for protection from the seasonal viruses that hospitalized more than 400,000 people last year alone.

With COVID-19 cases still spreading, contracting the flu could create confusion about which illness one may have. It's also possible to become infected with both viruses concurrently, which would impact the body's ability to fight the two illnesses and greatly compromise health.

The CDC also recommends this routine immunization to help decrease influenza cases, protect



EBCH will offer free flu shots on Saturday, Oct. 16 at the St. Louis County public works facility, located off Hidden Valley Road in Ely. photos by K. Vandervort

communities from vaccine-preventable outbreaks, and reduce further strain on healthcare systems where hospital bed availability and vital personal protective equipment remain limited during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dozens of area residents took advantage of the convenient public health

service last Saturday, and EBCH will again offer the clinic this Saturday, Oct. 16, from 8 a.m. to noon. Flu shots will also be available next month at ISD 696 parent/teacher conferences on Tuesday, Nov. 16 and Thursday, Nov. 18, from 3:30-7 p.m.

To help the lines move quickly, please mask up,

wear a short-sleeved shirt, and visit the EBCH website to print and complete a copy of the consent form. If you are age 65 or over and would like a high-dose vaccination, have your Medicare cards available.

For more information, go to <https://www.ebch.org/community-health/classes-events>.

## SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING MATH

### Alworth Memorial Fund launches fun and informative 'STEM Talks with Professor Alworth' online video series

REGIONAL- High school students who have interests in STEM fields, but are uncertain of what to expect in college and beyond, now have a friend they can turn to for insights 24 hours a day.

She's Professor Alworth, who chats with northern Minnesota STEM students in a series of fun and informative video features that launched Oct. 11 at [www.AlworthScholarship.org/STEMtalks.html](http://www.AlworthScholarship.org/STEMtalks.html). "STEM Talks with Professor Alworth," each about 10 minutes in length and featuring recent Alworth Scholarship recipients, confirm that many STEM students had the same apprehensions current high school students might have – including being surprised they'd qualify for a \$20,000 scholarship.

"Teachers and guidance counselors do a great



Victoria Main plays Professor Alworth in the STEM Talks series. submitted photo

job of preparing STEM students for college, but when those students hear it from others who are about their age, who had the same excitement and fears, it really hits home," said Alworth Memorial Fund Executive Director Patty Salo Downs. "These videos not only paint a realistic picture of college life, they hopefully inspire

young people to aim high in STEM careers."

One of the first two "STEM Talks with Professor Alworth" now online features Babbitt's Lori Huseby. Currently in her senior year at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, where she's studying math, chemistry and computer science, she talks about her internship with NASA and how she almost didn't apply for the Alworth Scholarship.

Future segments will include one about a student who turned his knowledge of car repair into an engineering career and another about a student whose love of the outdoors led to her becoming a research biologist. Additional "STEM Talks" videos are being produced frequently, with new ones being added to the Alworth website each month.

While the students

in the videos are real, Professor Alworth is actor Victoria Main, a Superior resident who has performed professionally from Duluth to New York City.

The Marshall H. and Nellie Alworth Memorial Fund awards scholarships to students with interests in pursuing a bachelor's degree in mathematics or scientific fields of study. The Fund is available to students in high schools, plus those who are home schooled, located in these 10 northern Minnesota counties: Aitkin, Beltrami, Carlton, Cass, Cook, Crow Wing, Lake, Itasca, Koochiching and St. Louis.

Since its establishment in 1949, the fund has distributed \$52 million among 5,200 motivated young people. Its web address is [www.AlworthScholarship.org](http://www.AlworthScholarship.org).

## GOOD DEEDS

### EVFCU lends a helping hand

REGIONAL- Embarrass Vermillion Federal Credit Union staff can have fun while helping those in need. One of the EVFCU board members ended up in the nursing home to receive physical therapy after getting an infection that left him unable to walk. With the winter months just around the corner, he had 10 cords of wood that needed to be cut, split and stacked. How this was going to get done weighed heavily on

the family. On Saturday, Sept. 25, EVFCU employees, board members, and friends worked hard from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and put away all 10 cords. There were 22 volunteers, two chainsaws, three wood splitters, a truck, and a four-wheeler with a trailer going all day.

Patty Mineheine, Cindy Scherer and Vicki Balster were part of a 22-person volunteer crew. submitted photo



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## HEALTH CARE

# Ely Veterans Clinic renovation completed

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY - The Veterans Affairs (VA) Clinic here just completed a renovation that added 2,400 square feet of remodeled space and 5,040 square feet of new space. A ribbon-cutting ceremony and grand opening celebration was held last Friday.

The completed project enables the outpatient clinic to provide additional health services, including mental health care, primary and internal medicine, and women's health care to area military veterans.

Minneapolis VA Health Care System Director Patrick Kelly attended the

grand opening and thanked "dedicated staff" at the Ely VA Clinic for continuing to provide "top notch" health care to area military veterans.

Kassidy Karnik, Minneapolis VA Health Care Systems Community Based Outpatient Clinic Director and St. Louis County Veterans Service Officer, also took part in the grand opening celebration.

The Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board supported the project with a \$247,918 Development Infrastructure grant to the city of Ely. The infrastructure improvements required for the building expansion included relocation of a

sanitary sewer main, installation of a storm sewer, replacement of sidewalks to provide ADA access, extension of a new sewer service and restoration of the roadway and parking lot that serves the building.

The clinic opened in 2013 and is located on Miners Drive in the city-owned Sato building within the Ely Business Park. Other building tenants include CWT Travel and the state Department of Revenue.

The clinic currently serves approximately 450 veterans, has six employees and is anticipated to hire two additional employees. The

See **ELY VA...**pg. 5



Patrick Kelly, Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Health Care System Director, cuts a ribbon with VA clinic staff and area elected officials at the newly-renovated and expanded VA Clinic in Ely. photo by K. Vandervort

## How big is the issue of breakthrough COVID cases?

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Ever since the word "breakthrough" was added to the COVID-19 lexicon last spring to describe coronavirus cases in fully vaccinated individuals, state and federal officials have been scrambling to determine the extent of the issue.

A person is considered fully vaccinated 14 days after they have received the final shot of their vaccination series.

The incidence of breakthrough cases drew the attention of the medical

About 99 percent of fully vaccinated don't get COVID

community and the national press when researchers discovered that the efficacy of the Pfizer vaccine diminished more rapidly than the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. That prompted the CDC to recommend booster shots for certain groups of people six months after they had their second dose of Pfizer vaccine. Studies of the other two vaccines and the possible need for boosters is ongoing.

In early August, officials at the Minnesota Department of Health noted that between

25 and 30 percent of newly-diagnosed COVID cases were occurring in fully vaccinated individuals. At about the same time, MDH started issuing weekly updates specifically related to breakthrough COVID cases.

The report issued Monday showed that the cumulative number of breakthrough cases in the state since the start of vaccinations was 38,808, an increase of 6,012 from the prior week's report. Cumulative hospitalizations from breakthrough COVID increased by 244, from 1,690 to 1,934. And

the total number of deaths attributed to breakthrough cases also rose, from 185 to 234, an increase of 49.

But with more than 3.2 million Minnesotans fully vaccinated as of Sept. 12, what do the numbers actually mean, and how do they compare with the more familiar COVID measures of weekly cases and weekly case rates?

For help with those questions, the *Timberjay* contacted MDH Information Officer Doug Shultz.

See **BREAK...**pg. 5

## Clarification

Our Oct. 8 story on a Tower suicide included information taken from a St. Louis County Sheriff's investigative report that members of the family of the victim say was not fully accurate. According to the family, the victim, Jason Mysliwiec was not separated from his wife Kristen at the time of the incident, but had only been staying in Tower in the aftermath of the death of his

uncle. While family members agreed that Mysliwiec did have mood swings, they say he had not had any medically-diagnosed mental illness, as suggested in the investigative report.

As is standard in journalism, the *Timberjay* relied on the official record produced by law enforcement for its reporting on this story. The *Timberjay* appreciates the opportunity to clarify its reporting.

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# OPINION

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## Editorial

### Democracy at risk

A handful of officials saved democracy in 2020.  
Will they be there in 2024?

The results of a Senate Judiciary Committee investigation, released this past week, offer both hope and a dire warning for the future of elections in the U.S. While much of what was in the Senate report had previously been reported by the media, it provided confirmation through official channels of the extraordinary efforts that former President Donald Trump undertook in the wake of the 2020 election to overturn the results and keep his job in the White House.

This was despite the fact that President Trump and his supporters had virtually no credible evidence of improprieties of a nature that could have swayed the election in Mr. Biden's favor.

Mr. Trump's actions reflected a desire, untethered from reality, to retain power, without the slightest allegiance to his oath of office to uphold and protect the U.S. Constitution.

Mr. Trump clearly does not believe that voters should decide elections in America, unless they decide them in his favor.

Fortunately, in the fall of 2020, we still had enough people of good character in positions of authority to block Trump's attempts to overturn the will of the people. As the Senate report highlights, top officials in the Justice Department refused Trump's increasingly aggressive demands to file a brief with the U.S. Supreme Court seeking to overturn the election. And when Trump threatened to appoint a lower-level lackey who had expressed a willingness to take that action as the interim attorney general, the department's top staff threatened to resign en masse.

This was all a hopeful sign. Just as election officials in states like Georgia resisted Trump's demands that they "find more votes" in his favor, we had top officials in Washington who stood up to a would-be authoritarian.

The system worked, although it was thanks to what turned out to be a tiny handful of individuals with sufficient courage, independence, and integrity to tell an enraged president "No."

Yet, we know that these are exactly the kind of people now on the outs in a Republican Party that seems more than content to follow Trump into a very dark place. Those same political leaders, many longtime Republicans themselves, who stood up for our Constitution, are now facing political extinction. Trump and his allies have already targeted those elected leaders who resisted him, for defeat in upcoming elections, in favor of individuals

whose fealty is to Trump rather than the rule of law.

At the same time, state GOP politicians across the country, backed by wealthy rightwing funders, are conducting highly biased, sham audits of the 2020 results in the hopes of continuing to feed false narratives about supposed fraud. It's all kabuki theater to be sure, that continues to confirm the legitimacy of the 2020 vote. Yet, it is undertaken with the intent of undermining faith in our elections and political institutions. And, based on polls, it appears to be working among the Republican base, overwhelming majorities of whom indicate they believe the 2020 vote was illegitimate.

These efforts, combined with the GOP's longstanding voter suppression efforts, potentially set the stage for an undemocratic takeover, led by Trump, beginning next fall. If Trump is successful in getting his operatives elected as secretaries of state or to legislatures in key battlegrounds, it could put Trump back into office in 2024, regardless of what the voters say. Several GOP-dominated legislatures, including in battleground states, have since given themselves the authority to set aside the votes of the citizens of their state if they don't vote the way the Trump allies want, and determine their own slate of electors.

Telling their supporters that the other side is winning through fraud is all part of the strategy, because it serves to justify whatever anti-democratic efforts, including violence, the Trump acolytes have planned themselves. Trump has already laid out the road map, and he's done so publicly, which may be one reason that the American people have yet to fully grasp the audacity of his efforts and the fundamental risk it poses to the future nature of America's governance and our Constitution.

Coups, or other efforts to overturn constitutional governments, are generally plotted in secret. Trump is plotting in clear sight and he has the support of large majorities of his own party, which makes it possible for him to succeed.

This is a dangerous moment in our history. While Trump's defeat in 2020 was a reprieve, he has made it clear he isn't going away. He's continuing to lie to the American people about the election, and he and his allies are working behind the scenes to put people in place who will back his anti-democratic efforts when the time comes. Trump was unsuccessful in his illegal attempts to hold onto power in 2020. He and his allies may not make the same mistakes the next time around.



## Letters from Readers

### Time to require COVID vaccinations

To prevent further spread of the coronavirus, we should require everyone to get fully vaccinated, (including a possible third dose), unless exempted by a sincerely-held religious belief or medical condition. We should write to our legislators and executives at all levels of government.

**Alvin Blake  
Hibbing**

### Americans don't have the right to endanger others

As American citizens, we are entitled to many rights. Nonetheless, we do need to be aware that those rights do not extend to endangering the health and safety of others. For instance, we do not have the right to drive down either side of the highway nor can we legally drive without auto insurance. We cannot ignore speed limits or stop signs. These limitations protect the health, safety, and rights of others. And these are just some of the rules for the road.

Similarly, vaccinations and masks are to protect the health and safety of others, not just ourselves. Things such as these are what keep our society functioning.

**David Kess  
Ely**

### Time for Greenwood's attorney to resign

Five years ago, when Tim Storm, then Greenwood Township attorney, decided to quit being the township attorney, Mike Couri was selected, at a monthly board meeting, to replace him. Couri spoke at that meeting and was well received by both the board and the citizens because he laid out a plan for the board to mend its divisions and, as he described, "Become a boring township."

He said we could accomplish this by compromise, creating written policies on employee conditions, and keeping out of the newspaper to name a few things. Unfortunately, under Couri's counsel the last five years, the opposite has occurred. You find us in the paper all the time, and the board, at the urging of Couri, canceled our township personnel policy and there are no compromises.

Couri told us that Tim Storm decided to quit because he had lost support of the entire board. Couri then went on to say, "Years back I had a five-member town board and two of the members did not want me as their township attorney. They did not value my advice and at that point I did exactly what Tim did. I indicated to the town board that the attorney-client relationship is too important to have your attorney in opposition where some of the board members don't take your advice, don't trust it, and don't follow it whatever it might be. In that situation I told the township that I will remain as long as you need to find a replacement because I can't be effective working with a divided board, and you don't get good legal service when some board members don't see eye to eye with the attorney. If I were in that situation again, I would do the same thing. The board needs to believe that the attorney is working in the township's best interest not one party's best interest. I thought it was a very honorable action on the part of Tim Storm. He did something that in my eyes upholds the integrity of the profession".

It is time for Couri to realize his counsel has not been effective for some time and the fact that two members of the board don't support him as counsel. He should heed his own words and do the honorable thing, resign to protect the integrity of the profession.

**John Bassing  
Greenwood Twp.**

### We're all part of the human race

Critical Race Theory? First of all, remember - it is a THEORY, not a fact. Earlier this year I drove past an area that had been cleared of all vegetation. The soil was a rich, red clay. I thought: hmmm, The bible says in Genesis 2:7 the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground.... and I wonder: what color was the dust (ground) in Eden? Was it red clay? Sand? Black top soil? Sandy loam?

Without proper farming the black top soil will be washed down a hill and the hill will become less fertile and take on a grayish appearance. You don't plant corn if you want tomatoes. If you want horses you don't buy a cow. A horse is a horse regardless of the color of its coat! God began the human race through Adam and Eve and after the flood He 'started over' through Noah's three sons so how can we be a different race when we are all part of the human race? We may be of different ethnic backgrounds but we are still ALL a part of the human race. STOP THE LIES!

**Marilyn Mueller  
Greenwood Twp.**

### We welcome your letters

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

We ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

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

Letters are a great way to offer your input to the *Timberjay's* editorial page. We want to know what you think!

# The frights and haunts of yesteryear

If there was one holiday over the years that was constantly of equal joy as Christmas for me, that holiday was Halloween. That night of fright was as magical to me as the holiday of lights, and oft times just as detrimental to my gradually-expanding waistline.



**DAVID COLBURN**

My first memories of Halloween are more vivid than those of Christmas - King Kong was a more fearsome figure than the Jolly Old Elf, and that was my costume of choice in Kindergarten. The mask was one of those

molded plastic ones held on by a band of elastic, with some sort of glow-in-the-dark substance illuminating both its features and the decorative lines of the little fabric suit. In the early 1960s, I'd be willing to bet that substance was somewhat toxic, but when the prospect of nuclear war still hovered in the political air, who cared about a little radioactive material on a one-night-only costume? It surely was a roaring hit among the neighbors in our

southern California neighborhood that year.

But after we moved back to Kansas my second-grade year, that's when Halloween really became a big deal for the Colburn family. We moved into one of the larger old two-story homes on Elm Street, well before Elm Street would become synonymous with Freddy Krueger. The front of the house had a large hewn-stone front porch that was screened in, an imposing portal that became even

more so with spiders and webs and candles and such.

There was a bit of movie inspiration involved, too, a classic Don Knotts gem, "The Ghost and Mr. Chicken." Come to think of it, maybe there was some life foreshadowing in that - Luther Heggs, Knotts' character, was a newspaper typesetter.

One of the more chilling aspects of that movie was the creepy organ tune supposedly played by a ghost at midnight. Well,

we just happened to have an antique pump organ. Since it seems like everything wood in the 1960s ended up getting painted, creating a huge market for paint removers a couple of decades later, the organ got a coating of pumpkin orange paint. My sister Lynn and one of the neighbor girls practiced for a couple of weeks to create a reasonable facsimile of that organ tune, and for

See HAUNT...pg. 5

# Letters from Readers

## More education needed on science and research

Educators are trained to be objective. To assess what the student knows and does not know. To assess what the student can do and cannot do.

I read about a group of Iron Range parents suing a school district over a mask mandate, citing that there are no medical or scientific studies that have demonstrated the efficacy of masks in stopping the spread of COVID in children. Yet, the school district's guidelines are based on information from the Minnesota Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control, and the Academy of Pediatrics.

Another local group, the Ely Community Voice group is demanding that the school district rescind the protective face mask mandate. A retired local doctor supports the group, suggesting that all people need to do is ingest Vitamin D and eat healthy. That doctor also insists that masks are unnecessary in children in stopping the spread of COVID.

As I reviewed these perspectives, nothing was more evident to me than realizing that these "students," need an understanding of research and statistics, what makes studies valid and which studies are questionable. The doctor's comments were most alarming to me after reviewing current research and conclusions on the efficacy of Vitamin D and COVID. He primarily cited an inconclusive premise with no conclusive

evidence.

Dr. Ford from the Cleveland Clinic pointed out that it is a danger to suggest that Vitamin D will make people immune to COVID. There is no convincing evidence that Vitamin D protects people against COVID.

A study at Oxford University for Evidence Based Medicine found no clinical evidence that Vitamin D could prevent or treat COVID. While Vitamin D does boost one's immune system, more research is needed on its antiviral properties. Studies in which COVID symptoms were moderate to severe, Vitamin D did not help their conditions or lessen their hospital stay.

Research at Mayo Clinic is on-going. At this point, Dr. William Marshall III, emphasized that there is not enough data to recommend the use of Vitamin

D to prevent infection of COVID or to treat COVID.

Most of the studies as to the correlation of the efficacy of Vitamin D show association, not causation, with mixed results, according to Walter Willett, Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. As a result, one cannot draw any firm conclusions.

At this time, the greatest danger to the health and welfare of people in this nation is online, low quality, unsubstantiated information which is passed along as reliable.

One advocate of Vitamin D pointed out that it is a viable supplement to increase one's immunity, just as other vitamins and minerals can be. However, this advocate also recommended that along with supplements, individuals follow other protocol,

getting vaccinated, maintaining social distancing, avoiding large groups, and wearing masks.

From an educator's perspective, it is clear that we must do a better job in our classrooms about understanding research. How to review wide sources of literature. How to assess bias. How to examine the research design. The control group. The size of the population. And validity and reliability of the study.

I think about the parents, so incensed that their children are being asked to wear masks. The responsibility of our schools is to keep all students and teachers and staff safe and well. One student can infect another more vulnerable student or adult with COVID. That student may never become ill, but those others might. There are guidelines that

school administrators are asked to follow in order to keep everyone safe. That is their responsibility. That is their job.

I would hope that the job of a parent is to respect that. To teach their children that there are times we must do things we may not want to do. At this time, it is simply being asked to wear a mask when we are around others. To keep them safe and well. It should not be a fight.

Now that could be another research focus in the classroom. To investigate the research and conclusions on the efficacy of wearing masks to prevent the spread of COVID in classrooms. Let's see what we find out.

**Ellie Larmouth Tower**

## HAUNT...Continued from page 4

several years they would sit out there on that porch and pump and pound that organ. There literally were little children who refused to approach the house, oft times being toted or dragged away in fright-spawned tears. I loved that part.

Halloweens as I grew older turned from treats to tricks. One year, to stay one step ahead of the local police officer, my friends and I decided for our costumes we'd dress up as women going to a party. Bad idea. Running away from a shaving-cream-filled jack-o-lantern is

completely impossible in high heels when you're not accustomed to them. We tried pretty much anything and everything, including the pinnacle of Halloween trickster achievement in rural small-town Kansas, stealing an outhouse and putting it on Main Street before midnight.

After I became a father, Halloween took on a whole new aspect of delight for me, as I wanted my daughter to enjoy it as much as I did. During her elementary school years I never bothered to think up a costume ahead of time. I'd get home from work

and we'd race around the house together grabbing all sorts of random apparel and items and makeup to create something ridiculous and spooky. I'd often climb the tree overhanging the porch, shaking the limbs and jumping down when trick-or-treaters came knocking. The highest praise from those endeavors came the year a junior high kid shrieked, jumped the shrubs and ran out into the street screeching, and then yelled down the street to his buddies that they HAD to come down to my house NOW.

And while we were cre-

ating our own Halloween traditions there in the St. Louis, Mo. suburbs, Mom was back in the Kansas homestead keeping the flames alive there, too. Dad had passed in 1987, but Halloween was something Mom looked forward to every year, and no one did it bigger or better. Halloween was a two-stage event for her—first, the trick-or-treaters, and then, the after party. The treats had to be the best, and the huge spread of food had to be elaborate. They always were, even when she started having to swap out some store-bought food for cooking every-

thing herself, and even as she started getting young volunteers to help "Miss Terrie" with what was an increasingly difficult task to handle alone. But it was totally her thing, and the community responded, with as many as 100 people coming back for the after party most years. After she died a few years ago, I was astounded by the number of people who told me that their Halloween wasn't complete without a trip to my Mom's.

These days, Halloween isn't something I celebrate with masks and decorations and treats and such. There's

little point in decorating a small house on a dead-end block that doesn't get Halloween traffic. But it's still a holiday I celebrate fondly, if only in my mind, with all of the marvelous and mischievous memories tucked away in there. And hey – finding those memories these days does require wading through a few cobwebs, so I guess I do still get a little feel for fright night that way, too.

## BREAK...Continued from page 3

"The proportion of people newly diagnosed with COVID who are vaccinated is currently still around 30 percent," Shultz said last week. "However, that figure requires a large amount of context when reporting it and it comes from looking at multiple sources or streams of data, not just one set."

Looking at the sleuthing process Shultz described for identifying breakthrough cases, hospitalizations, and deaths, it becomes clear that the weekly breakthrough reports aren't the same as the weekly COVID case numbers reported by the state.

"The biggest problems with trying to show a week-by-week breakdown are the constant changes," Shultz said. "Cases are reported late, vaccinations get reported later, we do a long run-match process, we spend time cleaning up errors, and new information gets reported. So, the data that gets posted on Monday is just a snapshot in time and does not necessarily reflect discreet or distinct weekly sums of new data that can be broken down by week. It's out of date the minute

it's out the door. We aren't doing real-time reporting and the cases week to week that are posted on the website are always going to change in retrospect as new counts come in. There are many, many ways you could cut or slice the data, and each one would give you a different picture and changes all the time."

So, there's no way of telling exactly when this week's reported increases in cases, hospitalizations, and deaths actually happened. Some may have been within the past two weeks, while others may have occurred months ago but are just being reported now.

The analysis gets even more complicated when trying to compare the breakthrough data to other COVID measures, Shultz said.

"If it's all people who have COVID, the percent that you're calculating can get really skewed," Shultz said. "There will always be older people and people with serious underlying conditions that will be at risk for COVID even if they get vaccinated. Their immune systems just can't handle it. And if you live in a

nursing home or some other congregate care, you're in a setting where disease can spread more easily. So, if you just look at cases to see how many are among vaccinated people it really misses the big picture of how many people in the whole state are vaccinated and are NOT getting COVID."

### The big picture

Overall, the data for Minnesota reported Monday shows that 98.8 percent of people who are fully vaccinated have not contracted COVID-19. That's slightly higher than the "less than 99 percent" figure widely reported in August, but that's to be expected, Shultz said.

"The percentage of cases that are breakthrough will continue to increase as more people are vaccinated - partly because no vaccine is 100-percent effective, partly because we will start to see waning immunity in those vaccinated earliest, and potentially because of things like the Delta variant, which is very transmissible and could be playing a role we don't understand yet."

And while about 30 percent of newly diagnosed cases in Minnesota currently involve fully vaccinated

people, Shultz noted that the number illustrates that the unvaccinated are clearly at higher risk.

"It tells us that 70 percent of new COVID cases occur among the 30 percent of the population who are not vaccinated," Shultz said. "More importantly, about 99 percent of people who are vaccinated do not get sick with COVID. That's what the breakthrough data tell us."

Research has also demonstrated that fully vaccinated people who contract COVID-19 are far less likely to experience severe illness, hospitalization, and death. The breakthrough data for Minnesota show that hospitalization among those fully vaccinated is quite rare.


And the risk of dying from COVID-19 among the fully vaccinated is far lower still. The 234 total deaths reported Monday represent only seven thousandths of one percent of those vaccinated.

Shultz said that MDH continues to refine the process of presenting the breakthrough data.

"It will likely fluctuate for a while depending on the future vaccine recom-

mendations and testing behaviors of the public," he said. "But we have been working on some ways to calculate some age-adjusted measures that we hope to put out in the near future that will better display the

data and help to answer some of the questions we all have about all of this."



*the*  
**TIMBERJAY**

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## ELY VA...continued from page 3

expansion created approximately 15 construction jobs. Total project investment was \$2.95 million.

"The Development Infrastructure grant to support the expansion of Ely's VA Clinic is part of the agency's commitment to the growth of business and quality of life in northeastern Minnesota," said IRRRB Commissioner Mark Phillips. "The clinic project retained and created jobs and provides quality health care to our region's veterans who have sacrificed to serve and protect our nation."

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Week of Oct. 18

**Monday**

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 Oct. 19.

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](http://vermilioncountry.org).

## Tower-Soudan Singers preparing for carolling

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Area Singers are rehearsing on Monday evenings starting at 5:30 p.m. at St. James Presbyterian Church. The group plans to carol on Monday, Dec. 6 at the Breitung Community Hall in Soudan, and Monday, Dec. 13 at Sulu's in Tower.

## Movie Night at St. James on Sunday, Oct. 17

TOWER- St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower is hosting a free movie night on Sunday, Oct. 17 at 6 p.m. "The Beautiful Beast" is a twist on the classic Beauty and the Beast tale. Isabelle is all beauty, on the outside. A glamour-queen socialite, she spends her days spoiling herself and spending money like it's going out of style. When Isabelle injures herself and gets lost in isolated winter-land, she stumbles on the solitude of Jeremy, a man hiding from both the world and his past. He's the first person to put Isabelle in her place, and Isabelle realizes she might be more beast than she wants to admit. Through Jeremy's influence, she begins to change and fall in love. But will she revert to the beast and give up her chance at real love when she returns home?

## Trick-or-Treat on Main Street

TOWER- Tower Main Street businesses will be handing out treats to children on Friday, Oct. 29 after school. Participating businesses will have posters on their door, welcoming the children.

## Wheelchairs donated to Tower Loan Closet

TOWER- The Tower Loan Closet now has two wheelchairs to lend out, thanks to a donation by Sally Turk, who also donated some other home health care equipment. The loan closet is open by appointment by calling Joe Morin at 218-780-7306.

## TOWER-SOUDAN ELEMENTARY

# Hike...that football

## Flag football is a fall tradition at Tower-Soudan Elementary



With two former high school football coaches overseeing the action, this year's flag football season is focusing on teaching the fundamentals, learning to run simple plays, and most of all, having fun. Principal John Jirik and teacher Scott Chiabotti have both taken on the role of quarterback for the purple and gold teams, and make sure all the players have a chance at trying out every position. The young athletes have taken to the school football field on Monday afternoons since Sept. 23, with the season ending on Oct. 18. The coaches are also planning a game one afternoon, so the rest of the students can come and watch the action. The school received all-new flag football gear this year, thanks to a donation from the Minnesota Vikings in 2020. photos by J. Summit



## MAIN STREET

## Iconic Marjo Motel neon sign damaged by vandalism

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- The 1950s vintage-era neon sign at the MarJo Motel was broken by vandals sometime around 2 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 11.

The local landmark has been lighting the way into Tower for almost 75 years.

"We found out about the damage on Sunday morning when our housekeeper texted that there had been some vandalism on the premises," said MarJo General Manager Orlyn Kringstad. "We immediately went to check it out and found the lobby storm door kicked in so it had jammed," said Kringstad. "I was able to get the door open and nothing was disturbed inside the office."

But the real damage was found shortly afterwards, as Orlyn and his wife Marit began cleaning up the mess outdoors, collecting the lawn chairs that had been thrown around.

"I noticed glass on the ground underneath the sign," said Kringstad, "and looked up to see the glass tubing was broken in multiple places."



A photo of the lit Marjo sign taken Saturday evening, by a motel guest, right before the neon glass tubes were broken by vandals (at right). You can notice the broken glass tubing on the brick sign base. submitted photos

The two found some broken lawn ornaments, and they suspect that is what was thrown at the sign to damage the neon tubes. The glass on the east side of the sign was broken, and all the lettering needs to be replaced with new glass tubing, and while the west side is still in one piece, the lights on that side are not working either, so that may or may not need to be redone also. So for now, those driving by will not be able to see if the motel has a vacant room

After talking with guests at the motel, they found out that there was



loud shouting outdoors in the parking lot around 2 a.m., with profanity and doors slamming and the sound of a door being kicked in.

The couple is working with Mesabi Sign in Virginia to get the neon tubing repaired. The custom work will need to be done in Minneapolis, and is likely to cost several thousand dollars, if

not more. Replacing the sign with more modern LED lighting would also be expensive, Kringstad said, but the couple really wants to preserve the historic 1950s-era look.

The damage has been reported to the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office, along with a possible description of the person(s) who were involved.

Kringstad, who post-

ed about the vandalism on facebook, said they were amazed at the support they received from area residents.

"But all can be assured that the MarJo will remain the landmark for Tower that it has always been since the 1950s," Kringstad said.



VERMILION COMMUNITY COLLEGE



The Vermilion Community College Iron Men football team was greeted by fans and supporters as they walked through Whiteside Park Saturday afternoon on the way to the Ely High School football stadium for their home game against the Central Lakes Raiders. photos by K. Vandervort

OUR COMMUNITY

# Tree pruning 101

## Ely Tree Board volunteers teach proper techniques

ELY - The Tree Board here held a clinic on proper tree pruning techniques last Saturday in Whiteside Park. The event was meant to demonstrate pruning to property owners in the city who have city-planted trees on city boulevard land in their yard. A small, yet dedicated group of volunteers met in the park, and learned proper trimming techniques from Dixon Shelstad. Students received training in pruning practices and helped prune street trees in Ely, including Gavin Commers, Vermilion Community College Forestry and Wildlife Club secretary, and Hailey Hurlbut, a second year NRT student who is also an Americorps volunteer for the city of Ely as part of the Minnesota Forestry Corps program.

Lovers of trees spent part of last Saturday in Whiteside Park for a tree-pruning clinic hosted by the Ely Tree Board. photo by K. Vandervort



### Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2021



deer in the front yard casual visitors to town

as if everywhere

### Libraries

#### Ely library

Hours: Monday — Friday, 9:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Closed on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays 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.  
**SUNDAY NIGHT AA -** at St. Anthony's Catholic Church is cancelled.  
**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.  
**ADULT BASIC EDUCATION GED** - Study materials and pre-test available. Call 218-365-3359, 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

# Ely Police Department Activity Report Sept. 15-30, 2021

### Arrests/Citations

➤Domestic Assault- Individual arrested for Domestic Assault.  
➤Traffic Stop- Individual arrested for 4th Degree DWI.

### Complaints

➤Disturbance- Officers were called to a residence for an argument over a phone. Officers arrived and the two individuals figured out the issue.  
➤Intoxicated Person- Officers were called about an intoxicated person seeking medical attention. The individual was transported by the ambulance.  
➤Disturbance- Officers were contacted about two individuals fighting. This case was sent to the attorney for charging consideration.  
➤Suspicious Activity- Officers were contacted about an individual looking inside a mailbox. This case is under investigation.  
➤Unwanted Person- Officers were called about an unwanted person that might be at a residence. Officers arrived and did not locate anyone.  
➤Suspicious Activity-

Officers were contacted about a suspicious person around a vehicle. This case is under investigation.  
➤Parking Complaint- Officers located a vehicle that was abandoned. The vehicle was towed.  
➤Check Hazard- Officers were contacted about a drain that was clogged. Officers contacted the proper department.  
➤Disturbance- Officers were contacted about an individual acting strange. Officers arrived on scene and the individual requested a ride home.  
➤Public Assist- Individual let back into their residence.  
➤Found Property- Officers were contacted about property that was located outside of town. Officers notified the owner and the property was returned.  
➤Unwanted Person- Officers were contacted about an unwanted person at a residence. Officers arrived and the individual left.  
➤Animal Disturbance- Officers were informed of a bear in town.  
➤Public Assist- Individual let back into their residence.  
➤Found Property- Officers located a bike on a trail. This

bike is pending owner identification.  
➤Damage to Property- Officers were contacted about damage to a building. This case is under investigation.  
➤Check Welfare- Officers were contacted to check on a person that had not been heard from in a few days. Offices located the person and they had their phone off.  
➤Harassment- Officers were contacted about a person that was making another person feel uncomfortable. Officers advised how to obtain an HRO and did not locate the other person.  
➤Security Alarm- Officers were called to a security alarm at a local business. Officers determined the alarm to be false.  
➤Suspicious Activity- Officers located a vehicle with a door open. Officers located the owner and it was not closed when they returned home.  
➤Scam- Officers were informed about a scam call.  
➤Assist Other Agency- Officers assisted a neighboring agency with an ATV crash.  
➤Fire Alarm- Officers assisted the Ely Fire Department with a fire alarm.

➤Public Assist- Officers were requested to do a standby while an individual collected their belongings.  
➤Disturbance- Officers were contacted about a group of people arguing. Officers arrived and mediated the situation.  
➤Attempt to Locate- Officers were contacted about a vehicle driving at a high rate of speed. Officers did not locate the vehicle.  
➤Order Violation- Officers were contacted about an individual that violated a court order. This case is under investigation.  
➤Unknown Trouble- Officers were contacted about a 911 hang up without information. Officers determined it to be phone problems.  
➤Theft- Officers were informed about a theft at a local business. This case is under investigation.  
➤Loud Music- Officers were contacted about loud music. Officers arrived and the individual agreed to turn the music down for the night.  
➤Vehicle in the Ditch- Officers located a vehicle in the ditch. This case is under investigation.



ORR CITY COUNCIL

# Is a new home in store for Orr Ambulance Service?

Council looks at deal for school bus barn and longer term development plan for facility

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- In a deal members described as too good to take a pass on, the Orr City Council gave the green light Tuesday to the possibility of buying a 5,200-square-foot building from ISD 2142 as a possible future home of the Orr Ambulance Service.

Ambulance Director Donna Hoffer said that she had talked with school district officials about the possibility of buying the school bus garage building.

"They are willing to accept an offer from us for the building for \$10,000," Hoffer said.

ISD 2142 placed one stipulation on the possible sale, that of having continued use of one garage stall for bus parking until such time as the Orr bus route is eliminated, Hoffer said.

There's sufficient money in the budget to cover the purchase, Hoffer said, and a purchase offer could be considered as soon as the Oct. 26 ISD 2142 regular board meeting.

The ensuing comments were clear evidence that it will take a lot of work and a lot of money to make the structure suitable for housing the ambulance service.

"There's nothing there except the four walls and the electric," councilor Bruce Black said. "It's nothing but a pole barn." County property records do indeed describe the structure as a pole building, with an estimated market value of \$35,200, including the building and the 3.87-acre lot.

"Do the garage doors still work?" Mayor Joel Astleford asked.

"They're electric doors, but the only thing that's in the place is elec-

tric," Black said. "There's a sand floor with four walls and it's bigger inside than it looks from the outside. You'd have to have sewer and water put into it. There's a long laundry list of stuff that would have to happen."

Astleford started making some rough guesstimates about how much it would cost just to put a concrete floor in the building, varying in range from \$75,000 to \$120,000 depending on various factors other council members tossed out.

It was noted that offices and bathrooms would need to be constructed to meet ambulance service needs.

Still, with suitable alternatives scant in Orr, the council was favorable toward getting the additional details necessary to develop a formal purchase agreement.

"I definitely think it's worth it, Donna," Astle-

ford said. "It's not a bad location. Let's move forward and get more information."

## Crumbling cooler

A much smaller construction project may be necessary at the Orr Muni after the person who originally built the walk-in cooler there conducted a recent inspection of it.

"He thinks it needs to be rebuilt," said manager Chet Nieman.

Excessive moisture from condensation is a major concern, with misaligned doors, and an unsealed hole to the outside where the condenser drain once was, among the issues contributing to the problem.

"It's been buckets in there since I've worked here, catching the water," Nieman said.

The cooler isn't a self-contained unit, instead being constructed in place with stud walls, fiberglass insulation, and

plastic sheeting.

Since any renovation or rebuild of the walk-in cooler wouldn't take place until January or February at the earliest, all agreed that now is a good time to consider options, look into getting bids, and consider what the budgetary impact would be.

In other business, the council:

► Approved an Application for Payment Processing and Hosted Services Agreement with TransMedic that includes a check scanner for TransMedic to process checks for Orr Ambulance Service. The city will not be charged any fees and TransMedic will cover any costs.

► Briefly discussed a letter sent to Orr Chamber of Commerce members by secretary/treasurer Yvette Rutar proposing that the organization be dissolved (see related article). Council members expressed

hope that businesses in the community might pick up responsibility for Chamber-sponsored events such as July 3rd Fun Day and the Orr Snow City Festival, but took no action to have the city involved in the organization of them.

► Approved a partial payment and change order for the airport pavement crack sealing project.

► Approved participation in Minnesota's Water Assistance Program, which can make payments for past due and current water and wastewater usage charges for customers in need of assistance, up to \$1,200. The program is administered by the AEOA Energy Assistance Program in Virginia. The city's formal participation will allow AEOA to obtain the necessary information to confirm applicants' account balances to determine appropriate payments.

ORR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# Orr events in limbo as local chamber eyes dissolution

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- If events such as July 3rd Fun Day and Orr's Easter "Egg-stravaganza" are to continue as popular annual events in this community, they'll have to do so without their longtime sponsor, the Orr Area Chamber of Commerce.

That's because after 38 years of existence, the Orr Chamber is on the brink of folding its doors and calling it quits.

However, that's not so much a cause for alarm for area business members as it is a nod to the fact that technology has paved the way for others to assume the Chamber's primary function, supporting local businesses, and to do it better.

"We don't look at this as falling apart," secretary/treasurer Yvette Rutar said. "We have come to the conclusion that we're actually not an entity that is needed anymore. You've got these tourism bureaus now, and they have lots of money coming into them. They have way better websites, they get more hits on their websites, they can put out brochures - they reach way beyond what we do."

The Chamber's links to member businesses in Orr on their website are largely duplicated, for example, on cityoforr.com and orrpelicanlake.com, both sites with sharper promotional graphics and extensive information tailored for visitors to the area.

It's become an ongo-

ing challenge, Rutar said, to recruit new leadership for the Chamber.

"I got on on the chamber back in 2000," she said. "I think it was 2005 or 2006, we couldn't get people to come and want to run for office. We couldn't get anybody to sit on the board. Everybody's like, 'No, no, no, we'll help, but we don't want to be committed to having to show up at meetings and do anything.'"

True to the word "area" in its name, half of the 32 Chamber members listed on the organization's website are based somewhere other than Orr, from Crane Lake to Hibbing. Those businesses support the Orr area in some way, Rutar noted, but most don't directly benefit from special

events designed to cater specifically to Orr, and there are numerous alternative options for them to market their services.

And the challenge with having far-flung membership is that volunteers for those special events are harder to come by, Rutar said. The folks in the Chamber who've led these events for years have reached the point where they're worn out, and they need new blood to step up and take the reins.

"If we can run these through other entities, if we can combine with another entity as far as volunteering, that'd be better than trying to get volunteers from elsewhere," Rutar said.

Without the Chamber, someone else will need to

pick up the responsibility for planning and coordinating the events, and if they do, they'll have some ready volunteers in Rutar and Sandy Wardas, who have committed to helping out with, but not leading, the Easter and July 3rd events.

And volunteers have already been recruited so that the Orr Snow City Festival will happen this December, Rutar said. The Orr Lions Club will shoulder a good deal of the work, and Rag Bag Originals owner Ruth Huisman has been committed since this summer to making sure the event is as good as ever.

But as for the Chamber, it's an idea that's apparently run its course in Orr, an entity supplanted in this tiny community by

progress and technology. Rutar sent a letter to all of the members in mid-September explaining the rationale for dissolving and asking members to respond with their feedback. None of them have.

A meeting will likely be scheduled later in the fall to formally disband, and Rutar said the Chamber's remaining funds would be used in part to support the Lions Club with their Snow City festival expenses, and the rest would go to area fire departments.

The Chamber's situation was discussed at Tuesday's Orr City Council meeting, where members expressed hope that businesses and volunteers will step up to keep the community's traditional events going.

GRIZZLIES ROYALTY



Morgan Burnett and Ethan Byrum were crowned as Queen and King during Homecoming Week festivities last week at North Woods School. Olivia Udovich, Haley Bogdan, and Michelle Hagen were additional Queen candidates, and King candidates included Erik Aune, Ty Fabish, and Joe Hoagland. photo by C. Stone

HOOPS DONATION



Members of the North Woods Grizzlies boys basketball team pose with a \$300 check presented to them by Cook Lions Club representatives Steve Kajala and DeeAnn Sandberg. The donation will be used to assist in the purchase of new warm-up gear. submitted photo

NWFA MEMBERS EXHIBIT



This fiber art by Sue Minter is among the works of 46 members of the Northwoods Friends of the Arts that are on display and for sale in October for the Susan Martin Memorial Member Show at the NWFA Gallery in Cook. The exhibit can be viewed on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. submitted photo

SUPER SENIORS



The North Woods volleyball team and Head Coach Kandi Olson honored the team's seniors, from left, Olivia Udovich, Abigail Shuster, Morgan Burnett, and Haley Bogdan before a recent match. photo by D. Colburn



## GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

## Supervisors continue to wrangle over financial discrepancies

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

**GREENWOODTWP-** Once again, the Greenwood Town Board spent much of their meeting on Tuesday reviewing the submitted financial reports. And, once again, town board members noted discrepancies between the treasurer's and clerk's list of claims and disbursements.

At the Oct. 12 meeting, Supervisor Sue Drobac pointed out that the list of disbursements in the meeting packet had been prepared by the treasurer.

"This should be run by the clerk," she said. "I talked about this last month."

Comparing the claims list (bills to be paid) to the disbursements list (checks issued) is an oversight duty for the town board. And having the clerk entering the disbursement information allows the town board to compare the two lists, even though the treasurer is also entering that information, as she prepares checks to be printed.

At last month's meeting Treasurer Belinda Fazio said she would work with Clerk Debby Spicer to get the issue "figured out." But apparently, the board found, this had not happened.

Chairman Mike Ralston asked Clerk Debby Spicer if she was able to print out that report, which she agreed to do. But the report printed by Spicer did not match up with the treasurer's list, being off by more than \$10,000.

"I can't approve the treasurer's report with this discrepancy," Drobac said. "They aren't showing the same number of checks."

Fazio said that a check written to the city of Tower for the ambulance subsidy had been set aside, and she hadn't forwarded that info to the clerk to enter into her computer, but that accounted for only \$6,700

of the difference. Spicer said there were other checks she hadn't received information on.

The board tabled approval of the treasurer's report and will review it again at their next meeting.

Drobac also noted that the slight discrepancy in supervisor salary checks had not been corrected, as well as the pay period dates on the checks. Drobac also asked, again, for a printout of actual amounts paid to each employee, not just a total amount.

"We need a report that gives us the person's name and pay as has been done in the past," she said. "This is where the checks and balances come in."

Ralston wondered if this would expose personal information, and Fazio said that was possible.

Drobac said the list of names and their gross pay was public information.

"This is not an invasion of privacy," said Supervisor Barb Lofquist.

Fazio said, "I will look at the reports and see what I can do for you."

Salary information for public employees (state, federal, school district, township) is public information.

Drobac asked why she had not been given the information requested so she could try to have ADP, which is processing payroll for the township, make the needed corrections. Drobac earlier had said she had tried calling, but she was not successful, and the board had passed a motion to allow her to try to get the issue corrected.

"I am not comfortable giving you my password," said Fazio, who then asked to see a copy of the motion in writing. Drobac noted the password could be changed after she used it.

"You could be there when I am talking to them," Drobac said. "The checks are not right, the dates are not right. Why is that

so hard to get changed?" Drobac first brought the issue to the board several months ago.

"I agree that the supervisor shouldn't be in the payroll program," said Ralston. "But the pay date and pay period issue is troubling. I agree with that."

Spicer said she thought the issue had been corrected and would see when this month's payroll checks are printed out.

The motion to approve payroll passed 3-2 with Drobac and Lofquist voting against.

**Fire department**

Drobac asked why she was unable to get a list of the township firefighters who had completed their Firefighter I and II training, along with those who hadn't completed training. Township guidelines call for firefighters to complete those classes within five years of joining the department.

"The town board is the employer and supervisors are overseeing the department," she said. "We should know who has the training."

Fire department training officer Rick Worringer said the department is allowed to train its own members, "as long as we don't ask them to do something they don't know how to do."

"Why does this have to be a secret?" asked Drobac.

"What is your end game?" asked Fire Chief Dave Fazio.

"I just want a list of who has it and who has finished it," she said.

Fire department member Jeff Maus said most of the Standard Operating Guidelines for the department refer to the firefighter training.

Worringer said the department has "trouble getting and keeping people."

"If someone doesn't have Firefighter I and II, they can still be a valuable

asset," he said. "They can drive trucks, run hoses. It is my personal opinion that requirement should be removed."

Worringer said the department members are not professional firefighters, but "everything we do we are trained to do. It is a dangerous job. But that doesn't have anything to do with having the firefighter training." "He has answered the question," said Ralston. "It is not necessary."

Fazio asked for board approval to purchase a calibration unit for the fire department carbon monoxide detectors. Currently they need to get serviced twice a year, a task they get done in Hibbing, Fazio said, at no charge except the travel costs.

The calibration unit costs \$2,195 and lasts two years, he said.

"It is expensive to have it on site, but it will save hassles before going out on a carbon monoxide call," he said. "There are times our guys can't get the carbon monoxide meters to work."

The test units need to be calibrated before each use. They are used when responding to a call when a carbon monoxide detector has gone off.

"This is a safety issue," said Lofquist.

A motion to purchase the new unit passed unanimously.

Dave Fazio said the department is looking into the idea of purchasing a boat that can be used for rescue work on Trout Lake, using the \$10,000 donation received earlier this year.

"We had four calls there this year," said Indihar, "and no way to get across. We have to wait for the St. Louis County Rescue Squad."

"We want to dedicate the donation to something tangible," he said.

Fazio said the department has not done any research yet on what type of

boat is needed, or on where the boat would be stored.

**Tower Ambulance**

Resident Lee Peterson addressed the board about issues surrounding the Tower Ambulance Service. He said the ambulance commission should have questions on why billed amounts were being counted as actual income, as reported by Tower Acting Mayor Dave Setterberg at the council's Oct. 11 meeting. He also said he disagreed with Setterberg's statement that it wasn't in the city's best interest to have a forensic audit done, at an estimated cost of \$20,000.

"A forensic audit would resolve that [possibility that ambulance funds were being used to cover other city expenses]," he said. Peterson also said he disagreed with findings in the EMSRB report and felt the township should have a discussion with Virginia Fire and Ambulance Chief Al Lewis about the possibility of forming a regional department, which could station an ambulance and personnel in this area.

"They are grasping at straws in Tower," he said.

Ralston asked if it wouldn't be better to begin talks with the Tower Ambulance Service first, and others agreed.

"Tower has done this so long," said Fire Department Assistant Chief Mike Indihar. "We should appreciate the service they have given to our community."

**Other business**

In other business the board:

► Was asked why the email notification list for special meetings had not been used to notify the public of a special meeting held Oct. 5. "Over 100 people are on the notification list," said Lofquist. Spicer said that task would take extra time and wondered if she would get "more pay."

"I am not a secretary," she said.

► A motion by Lofquist to have the township's printer/fax/scanner moved back into the outer office area, so that other board members can use it to do township business, failed on a 2-3 vote, with Ralston, DeLuca, and Skubic voting against. The machine had recently been moved into the clerk's office, which is kept locked. A smaller printer was put into the outer office, but it is harder to use, cannot be used to fax, and is more expensive for the township because it uses inkjet cartridges. Lofquist and Drobac have been working on compiling the hundreds of responses to the township's broadband survey.

Responses to the survey have been overwhelmingly positive, said Lofquist. "I'd say that 95-percent are in favor of broadband. And some say they would spend more time up here."

Though Spicer said "a lot of people say they don't want it."

Lofquist and Drobac said they had volunteered to do the work, so the clerk didn't have to do it.

"We wanted to save you time," said Lofquist.

► Approved purchasing six 20 mph speed limit signs for Birch Point Extension, and will ask St. Louis County to replace faded speed limit signs on Birch Point Rd.

► At a special meeting on Oct. 5, the board approved purchase of a township errors and omissions insurance policy for \$12,144. The township's former carrier had decided not to renew their policy, but the township was able to find another carrier before their old policy expired. The new policy is similar to the old one, though it costs about \$500 more than last year.

## ST. LOUIS COUNTY

## Wolf Lake tract tops area tax-forfeited property sales

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook/Orr Editor

Final online auction of the year nets county almost \$1.5 million

**REGIONAL** – An undeveloped lakeshore property on Wolf Lake, southwest of Ely, was the highest-priced North Country property to sell in the final online sale of tax-forfeited properties in St. Louis County that ended on Oct. 7.

Thirty-eight of the 64 properties offered by the county Land and Minerals department were snapped up by bidders for \$1.49 million, the county's most successful online sale to date. Twenty-four of the properties had competing bids.

A 19.5-acre tract on the north side of Wolf Lake with about 1,500 feet of lake frontage, across

from the boat landing, sold for the listed valuation of \$157,500 to Evan Sheets. According to county property records, Evan and Rachelle Sheets, of Minneapolis, own an adjacent 3.5-acre parcel to the east with 865 feet of lake frontage.

The other area lake property to sell was a 2.58-acre parcel on Elbow Lake, in Beatty Township, with about 310 feet of lake frontage and water access. Deborah J. Ralston-Wolfe paid the list price of \$48,750. Ralston-Wolfe and Charles R. Wolfe, both of Duluth, are the owners of record for adjacent parcels on either side of the recently purchased one.

Three other Elbow Lake tracts, two Ban Lake parcels in Beatty Township, and two Pine Island properties in Breitung Township failed to attract any bidders.

David and Myranda Grecinger, of Cook, were the successful bidders on a 7.9-acre tract on undeveloped platted roads west of Vermilion Drive and northeast of the railroad grade. A portion of the property is zoned suburban residential, and the remainder is zoned residential district. The parcel is one that apparently attracted multiple bidders, as the Grecingers' successful bid of \$42,100 was about \$16,000 more than the

listed price of \$26,025.

A 14.73-acre tract lying primarily at the southwest corner of the Highway 135/Wahlsten Rd. intersection in Kugler Township was purchased by Michael J. Jankowski for \$15,000, slightly higher than the \$13,125 list price. A portion of the tract is bisected by the highway and adjoins the Iron Ore Trail on the eastern border.

Another contested property was a 3.88-acre parcel in Leiding Township that is west of the Highway 53/Johnson Rd. intersection. Daniel Fife was the successful bidder with an offer of \$6,000, \$3,300 more than the listed price.

A triangular-shaped 2.9-acre plot near the south entry to Cook on Highway 53 may have been the most profitable parcel of the auction in terms of ratio of asking price to successful bid. The parcel is several hundred feet south of the Johnson Rd. intersection, bordered by Highway 53 on the east and the Cook city limit on the west. The property description said the parcel is predominantly wetland and may not be suitable for development.

Listed at only \$525, Carlyn Attama's winning bid of \$7,100 was more than 13 times greater than that amount.

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**ELY...**Continued from page 1

Colarich called for the resolution reversal.

"A lot has changed in the last year," he said. "COVID is still here. For what happens next year and the following years, I don't want those decisions to continue to be made by somebody who is not elected. The superintendent recommends policy. Making policy is the responsibility of the (school) board."

In responding to a true COVID emergency, the school board can issue a 24-hour meeting notice. A regular or special board meeting can be called with a 72-hour notice.

"Emergency meetings can be called within 24 hours when we need immediate board action," board chair Ray Marsnik noted.

The board unanimously adopted the resolution.

Erie, along with the district's other administrators, K-6 Principal Anne Oelke and 6-12 Principal Megan Anderson, are tasked with consulting weekly with the Ely Safe Learning Plan Advisory Council (ESLPAC). Consisting of school staff, a school board member, parents, students, local physicians and nurses, and the St. Louis County Public Health Department, ESLPAC reviews and discusses local and regional COVID-19 case rate data and trends, existing cases and quarantines, and other public health information to determine local strategies to navigate through the continuing coronavirus pandemic.

ISD 696 administrators, as recommended by the school's advisory council, have been implementing wide-ranging



The ISD 696 board room was standing room only Monday night for the monthly business meeting of the Ely school board as COVID-19 public health mitigation strategies were discussed. photo by K. Vandervort

COVID-19 mitigation strategies.

Last year, under the peacetime emergency declared by Gov. Tim Walz, the Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Department of Education developed specific policies and procedures school districts were to follow, with some leeway for districts to tailor local decisions to fit local conditions. For example, masks were mandatory for those in school buildings, but districts could consider multiple sources of information in determining their learning models.

Without the peacetime emergency, the state Health and Education departments no longer have the authority to impose COVID-related mandates on school districts. Decisions about all mitigation strategies that have been strongly recommended by those departments and federal health officials, such as mandatory masking, are now in the hands of local school districts.

Just days before the start of the current school year, faced with an alarming increase in local COVID-19 case rate data

during the last month of summer, ELSPAC recommended a mandatory face mask requirement within Ely school buildings.

A group of community members, called Ely Community Voice, pushed back on the mask mandate and last month presented the school board with a petition, signed by more than 300 people, calling for the district to scrap the requirement and leave decisions about masking to parents/guardians.

Last month, when Colarich called for pulling administrative authority to implement public health mitigation efforts, the school board also wanted to see a strategy for how and when mandates would be eased to get face masks off students while at the same time keeping the classrooms full.

Erie presented the board with a revision of the Ely Schools Safe Learning Reopening Plan Monday night.

"These revisions mainly cover the conditions and metrics for a change to less restrictive measures that the school board is looking for," he said. The revised plan was

presented to the school board on Monday, following the weekly ELSPAC meeting last Thursday and Erie's weekend work to revise the plan.

"We heard the message that you are looking for metrics, but that doesn't mean that we are totally comfortable doing that," he said.

He noted that many area schools are not looking at dialing back health measures as COVID-19 case rate data continues to increase.

"Cook County, Hibbing, Duluth, and International Falls don't have any metrics. Rock Ridge does. ISD 2142 and Mesabi East are not even masking. Vermilion Community College is masking," he said.

The revised metrics for dialing back the face mask requirement in Ely schools include:

► A bi-weekly COVID-19 case rate for Northern St. Louis of less than 30 (per 10,000 residents) for two consecutive weeks. The case rate has been steadily increasing from July and is at 88.5 this week.

► Local COVID-19

ZIP Code case rate less than 30 for two consecutive weeks. That case rate was at 33.82 last week.

► Vaccination rate for students ages 12-18 in Memorial School is greater than 50 percent. The current vaccination rate is 41 percent.

"If it was up to the administration here, I don't think we want to be boxed in (on these numbers)," Erie said, "and we would want to move when we feel the conditions are right." The presence of all three conditions would initiate an examination and probable recommendation to move to a face-mask recommendation protocol in the Memorial building.

The same three conditions would apply in the Washington building once vaccinations are approved for students ages 5-11.

"According to St. Louis County Public Health (officials) we may be looking at early November for vaccinations to be available for them," Erie said.

He added an exception to the metrics.

"If a classroom or program shows an increase of positive cases, the classroom and/or program could be required to wear masks for a specific period of time."

Tom Omerza, who is the school board representative on the ESLPAC, said he came out of the recent meeting "happy that we are starting to see some metrics and happy that something was introduced." He also noted that he was not prepared to vote on any metrics plan on Monday night. "I want to see input from parents, administration, and the school board. We need time to digest this and

get some feedback. I think it is too fast, but I don't want to go too slow. To me this is a really good start."

Marsnik described the role of the school board.

"The board's role is not to make recommendations. The recommendations have to come from the administration. When we start making recommendations, that goes under the heading of micro-managing."

Marsnik also pushed back against those in the community who have charged that the district superintendent is making the decisions.

"That's not true. He is a spokesperson, but he is making these decisions in collaboration with our principals and the ELSPAC advisory committee and our medical professionals," he said.

Erie agreed with Omerza. "Ideally, we would like more time and involve more people and get more feedback and get more direct guidance and see what other people are doing. You wanted metrics and this is a start," he said.

The board voted unanimously to remove the "Metrics to Dial Back Mitigation Strategies" from the Ely Public School Safe Learning Reopening Plan 2021-2022 to give the school administration more time to develop and fine tune a complete strategy, and called for at least four more community members, such as parents and students, to be on ELSPAC. The council was set to meet on Thursday, Oct. 14. School board members will schedule a special meeting to approve any revised COVID-19 mitigation strategies as recommended by the administration.



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**TOWER...**Continued from page 1

for the ambulance, we may bill \$3,000 and only receive \$500," noted Setterberg at Monday's meeting.

The disparity is a reflection of the different ways that the city and government accountants track revenues and expenditures. The city of Tower has long operated on a cash basis, which means that revenues and expenses are recorded in the city's bookkeeping program as the monies associated with them either come in or go out.

Government accountants, on the other hand, record revenues and expenditure as they are billed or incurred, even though it may be weeks or months before the funds arrive or the bills are paid. At the end of the fiscal year, the auditors convert the city's financials from the cash method of recording to the accrual method. While the shift doesn't impact most of the city's funds to any great extent, that's not the case with the city's ambulance fund.

The council report provided this week explains: "Unlike other businesses or government activities, the amount received for medical services is nearly always LOWER than the amount billed. This is unlike our Hoodoo Point Campground, airport fuel or utility funds. What we charge for a nightly camp site, a gallon of aviation gas, or for quarterly utility usage is typically what we receive with only minor adjustments for canceled reservations, fuel equipment malfunction, or late utility payment. The city of Tower or its billing contractor bills out for ambulance services provided. What the patient's insurance company pays is typically less or much less than the amount billed."

This discrepancy isn't a problem for a city that manages its books on a cash basis, since the city only enters the amount of money actually received from an ambulance bill. But the auditors, using the accrual method of accounting, calculate ambulance revenues based on what was billed, not what actually came in the door. That means that the ambulance fund balances shown in the audit reports never existed, at least not as cash, and in nowhere near the amounts that the auditors described.

The disparity is a reminder that government accounting is very different from the ways most people track money, a point that Setterberg said the city's auditor Devin Ceglar made clear during a meeting to discuss the issue. "He said most people shouldn't be reading audits thinking that they understand them," recalled Setterberg. "That was an eye opener."

In part because the auditors never explained this disparity in their annual reports, it allowed a dispute to linger for years over an ambulance fund balance, supposedly tapped by the city to pay for non-ambulance purposes, that was largely a fiction.

By exaggerating revenues to the city's ambulance service, the auditors also exaggerated the service's true fund balance. And because the auditors are required to balance city funds at the end of the year, the auditors routinely used these apparent ambulance service surpluses to cover, at least on paper, deficits that appeared in other city funds. Those calculations were reflected in a "Due To-Due From" analysis that the auditors provided each year, which suggested that the city had borrowed heavily from the ambulance service when there's little reason to believe that's the case. Setterberg's investigation did find two cash transfers from the ambulance service to the general fund, both made in 2014, although neither amounted to more than a few thousand dollars and appeared to be correcting entries.

The auditors do acknowledge that many of the funds they have included in their accounting as ambulance revenue will never be received given the disparities between bills that go out and the actual payments received. Indeed, they track that amount in a separate fund, which they have dubbed "Allowance-Doubtful Accounts." Exactly how much that totaled isn't entirely clear, notes Setterberg, because of the confusing nature of

the thousands of journal entries he reviewed as part of his investigation. Both Setterberg and Ranua noted that many journal entries in the past were not well supported by notes, an issue which she said the city had already fixed going forward.

Due to the lack of supporting notes with all the journal entries, Setterberg acknowledged it was difficult to track some of the adjustments made over time. So, he used another method to determine the actual cash balance that the service should have available, by totaling all the revenues and expenditures entered into the city's Banyon bookkeeping software between 2009 and 2018.

"Rather than trying to sort through the quagmire of all the journal entries, we know we have all the revenues and expenditures entered in the system," he told the council.

That analysis showed a total from all sources of revenue of \$3,027,352 versus \$2,596,024 in expenditures, for a total ten-year fund surplus, or balance, of \$431,328. That's less than half of the \$883,000 fund balance that the auditors reported in 2018. In both cases, those balances included \$125,990 in dedicated township contributions for ambulance replacement as well as \$133,470 from an

insurance settlement from a 2014 fire that damaged the former fire/ambulance hall garage, which Setterberg assumed was dedicated for future capital expenses. The ambulance service, to date, has not replaced the garage, which was ultimately sold to a private buyer and moved to a new location.

According to Setterberg's analysis, the ambulance service's actual unassigned fund balance from 2009-2018 totaled just \$171,868. How much of that money was still in the city's ambulance account at the end of 2018 is difficult to determine since ambulance funds were not segregated from the general fund checking account at that time.

Ranua addressed that issue early on by establishing a separate bank account for ambulance operations, which will provide for easier financial tracking going forward.

While some have called for a forensic audit to dig further into the ambulance fund, Setterberg said it's pretty clear to him that there was never a large balance of actual cash within the ambulance service.

Ranua said the situation helps to illustrate the value of good budgeting. "We should be amending the budget during the year so we don't end up having these strange conversations

about monies that never existed and which we'll never receive."

**Other council action**

In other business on Monday, the council:

► Approved advertising its mayoral vacancy for two weeks, with a deadline for application of Nov. 1, 2021.

► Appointed Setterberg to serve in former Mayor Orlyn Kringstad's place on both the Tower Economic Development Authority and the Gundersen Trust.

► Heard from Ranua that several city positions currently paid with salaries do not meet the standards for salaried workers and should be converted to hourly. She said she'll be discussing the job duties and time involved in the various positions with the employees to develop a recommendation for hourly wages. Members of the city council will likely go back to being paid on a per-meeting basis.

► Gave the first reading to Ordinance 2, which relates to utility connections.

► Heard from council member Joe Morin that he had received an estimate for repairs to the city's grader totaling \$21,000. "They feel with the repairs, the grader could be in working order again," he said. Morin said he is also reaching out to companies about the possibility of leasing a grader.

► Took no action on the possible sale of the city's former police vehicle.

► Agreed to submit the ambulance replacement contract to area townships for signature, as is. "We can't delay much more on this," said council member Kevin Norby. Setterberg agreed, noting that some townships are holding off on paying their ambulance subsidy until the contract is in place.

► Tabled action on a possible adjustment to the run requirement for the city's EMTs and EMRs. Norby and Setterberg will meet with ambulance director Dena Suihkonen ahead of the next meeting to discuss the issue.

► Tabled action on a request from former maintenance supervisor Randy Johnson for the city to pay him \$1,773 for lost investment income he would have received had the city transferred funds in his name to a state retirement program to cover his ongoing health costs. The city was supposed to transfer the funds when Johnson retired in 2018, but never did so, and Johnson said he lost investment income as a result. The council discussed the issue at length and seemed to agree that paying him was appropriate, although they wanted some more time to consider what amount would be appropriate.



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## CHANGE...Continued from page 1

A Native American justice project, "Awareness... Then Change" launched this week in Ely. Kunesh, co-chair of the task force, was here to support the local effort.

Kunesh, the daughter and granddaughter of members of the Standing Rock Lakota Sioux Tribe, is the first Native American woman elected to the Minnesota Senate. Her presentation at Tuesday Group, "Building Awareness for Historical Change: The MMIW Movement in Minnesota," focused on issues identified by the task force and plans for action to address the disproportionate incidence of violence against Native Americans.

Kunesh also presented the information to students at Vermilion Community College. Her presentation was prefaced with an honor song and dance by members of the Bois Forte Band. A display of red dresses (see sidebar), in memory of missing Indigenous women was also featured in the lobby near the VCC Fine Arts Theater.

The local justice project is sponsored by the Ely branch of the American Association of the University Women in collaboration with the Ely EMPOWER organization. The goals of the justice project are to increase understanding, honor the heritage of the area, and to set the stage for supporting policy and social action to reduce the risks for and support the resilience of Native American women and children.

"As a committee, we realized that we have issues of inequity in our own Northeastern Minnesota region," said local AAUW public policy committee member Linda Sutton. "Our intent is to bring awareness into our Ely community so that we can be better allies to our Native American neighbors."

Kunesh highlighted several portions of her Minnesota Legislative Human Trafficking Task Force Report released earlier this year.

## Red Dress public art campaign raises awareness



ELY – Red dresses were displayed outside the Vermilion Community College Fine Arts Theater here on Tuesday during a launch event for the Native American justice project, "Awareness... Then Change."

The display is meant to bring public awareness to missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people.

With red dress public art displays, advocates aim to educate about statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice. Some of the glaring and most current reports indicate that Native women face

murder rates in some counties, including tribal lands, ten times the national average.

Alongside the Red Dress campaign, a "Say Her Name" billboard campaign was launched across Minnesota and Wisconsin last month to bring more attention to the missing people cases within the Indigenous communities in the region.

Supporting groups include the Native Justice Coalition, the American Indian Community Housing Organization, and the Global Indigenous Council.

"Duluth was a huge hub for many years in the trafficking of Native girls," she said. "It was easy to seduce them with money and goods and promises of a good life, and to get them on a ship. The ship leaves and the girls were never seen again. It was a direct pipeline into the world-wide sex trafficking network."

Kunesh admitted that one of the biggest roadblocks for the task force was collecting data. "What has happened over the years is that either there hasn't been any record or information kept on missing or murdered Indigenous people, or it has been haphazard," she said. "No body collected the same information in the same way and documented it in the same manner and that made it very difficult." She noted the problem exists across the nation.

With 100-percent buy-in for the effort on both sides of the political aisle, the task force was able to begin collecting data.

"We found out that in 2017, law enforcement agencies across the state recorded 173 sex trafficking incidents. Twenty percent of those victims were Native American," she said. "That was an unfortunate confirmation. I would have loved it if we started looking at the data and found out that wasn't the case. But we knew anecdotally from the Native community that this was happening."

Kunesh summarized some of the key findings in the report.

"When an Indigenous woman or girl goes missing or dies under suspicious circumstances, the investigation, prosecution, and sentencing processes that are supposed to serve justice often fail to provide equal and fair treatment for these Indigenous victims," she said. "The system does not have adequate culturally responsive healing resources for Indigenous victims/survivors, families, and communities."

She implored the

audience to get involved. "What can you do?" she asked. "Learn about what sex trafficking looks like. Be aware of your surroundings, and offer help if someone might need it. Keep track of AMBER Alerts and learn about the missing Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people in your community. Advocate locally to ensure your county sheriff and municipal law enforcement, school district and local hospitals, etc., are aware of the MMIW injustice and the role of systems in preventing it."

Kunesh continued, "Contact your representatives about relevant legislation including VAWA (federal), Safe Harbor (state), ICWA (federal and state), etc. Help an individual or family that is involved in or trying to escape trafficking or domestic violence (donate to a shelter, be a foster care provider, etc.)."

#### More Ely events

An Ely community reading event of the book,

"In the Night of Memory," by Linda LeGarde Grover, also began this week. Area residents are encouraged to read the book, then participate in one or more of the scheduled discussion events related to the book.

"In the Night of Memory" is a moving story of loss and recovery in Native American communities.

A reading and book signing is scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 21, from 1-3 p.m. at Piragis Northwoods Co. The author will also introduce her new book of essays titled "Gichmigami Hearts" in which she interweaves family and Ojibwe history with stories from Misaabekong (the place of the giants) on Lake Superior. Copies of the book are available at Piragis Northwoods Co. and the Ely Public Library.

A community writing workshop with Grover will be held on Monday, Nov. 22, at the Ely Folk School. The workshop runs from 5:30 to 8 p.m. and will include a light meal.

Registration for the event is through the Ely Folk School website.

Grover will also provide workshops sponsored by Story Portage Foundation in several area schools.

The Community Read will wrap up with a reading and presentation at Tuesday Group on Nov. 23. Additional local activities related to the justice project will be scheduled in 2022.

The Ely justice project features an illustration, "Survivor II" by Shaun Chosa, a local Native American artist. "Survivor II" illustrates the impact of generations of historical trauma on Native American friends and neighbors.

Story Portage and The Brunfelt-Sainio Fund provided partial funding of the first two months of activities.

For more information on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Task Force in Minnesota, contact Sen. Kunesh at sen.mary.kunesh@senate.mn.

## COVID...Continued from page 1

census of COVID patients we've had at St. Mary's since last winter. Here in St. Louis County, we're regularly adding more than 100, sometimes close to 200 new cases every day, and we haven't witnessed numbers that high since last December."

Stephen collaborates with a regional group that coordinates critical care, monitors ICU bed availability, and helps hospitals find open beds. The current surge is a serious challenge, she said.

"There just aren't beds available, and when patients have to be transported well beyond our region for care, that's scary, especially when time is critical," she said.

St. Louis County Public Health Division Director Amy Westbrook said Tuesday that the county has yet to round the corner on the latest Delta-variant-driven surge.

"We're still seeing our cases and our hospitalizations going in the wrong direction, and that's not good," Westbrook said. "We're probably where we were last year at the start of November when we were heading into our peak."

The numbers on the county's COVID dashboard reinforce Westbrook's statement. The county's

seven-day case average on Nov. 3, 2020, was 104.3. Last week on Oct. 8, the same case rate number stood at 108.6.

"It's just not about case rates but looking at who is getting sick. One thing to call attention to is that we have seen more hospitalizations among adolescents in our central region," Westbrook said. "It's just more of a reason to really have communities pay attention to mitigation strategies and doing those things, that can help prevent illness."

Stephen said the surge among younger patients has created the need for additional coordination among hospitals to provide for them.

"As a pediatrician, it's been troubling to see this latest spike's impact on young people," Stephen said. "We often hear that it's now a pandemic of the unvaccinated and that unfortunately includes children. In addition to a daily call statewide about hospital bed availability for adults, we now have unfortunately had to set up a statewide bed availability call for children."

Jonathan Shultz is a physician in the emergency department at St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth, and he said handling the influx of

additional COVID patients is stretching the department to its limits.

"We are currently seeing unprecedented volumes within the emergency department, seeing very high volumes and persistently high volume day and night," Shultz said. "This is causing a number of problems in terms of being able to get ambulances, in terms of having enough ambulances for all the calls that are coming in, and then the system backing up in terms of trying to get patients into the hospital. This extra volume of patients in a system that runs full at baseline is really causing unprecedented strain." Shultz said that they often will maintain and manage patients in the emergency room until an ICU bed becomes available. He also said that they've been using an innovative approach for patients in outlying hospitals who need emergency care procedures, transferring patients to St. Luke's where they have the capability to do the procedure, and then transferring them back to the outlying hospital if there's not a bed available at St. Luke's.

#### Differential impact

This current COVID wave is having its greatest impact in the northern

and central/southwest regions of the county, most starkly illustrated by the latest bi-weekly case rates posted on the county's COVID-19 dashboard that reflect conditions at the end of September.

The northern St. Louis County rate, of 88.55, is more than double that of the Duluth area. Conditions are even worse in the central/southwest portion of the county, where the rate is 100.62. Given the ongoing case levels, the new rate for the northern region, to be posted this Thursday, could eclipse the pandemic record high of 92.3 at the height of last year's surge. And the situation could be even more pronounced than the numbers suggest, Westbrook said.

"We always have known that the number of positive cases is not a full picture of what transmission looks like in our community," she said. "We certainly know that there's more COVID transmission circulating, because not everybody will be going in to get tested, or some people will have very mild symptoms and don't know they have COVID."

#### Vaccination impact

While Westbrook stopped short of making

a causative link between vaccination rates and cases in the county's three regions, she readily pointed out that there's a clear correlation.

Numbers from the dashboard show that the Duluth region has the highest rate of vaccinations among those 12 and older at 74.3 percent and the lowest number of cases per 100,000, at 467.7. In the northern part of the county, where 67.7 percent of residents are vaccinated, the case rate is currently 860.7 per 100,000. The central/southwest, which has the lowest vaccination rate, at 61.8 percent, has highest percent case rate, at 1,192.4 per 100,000.

"It certainly is correlated that where we see vaccination rates rise, we have seen case rates decline," Westbrook said.

Health officials continue to support vaccination as the single most important solution to stemming the tide of COVID cases, but also emphasize that an overall strategy of layered mitigation including wearing masks indoors regardless of vaccination status, practicing social distancing, getting tested quickly when exhibiting COVID symptoms, and staying at home when ill is ultimately the most successful one for limiting community spread.

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# SPORTS

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## VOLLEYBALL

### North Woods tops Spartans

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- It's been a roller coaster season for the North Woods Grizzlies volleyball lineup, but with everyone

**Left: North Woods' Morgan Burnett concentrates as she returns the ball during a volley on Monday night.**

photo by D. Colburn

back and healthy, the team is rounding back into form, scoring a senior night win over Nashwauk-Keewatin on Monday and a solid 2-2 outing at last weekend's Mesabi East tournament.

Grizzlies senior players Morgan Burnett, Abigail Shuster and Olivia Udovich and senior manager Haley Bogdan were honored before the start of Tuesday's home match against the Spartans, and all three players figured in

the Grizzlies' decisive 3-0 win.

Serves were pivotal for the Grizzlies in their 25-20 victory in the first game. Falling behind at the outset, aces from Shuster and Burnett gave the Grizzlies a lead they wouldn't relinquish at 5-4. North Woods pulled ahead 15-9, but the Spartans rallied with a chance to tie the game at 17. Addy Hartway kept that from happening with a kill, and a service ace from Udovich gave the Grizzlies a 20-17 edge. Shuster served up

another ace in her final two serves to close out the win.

"We've been working on a new rotation and just doing some slight tweaks, and the tweaks have really started to solidify," Grizzlies Head Coach Kandi Olson said. "It's given us a chance to do some different things in our offense as well."

That played out in games two and three, ones the

See VOLLEY...pg. 2B

## FOOTBALL



## RUNNERS

### North Woods siblings make their mark in cross country

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- Prep cross country runners are a unique group of athletes, running individually but scoring collectively for their schools in races run on finely manicured golf courses and meandering trails through meadows and woodlands. The bonds formed among teammates and with competitors are respectful and tight, but a trio of North Woods runners from Orr's Pelican Lake share an even deeper connection. They're family.

And the Burckhardt siblings – ninth-graders and twins Alex and Addison and sixth-grader Zoey – have already put the region's teams on notice that they're a collective force to be reckoned with.

North Woods doesn't officially have a cross country team, so the

See RUNNERS...pg. 3B

## VOLLEYBALL

### Ely dumps MI-B in three

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

ELY – With the playoffs looming, Ely used a weekend tournament to sharpen their skills and a Tuesday night contest to show they could put it all together, as they dumped Mt. Iron-Buhl here in straight sets, 25-18, 26-24, and 25-15.

"It was a great win for Ely," said Timberwolves Head Coach Megan Wognum.

Junior Rachel Coughlin had a big night for the Wolves, racking up 11 kills, seven digs, three blocks, an ace and a set assist. Senior Kellen Thomas was close behind, with nine kills, seven digs, six blocks, and two aces. Junior Kate Coughlin

See VBALL...pg. 2B

### Grizzlies crush Mille Lacs, 56-11

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- North Woods quarterback Ty Fabish completed touchdown passes to four different receivers and T.J. Chiabotti ran for more than 200 yards as the Grizzlies turned a slow start last Friday into a thorough 56-11 thrashing of visiting Mille Lacs.

The matchup against the undersized and outmanned Raiders gave Grizzlies Head Coach Joel Anderson the chance to employ a full range of options on offense, once his team figured out how to stop the opponents.

**Above: Jared Chiabotti sheds a Raiders tackler before streaking down the sideline for the Grizzlies' first touchdown.**

**Right: Receiver Davis Kleppe speeds past a Raiders defender on his way to the end zone.**

photos by D. Colburn

"The first quarter we were a little flat," Anderson said. "They were running some stuff that we hadn't seen on film and we had to make some adjustments. We were getting a little too

See GRIZZLIES...pg. 2B



### Wolves slip to Cook County, 14-8

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY- The Timberwolves' homecoming match-up with Cook County proved a much-tighter contest than some recent outings, with the game decided only in the final minute. The outcome was the same as in recent games, however, as Ely ultimately fell 14-8 to the Vikings to drop to 1-5 on the season.

Junior running back Jason Kerntz staked Ely to an 8-0 lead late in the first quarter off a long

**Left: Ely quarterback Mason Davis looks for running room under heavy pressure from Cook County defenders.**

photo by K. Vandervort

run and it was all the scoring that either side could muster well into the third quarter.

Cook County evened the contest on a 40-yard pass completion and conversion in the third quarter.

The Vikings went on to add another six points in the final stanza, but left Ely a little time on the clock. With less than two minutes to go, Ely appeared to be on the move, driving down the field to about the 40-yard line. But that's all the further they would penetrate as Cook County picked off a Mason David pass on the next play, leaving just 37 seconds on the clock. The Vikings ran one play and Ely called a timeout to stop the clock. On the next play, as Cook

See WOLVES...pg. 2B





## SWIMMING

## NER's Tedrick scores two firsts at Rock Ridge tourney



Northeast Range senior swimmer Lily Tedrick broke her own 100 Butterfly record at Rock Ridge last week. submitted photo

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

REGIONAL – The Northeast Range High School girls swim team scored 101 points competing against six other teams last Saturday at the Taconite Invitational Meet at Mesabi East.

Senior swimmer Lily Tedrick continues to shine for the Nighthawks as she took third in the 200 Individual Medley with a time of 2:33.19. She also placed third in the 100 Butterfly with a time of 1:09.94. Kelly Thompson placed eighth in the 100 Freestyle with a time of 1:03.62, while Morgan McClelland finished the 500 Freestyle in the top ten with a time of 6:32.58.

The Nighthawks' 200 Freestyle Relay team of Tedrick, McClelland, Kelly Thompson and Anna Larson took second place with a time of 1:52.58.

Mesabi East won the Invite with 326 points.

At the Rock Ridge Triangular, with Rock Ridge and Cloquet/Esko also competing last Thursday, Tedrick broke her own record in the 100 Butterfly with a first-place time of 1:08.00, topping her previous best time, of 1:08.17 set in 2019. Tedrick also posted a first-place finish in the 200 Individual Medley with a time of 2:31.19.

"We had a great meet at Rock Ridge," said Coach Cheri Debeltz. "It was exciting to see Lily break the team record. The girls

are all looking fantastic this season."

The Nighthawks' team of Tedrick, Anna Larson, Esther Anderson, and McClelland also took second in the 200 Freestyle Relay in 1:53.23.

Rock Ridge won the meet with 142 points, followed by Cloquet/Esko with 218 points and the Nighthawks with 348.

At the IRC Meet in Two Harbors on Oct. 5, the Nighthawks finished fifth among six teams. Tedrick again posted the top NER performance, finishing second in the 200 Individual Medley in 2:32.68 and in fourth place in the 100 Butterfly with a time of 1:10.57. Morgan McClelland posted a time of 2:24.63 and finished

sixth in the 200 Freestyle, while Anna Larson was 11th in the same event with a time of 2:26.21. Morgan McClelland was seventh in the 500 Freestyle in 6:29.28, while Anna Larson tied for ninth place in the 100 Freestyle with a time of 1:05.19.

In the 200 Freestyle Relay, Tedrick, Thompson, Larson and McClelland again finished in second place with a time of 1:53.04. They also took second in the 400 Freestyle Relay in 4:09.27. Esther Anderson was tenth in the 100 Backstroke in 1:17.31.

The Nighthawks were scheduled to compete in a dual meet at Cloquet on Thursday, Oct. 14, and at Denfeld on Saturday, Oct. 16.

## VBALL...Continued from page 1B

added eight kills, eight digs and a block while senior setter Katrina Seliskar tallied 34 assists, five digs, a block, and an ace. Senior Raven Sainio added three kills and three digs, while junior Madeline Kallberg tallied three kills and three digs.

Tuesday's big home win came on the heels of a solid performance by the Wolves at the Mesabi East tournament this past Saturday. The Wolves downed Chisholm 25-12, 25-18, and followed up with a victory over Floodwood, 25-12, 23-25, and 15-11. Rachel Coughlin had a strong

performance against the Bluestreaks, posting seven kills, three blocks, and four digs. Kate Coughlin added five kills, four digs and two aces, while Thomas added five kills and Seliskar added two kills and 19 assists.

Kate Coughlin's 12 kills led the way for Ely over Floodwood, while Thomas and Rachel Coughlin added eight kills apiece. Thomas also added five digs while Coughlin added three digs and four blocks.

The Wolves hit a road-block against Mesabi East, which has been a nemesis for

Ely all season. The Giants won in two close, hard-fought sets, 25-22, 25-21. Thomas had a strong match, posting ten kills, seven digs, and two blocks. Rachel Coughlin added nine kills, five digs, and two blocks, while sister Kate added five kills and three digs. Kallberg posted five kills and two blocks, while Annikka Mattson tallied five digs. Seliskar posted 26 set assists.

The Wolves fell to Barnum in the tournament capper, losing 25-27 and 12-25.

"Overall, it was another great day of volleyball," said

Wognum. "We will be using the next week to sharpen up some skills that need refining so we are ready for the playoffs."

The Wolves hope to finish up the regular season with wins, which would likely guarantee them a home berth in the first round of the playoffs. They were set to host Nashwauk-Keewatin on Thursday. They'll travel to Cook County (6:30 p.m. start) on Monday and will finish up their regular season at home, hosting Bigfork.

## VOLLEYBALL

## Nighthawks top Hill City in straight sets

BABBITT— The Nighthawks combined for 34 kills here in a straight set victory over Hill City last Thursday.

Northeast Range has been increasingly hot as the season heads into playoffs next week and they easily handled the Hornets 25-16, 25-21, and 25-11.

Senior Hannah Reichensperger led the way, with 20 kills, 19 digs, and two blocked shots.

Fellow senior Natalie Nelmark added eight kills and a block while senior Erin Backe added six kills and ten digs. Freshman setter Maizy Sunblad added 37 assists and nine digs.

## WOLVES...Continued from page 1B

County attempted to down the ball, they fumbled the snap, but recovered the ball. The Vikings tried to down the ball again on the next play and fumbled the snap again with Ely recovering, with just seconds on the clock. The Wolves had one chance to tie the score, but Davis's long pass fell harmlessly downfield, ending

Ely's hopes of a comeback.

"It was an exciting end to the game," Ely Head Coach Louis Gerzin said. "Right after the game, with Homecoming and everything, the guys were pretty disappointed. I thought we played a great game. The team showed a ton of spirit in battling back and not giving up. They gave

themselves a chance to win. I was really pleased with their effort. They came back to practice on Monday ready to get to back to work."

On defense, junior linebacker Jackson Hegman led the Timberwolves with 13 tackles for the night. "Jackson had a great game," Gerzin said.

Senior Alec Cooke had seven tackles, while fellow senior Eddie Prijatelj added six. Senior Gunnar Hart added five tackles and Mason Davis notched an interception.

Jason Kerntz was sidelined with a severe leg cramp early in the game but returned to rush for 82 yards. Harry Simons had 71

yards on the ground while Erron Anderson rushed for 66 yards.

Davis had a 40-yard pass completion to Chase Sandberg.

"I need to give big credit to our offensive and defensive lines," Gerzin said. "They had a great effort in the trenches and played a really good game

on both sides of the ball."

The Timberwolves will host Hill City/Northland on Friday, Oct. 15. Game time is 6 p.m. They'll finish the regular season on Wednesday, Oct. 20 against Kelliher/Northome.

## GRIZZLIES...Continued from page 1B

deep with our defensive linemen and linebackers and opening up holes for them."

The Grizzlies scored on their opening possession, a 60-yard, six-play drive capped by a 22-yard sideline pass from Fabish to Jared Chiabotti that the junior running back/receiver turned into a touchdown, but the score didn't appear to faze the underdog Raiders.

Starting at their own 21, Mille Lacs runners A.J. Drift and Zach Remer shared rushing duties as the Raiders confidently moved to the North Woods 22. But a holding call set up second-and-long, and the Grizzlies stiffened to snuff out the drive and turn the ball back to the offense in the waning seconds of the first quarter.

The Grizzlies couldn't sustain that drive and punted the ball away, but the defense forced the Raiders into a four-and-

out that gave North Woods possession at its own 45 after the punt.

T.J. Chiabotti made the Raiders pay on the next play with his first big run of the night, a 65-yard jaunt off right tackle for a touchdown. Fabish competed a pass to Eric Aune for the two-point conversion and a 14-0 lead at the 9:37 mark of the quarter.

Defense dialed in and offense on track, the Grizzlies scored touchdowns on their next three possessions before half-time. Chiabotti dashed 38 yards for a score to put the Grizzlies up 20-0, and Fabish connected with a streaking Eric Aune on a 24-yard scoring strike. T.J. Chiabotti's conversion run made the score 28-0 with 1:51 remaining before the half.

After the defense forced two incomplete passes and a Mille Lacs punt, the Grizzlies got the ball back 75 yards away

from the Raiders end zone and with only 16 seconds left on the clock.

Jared Chiabotti picked up 26 yards on a pass from Fabish, and the Grizzlies immediately called time out. North Woods went to the air again, this time on a screen pass to T.J. Chiabotti. With a wall of Grizzlies in front of him, Chiabotti ran down the right sideline, then cut toward the middle of the field. There were five fellow Grizzlies within five yards of him as he crossed the goal line.

"We've been working on that all year, making sure everybody on the field knows to get downfield and keep finding guys to block, because at any given time one play can go for a very long way," Anderson said.

Chiabotti did it again on the first possession of the second half, turning a fourth-and-eight at the Raiders 44 into a 44-yard touchdown run. Olin

Nelson hauled in the conversion pass for a 44-0 lead.

Fabish was at the controls of Air North Woods again on the next possession, hitting Davis Kleppe about 15 yards beyond the line of scrimmage, and the Grizzlies' senior raced the rest of the way for a 36-yard touchdown with 6:02 remaining in the third quarter.

Seeing the Grizzlies pummel his squad for 44 points in a little over a quarter of elapsed game time, Mille Lacs Head Coach Jim Henrickson raised a symbolic white flag by asking the officials to start the running clock for the rest of the quarter.

The Raiders got a 55-yard run from Drift that set him up for a subsequent three-yard touchdown plunge on their next possession, but the Grizzlies responded immediately.

Fielding the ensuing kickoff on his own eight-yard line, Jared Ciabotti

streaked straight up the middle field for his third kickoff return for a score this season, and the Grizzlies' final touchdown.

"When we came into camp this year we worked really, really hard on special teams," Anderson said. "We have a lot of really nice athletes – it's almost like an offensive play for us. Hopefully that continues."

Fabish went eight-for-12 passing for 143 yards, four touchdowns, three conversions, and no interceptions.

"Our offensive line gave Ty a lot of time," Anderson said. "It was nice to be able to run those plays. We showed we've got a lot of athletes and if we get the ball in their hands, good things will happen for us."

T.J. Chiabotti carried the ball only 12 times but picked up 202 yards, three touchdowns, and a conversion to add to his 49-yard receiving score. While that total keeps Chiabotti near the top of the state's rushing

leaders and scorers among all classes, that kind of efficiency is beneficial at this stage of the season as the Grizzlies start eyeing a playoff run.

And while Chiabotti is far and away the team's statistical leader on offense, he's among a host of senior and junior players providing the leadership that make the Grizzlies tick.

"They're the kind of kids that are the first ones to practice and the last ones to leave," Anderson said. "They'll grab stuff and pick up the field as they walk by. They help the younger guys through different drills and explain to them what things are, which shows not only their football IQ but just the kind of people that they are."

The Grizzlies were scheduled to be in action again on Thursday with a home tilt against Mesabi East before closing out the regular season on the road on Tuesday, Oct. 19 against East Central.

## VOLLEY...Continued from page 1B

Grizzlies won by identical scores of 25-14. While serves remained a strength, North Woods came together on defense, in their passing game, and in scoring from both ends of the net and in the middle.

Skyler Yernatich, Tori Olson, and Shuster all picked up big kills as the Grizzlies bolted to a 12-7 lead in the second game. Talise Goodsky rotated into the game at server and sparked a four-point run for a 16-7 lead. North Woods has thrived numerous times

this season when Burnett steps to the service line, and that was the case with the Grizzlies leading 19-13. The Spartans struggled to handle her fast-paced, diving serves, giving up a couple of aces and setting up easy kills for Shuster and Hannah Kinsey. After a kill shot that sailed long passed the serve back to the Spartans, Kinsey put an end to the game with a kill down the middle.

Burnett, Goodsky, and Hartway all had productive rotations at serve in the

third game as a clearly confident Grizzlies squad was firing on all cylinders, building a commanding 18-6 lead en route to the 25-14 win that sealed the match.

Olson was particularly pleased for the seniors that everything came together so well on their night.

"It was so fun to see the seniors play the way they did," she said. "They stepped up and played in some different positions. They've been here building key parts of our team

throughout the last three years and it's been amazing to have them with us. We're desperately going to miss them."

## Mesabi East tourney

The Oct. 9 tournament at Mesabi East provided the Grizzlies with an opportunity for a bit of revenge and a glimpse at their potential as they split their matches 2-2.

Northeast Range had blanked the Grizzlies 3-0 earlier in the season, but this time North Woods flipped the script and avenged that

loss by dispatching the Nighthawks in two strong games, 25-17 and 25-18.

"We just had to play our roles really well, and we had the right defense up there at the right times," Olson said. "When Hannah (Reichensperger) was rolling through we had the right people in the right places and people were digging like crazy."

The Grizzlies picked up their other match win against Wrenshall, cruising in the first game 25-4 and controlling the second

25-21.

But it was a loss in identical 25-17 games to section-leading Barnum that gave the Grizzlies an inkling that they're rounding into a team that can match up against strong competition.

The Grizzlies lost their other match to Chisholm, but will have a chance to get that one back when they travel to Chisholm on Monday, Oct. 18 for their final regular season match.



## RUNNERS...Continued from page 1B

the Burckhardts practice locally under the supervision of Coach Dan Squires but run competitively with the South Ridge Panthers, and Tuesday's Polar League meet at Grand Marais was a prime example of why running fans should take notice of the Burckhardts' efforts.

It's clear from conversations with the trio that there's no sibling competition, only encouragement, but if Zoey wanted to claim bragging rights for the day, she could. Zoey claimed the junior high girls 2.5K championship with a time of 10:47. That was 12 seconds faster than teammate and runner-up Lacey Wojtyasiak.

But Addi and Alex weren't far behind in their 5K varsity races, each being the fastest Panther in their respective fields. Addi took second with a time of 21:03.2, finishing just ahead of friend, neighbor, and fellow North Woods runner Evelyn Brodeen, who placed fourth. Alex jumped up from last year's 18th-place finish to claim sixth with a time of 18:06.6.

Three siblings, three races, three medals. Not a bad day's work for a family of runners who've already established themselves in the upper echelon of cross country runners across the region.

Up until this season's meet at Hibbing, Addi hadn't finished lower than sixth in a regular season race since her fourth race as a sixth grader. During last year's COVID-complicated season, she won three of the four regular season meets she ran and qualified for state as an eighth grader with a ninth-place finish at sectionals. The state meet was cancelled, however, due to COVID.

Alex is a relatively consistent top-15 finisher in regular season competition, notching third-place finishes at Hibbing last year and Eveleth this year.

Zoey placed fourth in the two races she ran last year. In five events this year she's col-

lected two firsts, a second, and two thirds.

### Unlikely pursuit

While many prep athletes are following in the footsteps of their parents' sporting endeavors, that's not the case with the Burckhardts. Neither their mom, Stephanie, or their dad, Eric, were competitive runners in school.

"The farthest I ever ran was three miles in my life," laughed Eric.

But Stephanie jogs recreationally, and the twins started tagging along.

"They've been doing it with me since they were seven or eight," Stephanie said. "They were speedy. They would pass me up and go farther than I would. They thought it was fun to beat Mom."

Stephanie and Eric realized the kids weren't only having fun running, but they were good at it. So they decided to participate in some area runs.

"I think they all ran their first 5K eight years ago," Stephanie said. "Zoey was probably three and she was in a stroller, but the other two ran and walked it. They were about six."

The kids became regular participants in the 3rd of July race in Orr, and also added the Timber Days race in Cook to their repertoire. And when sixth grade and the opportunity for competitive school sports rolled around, Addi chose cross country.

"I just enjoyed running," she said. "I played volleyball, too, but I didn't really like it as much as running, so I chose to stick with that."

Alex initially went out for football, but a little sisterly nudge pushed him in a different direction.

"Addison did cross country and she wanted me to get into it, too," Alex said. "So I ran a couple of meets and I ended up really liking it. It was really fun."

And it didn't take long for

both of them to jump from junior high to varsity racing as seventh graders.

"I remember my first varsity race," he said. "They just put me in one of the varsity races to see how I'd do. In the first one I had no idea what was going on and I just kind of ran with someone else from the team."

Minnesota prep sports rules allow a lot of flexibility in terms of what ages can compete at junior high and varsity levels, so sixth-grader Zoey is actually a veteran.

"I ran last year, too," she said.

"We asked Dan, and he knew that (Alex and Addi) were good runners and that she could keep up, so he let her run last year as a fifth-grader," Stephanie said.

South Ridge Head Coach Jeremy Polson prescribes the practice routines that Squires oversees at North Woods. Distance runners don't typically progress on distance runs alone, so Polson's workouts include a mix of warmups, speed interval training, and long runs. Distances and routines vary, geared so that athletes are ready to run their best on meet days. A 5K race is 3.1 miles long, but Alex said he typically puts in a minimum of five miles a day, five and sometimes six days a week.

At first, Alex and Addi would run together, but now that Alex is running faster, training is a solitary affair. Addi said that she enjoys running with Evelyn Brodeen, as the two are closely matches. Zoey's performance last year as a fifth grader convinced a couple of other classmates to come out for cross country this year.

When Alex is racing, there's only one person he wants to beat - himself.

"It does help to have other people in front of me because then I always have someone to try to catch up to, and it helps me to go faster, for sure," he

said. "But I've always run to beat myself, not so much other people."

The South Ridge girls team has traditionally been better than the boys, Addi said, and that adds some extra incentive to her racing. "They push me a lot because I'm expected to do good since our team is pretty good," she said.

And unlike Alex, Addi has her sights set on overtaking a particular pair of runners.

"There are these two twins from MIB," she said. "I want to beat them so bad."

She's within about 10 and 20 seconds of doing just that, Stephanie said.

Zoey also has a benchmark competitor, a runner from Ely, and she's gaining ground.

"She's pretty good," Zoey said. "Two meets before, she was like 40 seconds ahead of me, and then the one that we just ran in Ely I was only 20 seconds behind her."

But Zoey also confessed that there's a thought in her mind when she's on the race course that's not particularly common.

"I'm like, 'I just want this to be over,'" she laughed. "I don't really know why."

Eric and Stephanie try to make it to as many of the meets as possible, and one of the things they enjoy most about the sport outside of watching their kids run is the camaraderie among competitors and spectators who realize that whether a kid finishes first or last, they're all out there giving their maximum effort.

"The cool thing about cross country is that it's such a positive sport," Eric said. "Even though you're competing against those people, they respect each other because this is not an easy sport."

Another difference among the three comes in the off-season. Addi and Zoey take some

time off from running, but Alex is going year-round. That includes the winter.

"He'll go out on the lake and make snowmobile tracks for miles and miles," Stephanie said. "He would run along the shoreline and come home with pockets full of lures that he would find in the trees and along the shore of Pelican Lake."

In the spring, all three will likely run track, although Alex split his time last spring between running and baseball. There may come a time when he has to choose one over the other, but for now the plan is to continue to do both.

However, all three were emphatic that they prefer running cross country, even Zoey, who hasn't yet run for the track team.

"I've never run track, but I'd pick cross country because I'd just get bored of running the same thing over and over," she said.

And when it comes to courses, each Burkhardt has their own favorite circuit, for different reasons. Alex likes running through the woods at Grand Marais. Addi prefers the Eagle Ridge golf course layout at Coleraine. And Zoey? She couldn't remember the name of the course (it was Eagle Ridge, too), and it wasn't the course but the prize for the winning teams that made it her favorite.

"The one where they give you cake," she said.

There's no telling if there's a future state championship waiting for one of the Burkhardt kids someday, and although it would be a great achievement, it seems like it really doesn't matter. If there's one thing the siblings have in common, being "the best" overall appears to be not as important as simply being the best they can be at a sport they all love.

## Obituaries and Death Notices



### Josh S. Polich

Josh Steven Polich, 41, of Cook, departed this earthly life on Saturday, Oct. 9, 2021. A Celebration of Life will be held outdoors at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 17 at Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry - Camp Vermilion, 2555 Vermilion Camp Rd. in Cook. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

Josh's journey in life began on Dec. 5, 1979, where he was born in Virginia. Josh grew up in the Cook area where his love for the great outdoors began at a young age. His summers were spent fishing, boating and working on Lake Vermilion. Later in his youth he developed a fondness for the arts, especially music.

In 1998, Josh graduated from Cook High School. He went on to receive a degree in graphic arts from Eveleth Technical College, and then furthered his education at The University of Wisconsin-Stout for graphic design.

Josh fell in love with the Eau Claire area which he called home for many years and... became an avid Packers' fan. While working in the graphic arts industry he became passionate for the culinary arts as a sous-chef.

Following his dreams, Josh began to travel. He spent his later years living, working and enjoying

the great outdoors of California and Hawaii, before returning to his hometown of Cook.

Josh's gentle spirit and kind smile will sadly be missed as he starts his ultimate adventure.

Josh is survived by his parents, Steven and Lynn Polich; brother, Zachary (Paige) Polich; grandmother, Hope Simpson; aunts, Susan Polich (Steven) and Loann Trygg; uncles, Brad (Connie) Simpson and Troy (Dawn) Simpson; cousins, Scott Trygg (Michelle), Tracy (Greg) LaPatka, Bo (Carrisa) Simpson, Brenna Simpson and Brynn Simpson; and numerous other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Nickolas and Helen Polich; and grandfather, Robert Simpson.



### H. Roger Lamppa

Herman Roger Lamppa, 88, of Virginia, passed away on Wednesday, Sept. 22, 2021, at Waterview Pines in Virginia. Funeral services were held on Wednesday, Sept. 29 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tower with a reception following. Pastor Liz Cheney officiated. Arrangements were with Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

Roger was born on Wednesday, Nov. 16, 1932, in Waasa Township

to parents Richard Victor Lamppa and Rose Marie (Rapinoja) Lamppa. He grew up in Embarrass and graduated from Embarrass High School in 1950. On March 7, 1953, he married Joan Carlson of Soudan in Duluth, and together they raised six children.

Roger graduated from Eveleth Junior College with an Associate of Science Degree. At the University of Minnesota-Duluth, he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education with degrees in history, social studies and physical education. He furthered his education with a Master's Degree in Counseling from Bemidji State, a Specialist Degree in Educational Administration from St. Cloud State, and a Family Counseling Certificate from the Alfred Adler Institute. He did additional graduate studies in history and social studies at Penn State and UMD, as well as high school counseling at the University of North Dakota and Denver.

After graduating from UMD, Roger taught history and social studies and coached at Argyle and Beulah High Schools in North Dakota, and later at Blackduck High School in Minnesota. (The Senior Class of 1965 dedicated its yearbook, The Black Quill, to him.) From 1967-1990, he was High School Counselor in Benson, where he also taught the Lions Club Quest Drug program.

Roger was a life member of the Minnesota School Counselor Association, and also a member of the National Education Association, Benson Lions Club, Tower-Soudan Lions Club (past president), and Eagles Nest Lake Association.

Roger was interested in politics, considered himself a C-Span junkie, and watched Morning Joe

regularly. He also enjoyed traveling across America and to Finland, as well as visiting many Presidential Libraries and numerous Civil War battle sites.

Growing up, Roger played football, basketball and baseball for Embarrass High School, and won several all-star honors. He also boxed and was a big fan of Joe Louis and Rocky Marciano. In addition, Roger loved country western music, particularly Hank Williams and Johnny Cash. He spent and enjoyed his retirement years at the family lake home on Eagles Nest Lake, relaxing, chopping wood, reading, and maintaining "heaven on earth".

Roger is survived by his wife, Joan; their six children, Robin (Barb) Lamppa of Fargo, Jee-na Hughes of Glenwood, Judy Janke of Blaine, Jody Lowther (Bill) of Golden, Colo., Ryan Lamppa of Santa Barbara, Calif., and Jaclynn (Dale) West of Minneapolis; brother, Fred (Karen) Lamppa of Britt; nine grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sisters, Flora Koivisto and Kathleen Janekselä; brothers, Raymond, Bernhard, Francis and Herbert Lamppa; and sons-in-law, Barry Janke and Daniel Hughes.

### Sharon J. Ridlon

Sharon Jean Kujala Ridlon, 68, originally of Alango, passed away with her loving husband by her side on Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021. A celebration of life will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 17 at the Balkan Community Center, north of Chisholm.

She is survived by her loving husband of 43 years, Roy; son, Mike (Shelby); daughter, Mi-

chelle (Jim); brother, Steve of Chisholm; sister, Kathy Arola of Cook; numerous nieces and nephews; and special niece, Jeanie Pessenda of Chisholm.

### Ray E. Ruoho

Ray E. Ruoho, 79, originally of Littlefork, passed away on Monday, Oct. 4, 2021, in Duluth. A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 23 at the Calvary Lutheran Church in Orr with Brita Hammit officiating. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Lewy Body Dementia Association (LBDA) in memory of Ray Ruoho at 912 Killian Hill Road SW, Suite 205, Lilburn, GA 30047. Arrangements are by Dougherty Funeral Home of Duluth.

He is survived by his wife, Beatrice Swieringa Ruoho of Duluth; children, Brita Hammit (Dallas) of Phoenix, Ariz., Paula Zahniser (Stephen) of Boise, Idaho, and Clinton (Mats Hansen) of Duluth; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and many loved nieces and nephews. Although his Lewy Body Dementia became severe, he was able to stay at home because of the loving care given by his niece, Char Majeski, for more than the last year of his life.

### Dana H. Miller

Dana H. Miller, 77, of Pengilly, formerly of Tower, died on Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021, at Sanford Health Neilson Place in Bemidji. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 15 at Dougherty Funeral Home of Hibbing with Mike Adams officiating. Visitation will be one hour prior to the memorial service at the funeral home. Private interment will be in the Nashwauk Cemetery in Nashwauk. Memorials

are preferred to your local DAV organization or the National DAV. Arrangements are with Dougherty Funeral Home of Hibbing.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Marcia Wilson Miller of Pengilly; sons, Nathan (Andrea) Miller of Highlands Ranch, Colo., and Darin (Katie) Miller of Lino Lakes; sister-in-law, Patty (Jim) Helin of Minneapolis; brother-in-law, Leo Jeffrey (Gloria) Wilson of Philippines/Guam; four grandchildren; two nieces and two nephews.

### Ira A. Brown

Ira A. Brown, 85, of Tower, died on Monday, Oct. 4, 2021, at Ely Bloomenson Hospital in Ely with family at his side. A family-directed memorial service was held at the Lake Vermillion Wellness Center on the Bois Forte Vermilion Reservation on Friday, Oct. 8. Inurnment will be at a later date in Oregon in the Willamette National Cemetery. Family services were provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his children, E. Maxine (Dennis) Park of Kennewick, Wash., Lavon D. (Donald) Nelson of Orem, Utah, Jeanine (Jorge) Montoya of Cherry Hill, N.J., L. Gaye (Louie) Rios of San Juan Capistrano, Calif., Timothy M. (Cindy Mettler) Brown of Canyon, Amy P. (Shane Kenney) Matterna of Portland, Ore., Shauna L. (Mathew) Peters of Shaw, Ore., and Paul A. Brown of Portland, Ore.; sister, Helen E. Bryant of Port Orchard, Wash.; brother, F. George (Ellen) Brown of Port Orchard, Wash.; 22 grandchildren; 48 great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family members and friends.





# Outdoors

Our lives in the Northwoods

## DROUGHT

### Fall returns to more typical rains, unusual warmth

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Recent rains have helped ease drought conditions somewhat across the region, although water levels still remain very low in most cases. That’s because the rain that began to fall more regularly beginning in September hasn’t been enough to recover from months of precipitation deficits over the late spring and summer.

While rainfall has been running about average since Sept. 1 across

much of the region, most reporting stations are still running well below normal levels of precipitation since the first of the year.

The longstanding Vermilion Community College weather station in Ely, for example, has reported less than 16 inches of total precipitation so far this year. That’s ten inches below the 30-year average through the middle of October. Other area stations have experienced significant deficits as well. Both Babbitt’s and Kabetogama’s official weather stations are running about 7.5 inches

**Right: Water is again flowing through the middle spillway on the Pike River dam, a sign that water levels behind the dam have risen due to recent rains.**

photo by M. Helmberger

below normal for the year-to-date. Embarrass is running 6.25 inches below normal. Other area stations have fared better, even though they remain below normal. Tower, for example, is running four inches below average, while Orr is running about

See WEATHER, pg. 5B



## CWD

### DNR puts temporary ban on farmed deer transport

REGIONAL — The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has issued an emergency rule that temporarily prohibits the importation and transport of farmed white-tailed deer into and within Minnesota.

The emergency action took effect Oct. 11 and aims to reduce further spread of chronic wasting disease, or CWD, to protect the health of Minnesota’s wild deer population. The temporary ban will give DNR officials the opportunity to determine the previous movements of deer known to have been exposed, or potentially exposed to CWD.

The DNR will work along with the Board of Animal Health, with which it shares concurrent authority to regulate farmed white-tailed deer. The DNR asks for the full support and cooperation of the farmed deer community.

The DNR is taking this action in response to the discovery that a CWD-positive farm in Wisconsin shipped 387 farmed white-tailed deer to farms in seven states, including Minnesota. Three farms in Minnesota ultimately received a total of five deer from the infected farm.

“This disease poses a clear, immediate and serious threat to Minnesota’s wild deer, and these actions reflect what’s at stake,” said DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen. “We are committed to doing everything we can to reduce the continued risk of CWD transmission in Minnesota, including from farmed deer to Minnesota’s wild whitetails.”

This temporary movement ban will provide time to track the movement of deer from the infected farm and understand the potential risk to other herds. The epidemiological investigations will show connections among known CWD-exposed herds, identify if there were additional exposed herds, and prevent additional transfer from potentially exposed herds. The rule provides exemptions for deer being transported to slaughter and those being transported on a direct route through the state.

As previously announced, the DNR learned on Sept. 27, 2021, that three Minnesota farms ultimately had received a total of five white-tailed deer

See CWD, pg. 5B



## SURVIVAL

### Out of sight, out of mind

Animals use camouflage to catch prey, stay out of harm’s way

While most of us who have spent time in the woods here in the North Country, have experienced the explosive and sometimes startling flush of a ruffed grouse, we’ve probably walked past many others that relied instead on their remarkable camouflage to avoid our detection.

Indeed, a ruffed grouse that remains perfectly still can be almost impossible to spot, particularly against the current backdrop of freshly fallen leaves in our area forests. In my experience, it’s usually the ones that give themselves away, either through a shortrun or a cluck or two, that make the dinner plate. I’m sure over the years, I’ve walked past many more that held tight in position, protected only by their own natural camo.

While ruffed grouse make an excellent example of natural camouflage, they are hardly alone in our area. Many species, from insects to amphibians, from birds to mammals, rely all the time on camouflage to survive in the wild, whether it’s to avoid predators, or to hide from potential prey. In nature, survival is the name of the game,

**Above: A ruffed grouse blends in nearly perfectly with freshly fallen leaves.**

**Right: Winter white fur helps to protect this short-tailed weasel from larger predators.**

**Lower right: A snowshoe hare transitions from winter white to summer brown, matching nearly perfectly with an early spring forest background.**

photos by M. Helmberger

and any advantage that a creature can achieve makes it more likely they’ll live to pass on their genes to the next generation.

Clearly, camouflage is not an adaptation that applies to every species. When I watch the blue jays or a male pine or evening grosbeak, it’s pretty obvious they aren’t relying on camouflage for survival. For many birds, males in particular, bright colors are a way of attracting a mate, so it’s a tradeoff between the advantage that camo might provide to a male bird and his prospects for mating.

It’s easy to understand why ruffed grouse rely on camo. Let’s face it... they’re

See CAMO, pg. 5B



MARSHALL HELMBERGER





# LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST from NOAA weather

Friday				Saturday				Sunday				Monday				Tuesday			
<b>47 36</b>				<b>52 37</b>				<b>55 35</b>				<b>60 39</b>				<b>53 37</b>			
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.
10/04	61	43	0.01	10/04	62	43	0.06	10/04	65	46	0.01	10/04	72	46	0.47	10/04	63	42	0.05
10/05	69	39	0.01	10/05	65	37	0.00	10/05	67	46	0.00	10/05	75	48	0.00	10/05	68	38	0.00
10/06	73	38	0.01	10/06	70	36	0.00	10/06	71	46	0.00	10/06	72	52	0.00	10/06	72	38	0.00
10/07	67	47	0.01	10/07	69	47	0.00	10/07	68	53	0.00	10/07	73	54	0.00	10/07	67	47	0.00
10/08	73	49	0.00	10/08	72	52	0.00	10/08	71	52	0.00	10/08	72	55	0.00	10/08	73	48	0.00
10/09	64	55	0.14	10/09	63	53	0.23	10/09	66	57	0.17	10/09	63	57	0.00	10/09	68	53	0.24
10/10	66	53	0.31	10/10	66	53	0.23	10/10	61	56	0.34	10/10	64	52	0.00	10/10	64	55	0.34
Total 15.17				YTD Total 18.35				YTD Total 17.04				YTD Total 17.66				YTD Total 20.68			

## HUNTING

### Don't forget: Early season youth deer hunt starts Thursday

REGIONAL — Minnesota's youth deer season will continue statewide for its third year, starting Thursday, Oct. 21, through Sunday, Oct. 24. The season coincides with statewide teacher workshops, so many Minnesota students don't have school during the youth season.

To participate, youth must be 10-17 years old and have a deer license. Participant numbers are not limited and there is no special permit, so parents should obtain a regular deer hunting license for the youth who will be hunting.

An adult parent, guardian, or mentor must accompany youth ages 10-13. All youth hunters and mentors must follow blaze orange/pink clothing requirements. Adults



may not hunt, unless they are in an area open during the early antlerless season and have the corresponding license. Complete youth season

details are available on the DNR youth deer hunting page.

### CAMO...Continued from page 4B

the best eating wild game out there, and we humans aren't the only ones that have figured that out. Grouse seem to recognize they're a tasty dish, which is where their camo comes into play.

Anyone who has hunted grouse knows that they often have a habit of freezing in place. When they're in the open, like along the edge of a gravel road, it can make them an easy target for a road hunter, which is one reason we tend to think of them as stupid. Situationally unaware might be a better term for it in that case, because in most circumstances grouse are able to rely on camo to avoid detection. We don't know how often freezing in place works because the successful birds are ones we don't see. But the fact that this tactic continues to be deployed by grouse, points to its success. If it didn't improve their survival, evolution would have drubbed those

birds out of the gene pool by now.

A number of mammals in our area rely on camouflage as well, and change their coats seasonally to be more successful. The snowshoe hare, also known as the varying hare, is a good example. It's brownish-gray in summer helps it blend in on the forest floor, while its winter white allows it to hide even more effectively. Just like grouse, they typically freeze to avoid detection.

Some smaller predators, like weasels, also change their coats, mostly to protect themselves from larger predators. Here in the North Country, most of these mammals will be sporting their winter white by early-to-mid November. Our exceptionally mild fall likely won't affect the timing of their color change, which is dictated by day length rather than temperature.

There has been concern that climate change is affecting the

timing of major seasonal changes, such as the coming of long-term snow cover, which could leave these color-changing species exposed when the forest remains brown well into November or even December. That's certainly a concern for individuals, but there is likely enough variability within the population to adapt over time. Those animals with genes that call for an early switch to white may be finding themselves at an increasing survival disadvantage, which is likely to reduce their abundance within the overall population, leading to more late-changing individuals. With short-lived, rapidly reproducing species, like hares, this change can probably happen relatively quickly.

A combination of factors, including increased competition from more southerly species, is more likely to be responsible for a decline in some of our boreal forest denizens.



Area aspen were at peak color this week, as seen from an overlook by the Soudan Mine.

photo by M. Helmberger

### CWD...Continued from page 4B

from the infected Wisconsin farm. Two of those deer went to farms that no longer are in business, and the two animals were subsequently moved back to farms in Wisconsin.

The other three deer were moved to a farm in Minnesota that's currently

active. Two of those deer were killed and tested; they did not test positive for CWD. The third deer is still alive and the owner is awaiting payment prior to making the animal available for testing. The farm where this animal lives is currently under quarantine.

### WEATHER...Continued from page 4B

3.5 inches behind for the year so far.

According to the most recent map from the U.S. Drought Monitor, published Oct. 7, much of eastern St. Louis County and all of northern Lake County were still rated as extreme drought, while in the rest of the region, the drought is classified as severe. The latest weekly update to the map will be issued Thursday morning, after the *Timberjay's* weekly presstime.

While the recent rains have restored at least limited flow to area streams, most rivers in the region remain below their annual Q90, which means flows are running below, in some cases well below, the tenth percentile.

The Vermilion River, which is fed primarily from outflow from Lake Vermilion, is running at just 24 cubic feet per second, or cfs. That's up from an astonishing 8 cfs during the peak of the drought in late August, but still well below the river's Q90 of 129 cfs. The river's normal flow for this time of year is about 450 cfs.

The Basswood River was running at 104 cfs as of Monday, well below its October average of approximately 800 cfs.

The Little Fork River is the only stream in the region currently running above its Q90. Thanks to recent rains across its watershed, the Little Fork is running at 155 cfs. That's still well below typical flow for this time of year, but it's above the river's Q90.

### Exceptional warmth

The return of more typical precipitation is not the only trend the area has experienced this fall. The past several weeks have also seen a return to temperature conditions more typical of the second half of August than fall here in the North Country. Since Sept. 1, most area weather stations are running about ten degrees above average, and since Oct. 1, most stations are running an astonishing 13-15 degrees above average.

# CLEAN.DRAIN.DRY.



**CLEAN**

- ✓ Boats, trailers, and gear
- ✓ Remove all weeds, mud, and hitchhiking contaminants from axles, wheels, undercarriage, motor, prop, nets, and gear before leaving boat landing



**DRAIN**

- ✓ Water from boat, bilge, motor, and live well
- ✓ Remove drain plug and open all water draining devices
- ✓ Trash unused bait



**DRY**

- ✓ Everything at least five days before going to other waters
- ✓ (Or) Decontaminate with high pressure water (120°F or warmer)

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# EMPLOYMENT

## Now Hiring Crew Members

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## Steger Mukluks is Hiring!

- Positions are available in Sales and Production
- Full-Time, Part-Time, Seasonal, and Year-Round positions available
- Competitive Wages and Benefits

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Email [officeassist@mukluks.com](mailto:officeassist@mukluks.com) or call 365-6634 to join the team! <sup>th</sup>



## OPEN POSITIONS

10 Fifth Street SE Cook, MN 55723

### Admissions

FT Patient Registrar

### Hospital/ER

PT Registered Nurse (Wage starting at \$34.06, \$4,000 Sign-On Bonus)

### Radiology

FT Radiologic Technologist

### Care Center

FT Director of Nursing (Sign-on bonus. Competitive Wage)  
 FT & PT Nursing Assistant (Wage starting at \$16.36/hr - \$1,500 Sign-On Bonus)  
 PT RN or LPN (\$4,000 Sign-On Bonus)

### Dietary

PT Dietary Aide/Cook

### Environmental Services

FT Housekeeper

Casual Laundry Aide

Casual Housekeeping & Laundry

### Activities

PT & Casual Activities Assistant

### TO APPLY:

[www.cookhospital.org/join-our-team/](http://www.cookhospital.org/join-our-team/)

More Info? Contact Human Resources

**218-666-6220**

[humanresources@cookhospital.org](mailto:humanresources@cookhospital.org)

The Cook Hospital & Care Center offers competitive pay and benefits including PERA retirement, Health and Dental coverage, Life and LTD.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Affirmative Action Employer

## Network Director Wanted

Ely Behavioral Health Network, a program of WBD, a nonprofit mental health and wellness nonprofit organization in Ely MN is looking for a full time program director. See our website for more information, [www.wellbeingdevelopment.org](http://www.wellbeingdevelopment.org). 10/15



## Equipment Operator Junior

Apply by 10/19/21

## Heavy Equipment Mechanic

Apply by 10/25/21

## Planner/Senior Planner

Apply by 10/25/21

[www.stlouiscountymn.gov](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov) or call 218-726-2422

Equal Opportunity and Veteran-Friendly Employer 10/15

## Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)

### Full Time Transportation Associate \$19.48- \$20.09/ hr

\*Salary ranges are increasing with contract approval

MnDOT is seeking a full-time, permanent, benefit-eligible Transportation Associate (TA) located at the Ely Truck Station. This position will learn to perform road surface maintenance and snow and ice control activities to keep the roadways and roadsides safe, clear and in good repair. Must have a good driving record. Requires minimum of Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL) PERMIT with no air brake restriction at the time of hire. This position will be trained for class A CDL. Must be able to report to work within one hour of being called. For full job details and to apply online, go to <https://mn.gov/mmb/careers/>. Job ID is 48920. Applications accepted online through October 22, 2021.

We are actively hiring multiple positions, check out our website to learn more!

MnDOT is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer with a strong commitment to workforce diversity. 10/15



## Social Studies Teacher .5 FTE

Vermilion Country School in Tower, MN is seeking to hire a .5 FTE Social Studies Teacher for the 2021-2022 school year. Position open until filled.

For more information, please email [jsummit@vermilioncountry.org](mailto:jsummit@vermilioncountry.org) or call Jodi Summit at 218-753-2950

## PUBLIC NOTICES



## City of Tower SEEKING APPLICANTS Appointed Councilor / Mayor

See [www.cityoftower.com/positions-available](http://www.cityoftower.com/positions-available) for job description.

Applications available at City Hall. Deadline Monday, November 1, 2021

Published in the Timberjay, Oct. 15 & 22, 2021



## CITY OF TOWER OPENING

### Tower Economic Development Authority Board Member

Should be a resident or business owner in Tower. Send or email a letter of interest to: TEDA, c/o City of Tower, PO Box 576, Tower, MN 55790 or email [clerk.treasurer@cityoftower.com](mailto:clerk.treasurer@cityoftower.com)

Published in the Timberjay, October 15, 2021

## POSITION OPENING Ely Public Schools Paraprofessional (3 positions)

Ely Public Schools is accepting applications for Paraprofessionals for the 2021-2022 school year; background check required.

### Qualifications include:

- Associate's Degree/equivalent or complete a Para Pro exam with a passing score ([www.ets.org/parapro](http://www.ets.org/parapro))
- Preferred experience working with school age children
- Evidence of ability to work cooperatively and communicate effectively in a collaborative setting.
- Background check required.

### Benefits include:

- Paid sick leave, personal days and vacation
- Health and life insurance
- Flexible spending account
- PERA retirement

Application available at: [www.ely.k12.mn.us](http://www.ely.k12.mn.us)

A complete application must include the following:

- District Application
- Resume
- College Transcripts
- 2 letters of recommendation

Return materials to: Ely Public Schools, Attn: Superintendent, 600 E. Harvey St., Ely, MN 55731 or email [mwognum@ely.k12.mn.us](mailto:mwognum@ely.k12.mn.us)

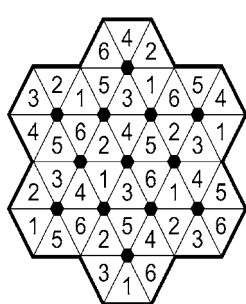
Starting Rate of Pay: \$16.90/hour

Hours: 6.5 hours/day

Deadline to apply: October 27, 2021; open until filled.

Published in the Timberjay, Oct. 15 & 22, 2021

## SNOWFLAKES solution



## Get Results!



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## FUNERAL SERVICES

### Range Funeral Home



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Hibbing 263-3276

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### Answers

G	R	R	A	G	A	R	R	I	F	T	S	S	A	G	E	S	T					
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## Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

## DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging  
 ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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

## AUTOMOTIVE

**Langevin Auto & Truck Repair**  
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## HAIR CARE

DREAMWEAVER SALON & DAY SPA - Open Monday-Friday 8:30 - 6:30. 218-666-5594. tfn

## HOSPICE

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

## SUPPORT GROUPS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS - East Range meetings and information, call 218-749-3387 or www.district8online.org.

AA FRIDAYS - 7 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 262 E Harvey St., Ely. Meets in the basement.

## Try out the Timberjay classifieds

Line classifieds cost 30¢/word, \$6.00 minimum. Classified ads can be run a second time at half price (private parties only). We now accept payment by Visa, Mastercard, AmEx, and Discover. Call your ad in to 218-753-2950. Display (boxed) classifieds are billed by the "inch"- please call for prices and information on discounts. Call Today - 218-753-2950 or 218-365-3114

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## HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED - COOK NEEDED - full-time or part-time at MelGeorge's on Elephant Lake. WEEKEND CABIN CLEANERS also needed. Call 218-374-3621. tfn

AGE 55+ WORKERS NEEDED for light custodial work at DNR Orr Office. Contact Green View at 651-639-1913. 10/22v

## MARINE



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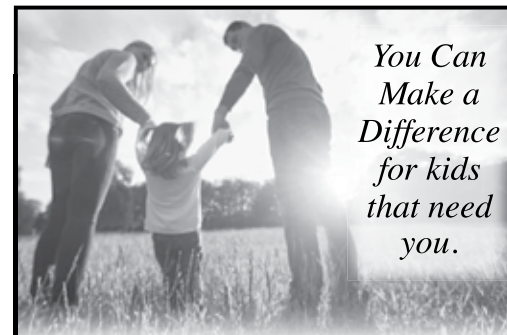


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## Super Crossword

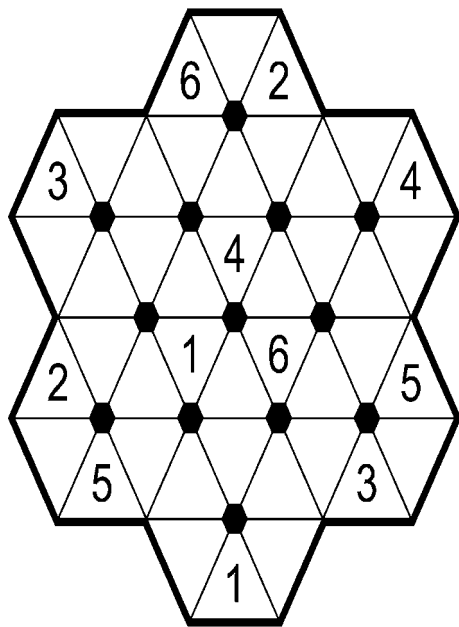
## PITIFUL PANTRY PROBLEM

- ACROSS**
- 1 Spot's threat
  - 4 Bacteria-growing gel
  - 8 Crevices
  - 13 Having the most wisdom
  - 19 Glasgow refusal
  - 20 "Space Ghost" cartoonist
  - 21 Actress Kemper of "The Office"
  - 22 Swollen and distended
  - 23 Central North Carolina city
  - 25 747, say
  - 26 Often-used expressions
  - 27 Start of a riddle
  - 30 "Three Times —" (1978 hit song)
  - 31 Hay unit
  - 32 Be in great anguish
  - 36 Trainee, e.g.
  - 37 Riddle, part 2
  - 42 Diplomat's skill
  - 44 Former NBAer
  - 45 Gets wrinkles out of
  - 46 See 71-Down
  - 49 1930s-'40s prez
  - 50 Church vestibule
  - 53 Classical intro?
  - 54 Riddle, part 3
  - 59 It may take the cake
  - 61 "— Sexy" (1992 #1 hit song)
  - 62 Clapton of rock
  - 63 Bernstein's "Candide," for one
  - 67 Early Oscar winner
  - 68 Riddle, part 4
  - 72 Fought (for)
  - 73 Look for a therapist, say
  - 75 Poi base
  - 76 River mouth deposit
  - 77 Go via boat
  - 78 Riddle, part 5
  - 82 "— culpa!"
  - 85 How a winding path proceeds
  - 87 Part of RBI or ERA
  - 88 Dir. from Ariz. to Ky.
  - 89 Dazzling success
  - 91 Despot Amin
  - 92 Gives a hand
  - 96 End of the riddle
  - 100 "Woe is me!"
  - 104 "The Mummies' Dance" singer
  - 105 No longer relevant
  - 106 Classic arcade name
  - 107 Riddle's answer
  - 113 All-terrain military vehicle
  - 116 Clipped, as a sheep
  - 117 Many a magic trick
  - 118 Give support
  - 119 Sizable
  - 120 Sulky state
  - 121 Malt product
  - 122 Some online greetings
  - 123 Possessed
  - 124 Gi's "lullaby"
  - 125 Longest river of Scotland
  - 6 Razor option
  - 7 Certain parallelogram
  - 8 Drive back
  - 9 "Maybe"
  - 10 Shortcoming
  - 11 Ex-Yankee
  - 12 Appear
  - 13 Miserly
  - 14 Sound engineer's console
  - 15 Smiling one
  - 16 Swelled head
  - 17 Resident of a gaming "City"
  - 18 NFL scores
  - 24 "It's the — era"
  - 28 Rowboat pair
  - 29 Satisfied sigh
  - 33 Victor's gloat
  - 34 "Titanic" actor
  - 35 Petro-Canada rival
  - 37 Time — half
  - 38 Square type
  - 39 Meg of "I.Q."
  - 40 Three feet
  - 41 "Poppycock!"
  - 43 "Should that be true ..."
  - 46 Brown, Penn and Harvard
  - 47 "The Silence of the Lambs" director
  - 48 Shaw of swing
  - 50 "Valiant attempt!"
  - 51 Aspiration
  - 52 Just-prior periods
  - 55 Egg middles
  - 56 Work fill-in
  - 57 Goya's gold
  - 58 Cedar cousin
  - 60 "Fat chance!"
  - 63 — about (close to)
  - 64 Mark in "piñata"
  - 65 "Grand" Rockies peak
  - 66 Wise saying
  - 68 Herr's "no"
  - 69 Pot for arroz con pollo
  - 70 "Poppycock!"
  - 71 With 46-Across, brand of frozen fries
  - 74 Is in first place
  - 76 "— be shy"
  - 78 Bona — (real)
  - 79 Lena of "Havana"
  - 80 Grand — (auto race)
  - 81 Drive out
  - 82 Whine like a baby
  - 83 Yodeling comeback
  - 84 Banned orchard spray
  - 86 Currency of Laos
  - 90 Dined at someone else's place
  - 92 Embellished
  - 93 Haughty sort
  - 94 Band's lineup of gig songs
  - 95 Fills up
  - 97 "Gas Food Lodging" director
  - 98 Tennis player
  - 99 Appear
  - 101 Lasso
  - 102 Colorful ring of anatomy
  - 103 Writer Sheldon
  - 106 Lies against
  - 108 Port of Norway
  - 109 Turn to liquid
  - 110 Trumpet, e.g.
  - 111 Forearm part
  - 112 Radar image
  - 113 Color tone
  - 114 Scanned market ID
  - 115 Deg. for many an exec

## 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

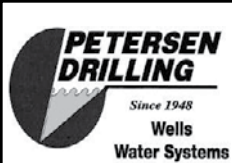
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## Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

Find It Here



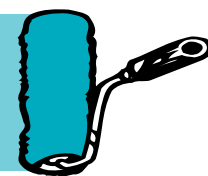
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• WELLS  
• HYDRO-FRACKING

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