

2022

Happy New Year!

Happy New Year

We wish all of our readers a safe and happy New Year. No paper will be published on Jan. 7. Our office will reopen on Monday, Jan. 10.

The TIMBERJAY



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989

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CRANE LAKE

New concerns raised over sewer plant

Critics cite pollution violations, lack of transparency

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

CRANE LAKE — Over the past two decades the Crane Lake Water and Sewer District (CLWSD) has spent millions of taxpayer dollars to build and

operate their, at times, controversial wastewater treatment facility, all in the name of cleaner water.

They've faced criticism from local residents concerned about high monthly rates and even bigger tax assessments. Longtime

sewer district board chair Bob Scott has been called "a dictator," and worse, by some of those unhappy residents. Experts from the University of Minnesota, who were initially hired to

See...SEWER pg. 9



A scene from Crane Lake's Gold Coast highlights the community's high traffic during the summer that has been cited as one reason for pollution violations at the wastewater treatment facility. Timberjay file photo

ONE MAN'S TRASH ...

Archie's menagerie



Making it fun to go to the dump

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

REGIONAL — Anybody who has ever been out to the St. Louis County Solid Waste Transfer Station on Hwy. 21 between Ely and Babbitt has likely met Duane "Archie" Archibald. Archie has worked for the county for about 23 years, and 21 of those years of service have been at the Northwoods location.

One of Archie's biggest fans recently told the *Timberjay* a real "Grinch" story involving Archie and his menagerie of discarded items collected from the dump's customers for the wildlife-feeding sanctuary

See...JUNK pg. 12



Duane "Archie" Archibald maintains what he refers to as a "menagerie" of unwanted items left at the St. Louis County Solid Waste Transfer Station on Highway 21 south of Ely. It seems that some customers have been known to help themselves to the collection of garden art, bird feeders and other decorative items he has collected and displayed over the years. He sure would like them back. photos by K. Vandervort

ENERGY

Lake Country: Price of power to rise in 2022

Hike needed to bridge \$5.6 million shortfall

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — The price of power is heading higher for the customers of Lake Country Power, beginning in April. The electric cooperative's board of directors voted last week to approve higher rates for general service customers in order to bridge a \$5.6 million revenue shortfall in their 2022 budget.

"We are keenly aware that any rate increase will have an impact on our members," says Tracy Peterson Wirtanen, Lake Country Power's chief financial officer. "As a cooperative, we make every effort to keep our member owners front of mind, especially when making difficult decisions."

A Lake Country Power press statement cites changing economic issues resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic that have pushed material costs over 30 percent higher and outside labor costs about 10 percent higher.

"In order to maintain our high level of providing safe and reliable electric service, we have no choice but to deal with rising inflation, which is affecting so many businesses including the power industry," said Mark Bakk, the cooperative's general manager. "We have successfully been able to keep rates flat for several years, but we are simply out of options."

Lake Country Power's increase comes just weeks after its power supplier, Great River Energy, announced that it would be lowering its wholesale cost of power to the electric cooperatives it serves in Minnesota. Great River indicated that its

See...POWER pg. 12

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Not all Ely Joint Powers members pleased with last-minute vote

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY — Sulfide mining was the top local issue on the agenda last week when the Community Economic Development Joint Powers

Another sulfide mining resolution draws criticism

Board convened with the Ely area's state legislators. The local Joint Powers board, made up of elected officials from the city

of Ely, city of Winton, Morse Township, Fall Lake Township, and the Ely School District, uses the annual event to discuss

various issues of individual and collective interest with county, state and federal officials.

Ely Mayor Roger

Skraba introduced a resolution in support of the proposed Twin Metals Minnesota copper nickel mining project. The res-

olution stated that Twin Metals expended more than \$500 million preparing an operating plan for an underground copper nickel mine in the Rainy River

See...ELY pg. 11



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Community notices

Ruby's Pantry food distribution
 COOK- The next Ruby's Pantry will be a drive-through food distribution at the old Cook School parking lot on Thursday, Jan. 13 from 4:30 - 6 p.m. Please give a \$20 cash donation at the door. Ruby's Pantry is sponsored by St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Alango.

Dream Quilters will meet Jan. 6
 TOWER-Vermilion Dream Quilters will meet Thursday, Jan. 6 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Martin's Catholic Church in Tower. Masks continue to be encouraged. Social distancing is available for those who prefer it. The program topic, the use of crayons in quilt designs, will be presented by Alberta Whitenack and Vickie Lange. Visitors are welcome.

Erie Mining history books for sale by Tower-Soudan Historical Society
 TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Historical Society has a book about the history of the Erie Mining Company, a beautiful, hard-cover, award-winning book. Purchase price is \$45. Contact Linda at 218-750-0193 to reserve your copy and arrange a pick-up.
 >This book has 352 full-color pages with photos, maps, charts, graphs, and vivid text.
 >It contains recollections of former employees, family members, and people linked with the Erie Mining Company.
 >It has a fold-out timeline of historical events and production statistics.
 >Book purchase includes internet access to over 150 oral interview transcripts, company newspaper articles, photos, organization charts, and more!

Juniper is looking for volunteers to conduct Live Well classes
 REGIONAL- Did you know that 80 percent of all adults ages 65 and older have at least one chronic health condition? If you or a loved one have ongoing health concerns such as chronic pain, diabetes, depression, cancer, or have recently fallen, Juniper can help. Through local community networks, Juniper is delivering workshops in communities throughout the state. Workshops are proven to help adults to manage chronic conditions, prevent falls, and live well.
 If you are interested in becoming a class leader, Juniper is looking for volunteers who will educate, motivate, and inspire. No experience? No worries! We provide training in the program that's right for you. Registration is now open for our January trainings. Space is limited, so sign up today.
 A Live Well with Chronic Conditions Online Leader Training will be held Jan. 18 - March 3, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-4 p.m.
 A Powerful Tools for Caregivers Online Leader Training will be held Jan. 31 - Feb. 4, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
 To learn more, call 218-969-5734 or email gmarsalla@yourjuniper.org.

LYRIC CENTER FOR THE ARTS Rich Mattson and Germaine Gemberling concert, Jan. 6



Rich Mattson and Germaine Gemberling will perform at the Lyric Center for the Arts in Virginia on Thursday, Jan. 6 at 7 p.m., as part of the Queen City First Thursday Art Crawl. Advanced tickets are required and available at lyriccenterforthearts.org. COVID-19 safety protocols will be in place for all attendees. submitted photo

VIRGINIA- The Lyric Center for the Arts in Virginia, an entity of the Laurentian Arts and Culture Alliance, is hosting popular music duo Rich Mattson and Germaine Gemberling at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 6 as part of the Queen City Art Crawl. Advanced tickets are required and available at lyriccenterforthearts.org. COVID-19 safety protocols will be in place for all attendees, and the concert

will be limited to 30 people. "We are very excited to be featuring Rich and Germaine as part of the First Thursday Art Crawl at the Lyric," said executive director Paul M. Gregersen. "They are treasured musicians based right here on the Range and their music resonates with just about everybody."
 The Art Crawl is a monthly event that features local artists, musicians, and

performers to celebrate the region's creative community and small businesses. It is held the first Thursday of each month from 4-7 p.m. and takes place on Chestnut Street in downtown Virginia. The events are family friendly. The Mattson and Gemberling concert will conclude the evening.
 Beer and wine will be available for purchase at the event.

"We anticipate 2022 to be a bounce-back year for the arts in our community after almost 24 months of the pandemic," Gregersen said. "This is an opportunity to enjoy a night out on the town, in the safest environment possible, to enjoy music, art, and community. Area artists and art lovers deserve this as we begin the new year."

HOLIDAY SAFETY

AAA offers tips to keep you safe from holiday hazards

Several hazards are possible during the hustle and bustle of the holiday season

REGIONAL- Travel around the holiday season is forecasted to rebound 13 percent from last year. Many Americans are ready to reunite with loved ones for the holidays. However, the year-end holidays can be a time filled with many potential hazards in and around the home.

"Since safety is at the heart of what we do at AAA, we want to share a few important reminders to keep everyone safe throughout the holiday season," said Meredith Mitts, spokesperson, AAA-The Auto Club Group. "The holidays can quickly turn tragic if you're not careful. Whether you're in the kitchen or behind the wheel, AAA urges you to be patient, avoid distractions and pay close attention to your surroundings."

Home fires
 Cooking is the leading cause of all residential building fires and injuries, with Thanksgiving being the worst day of the year followed closely behind by Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The number one cause of cooking fires is leaving the kitchen unattended - something that's easily avoided. A few key steps can keep you, your home, and your loved ones safe:
 >Have someone on cooking duty at all times. If you have to leave, turn off cooking equipment first.
 >Limit distractions by planning television time, video chats, chores, and other activities outside of meal preparation time.

>Smother grease fires with a metal lid or baking soda. Never use water. Make sure to turn off the heat first.
 >If a fire starts in the oven, turn off the heat and keep the oven door closed.
 >Everyone loves hanging out in the kitchen, which can lead to bumps, spills, and other injuries - especially when kids are involved. To minimize accidents and divert traffic, put snacks, games, and toys in another room.
 >If you are sleepy or have consumed too much alcohol, step away from cooking and designate a "driver" to take the lead.
 >Keep dish towels, oven mitts, paper products, and other flammable materials away from heat.
 >Have a fully functional fire extinguisher handy for emergencies.

Potential holiday fire hazards are not isolated to the kitchen. Holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees can greatly increase fire risk, if you're not careful. Between 2015-2019, U.S. fire departments responded to an average 160 home fires that started with Christmas trees per year and there were another 790 home structure fires per year that began with decorations. Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in almost half of home Christmas tree fires. Nearly one in five Christmas tree fires was started by decorative lights, and candles caused 45 percent of home decoration fires in December.

Knowing this, AAA recommends:
 >Inspect your holiday lights for frayed wires, broken bulbs or loose connections.
 >Proactively place your tree away from fireplaces, radiators, and other heat sources.
 >Remove anything flammable from the area around candles, and place them in jars, glasses, or on ceramic plates when possible to keep the flame more enclosed.
 >Double-check smoke detectors, ensuring batteries are fresh and the detector is functioning
 >Unplug and snuff lights, candles and fires before leaving the room or house for extended periods of time or going to bed for the night.

Theft
 Another common hazard that occurs throughout the holiday season is theft. Around this time of year theft can come in many forms, including home break-ins, packages stolen from porches, vehicle thefts and even vehicles being broken into. If valuables, such as shopping bags and gifts, are left in plain sight they can be attractive to smash-and-grab burglars.
 "When leaving your vehicle in a parking lot, make sure shopping bags and gifts are not visible through the car window," added Mitts. "Putting your bags in the trunk or another place where they are not visible can help prevent vehicle break-ins."

Traffic crashes
 Busy parking lots are another holiday hazard. It's important to be aware and focused while traveling through parking lots to help avoid collisions. Also, traffic on the roadways is more likely to increase during this time of year, whether it's running holiday errands or traveling on the highway to visit family and loved ones. AAA recommends limiting distractions when driving. This is especially important in heavy traffic or congested areas. Remember to check weather forecasts to be aware of any wintry weather that may occur.
 Here are a few additional tips to help you avoid distractions out on the roadways:
 >Put it away. Place your mobile device out of sight to prevent temptation.
 >Know where you're going. If using a navigation system, program the destination before driving.
 >Ask passengers for help. If riding with someone, seek their help to navigate, make a call or send a message.
 >Pull over. If you must call or text while on the road, pull off the road safely and stop first.
 >Be a good passenger. Speak out if the driver of your vehicle is distracted.
 >Activate Do Not Disturb. Setting up this feature on an iPhone or Android device will prevent calls from coming in while you're driving.

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VERMILION COUNTRY SCHOOL

Graduate returns as volunteer “artist-in-residence”

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER - An unplanned semester off from college has given Vermilion Country School graduate Jules Schmidt the chance to help a younger generation of charter school students learn about art, create art, and see what career possibilities an art education can give.

Schmidt is a sophomore at SUNY-Fredonia in upstate New York. She graduated from both VCS and Vermilion Community College in 2020, earning her AA degree through the post-secondary enrollment option.

“My classes at Fredonia remind me a lot of my time at VCS,” she said. “There are a lot of professors and other staff there to help the students with their projects.” Schmidt is majoring in animation illustration, with a minor in creative writing. She is currently looking into internship opportunities with larger animation companies.

Schmidt contracted COVID-19 at college last March, and had to take medical leave as she struggled with effects from “long COVID,” so she moved back to her home in Ely.

“Now I’ve recovered,” she said. “And I wanted to work.”

She is volunteering three days a week at VCS, introducing students to art theory and appreciation, helping build the students’ vocabulary and awareness of art techniques, as well as leading students on hands-on art projects. She is also writing curriculum for other teachers to use to continue the students’ art education once she is back in college this winter.

The week before Christmas she was teaching students how to critique a work of art, using one of her own not-quite-finished pieces. Step-by-step she set up the framework and vocabulary to talk about a piece of art, regardless of whether or not someone

likes the art itself.

Afterwards, she was guiding students who were working in small groups creating three-dimensional sculptures out of cardboard. Glue guns, duct tape, and cutters were all in use as students followed the plans they had each sketched out. Students’ projects included a small village, a three-dimensional cat tower, a doghouse, and a fish sculpture. Once the cardboard creations are finished, they will be either painted or covered with paper-mache.

“I’m really having fun,” she said. “I like the students. They respond so well to me, I think, because I am much younger than their other teachers.”



Schmidt’s mother, Karin Schmidt, is the language arts teacher at VCS, but also teaches music, art, and theater throughout the school year. Jules said she hears from her mother that the students do enjoy working with her.

“It is a little bit weird being back here,” she said. “But I really like watching the students work on their own projects.”

Jules will have spent a total of six weeks volunteering before she returns to her classes in New York in late January.

Jules said her art classes at VCC gave her the confidence she needed to pursue a degree in the creative arts. “I told my drawing teacher Chris Koivisto I was interested in doing hand-drawn animation and he told me I could do that.”



Above: Jules Schmidt (also at left) helps Brandi with her project, an intricate three-dimensional play tower for her cat.



Above: Anna and Ally show Jules their progress on their separate projects.

Right: Caleb Ramponi gets to work on his project. photos by J. Summit



own home.” Jules said her current college experience really does remind her of her time at the charter school. She will be back home in Ely this summer, working as a guide at Northern Tier High Adventure Camp.

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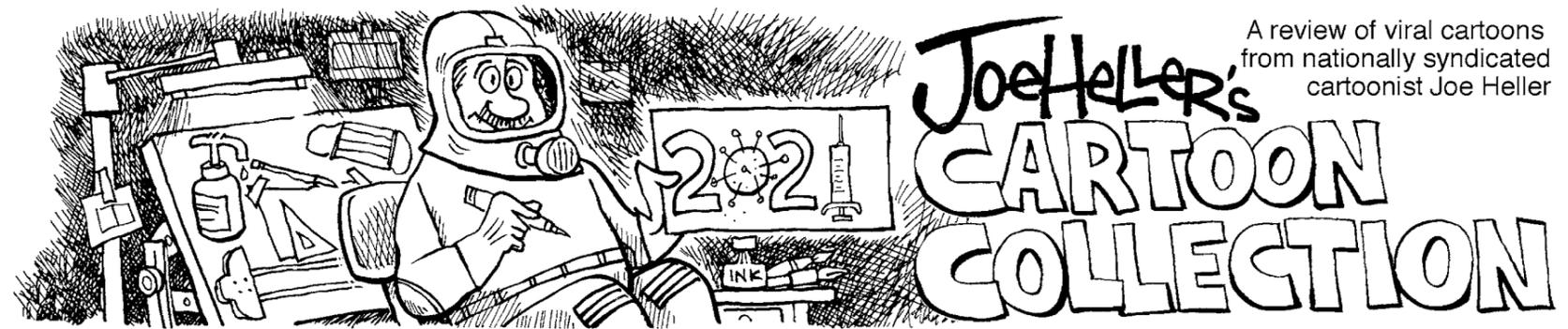
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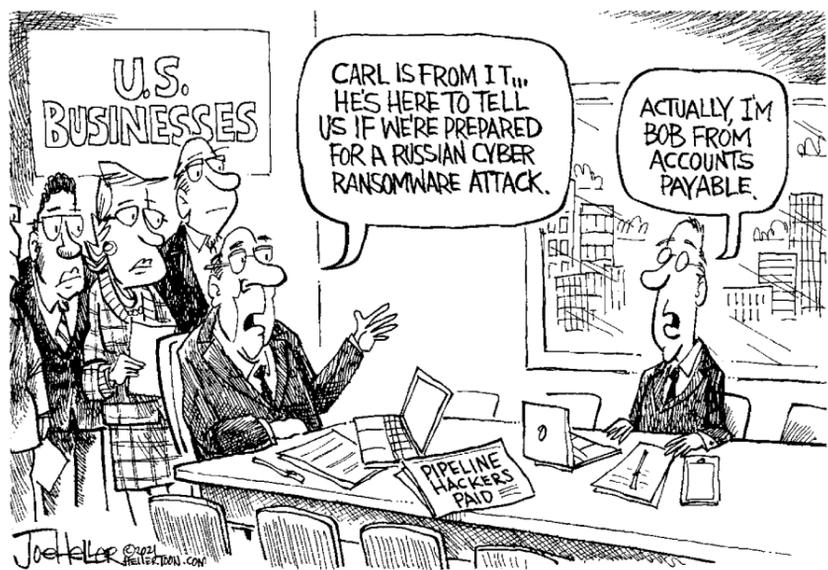
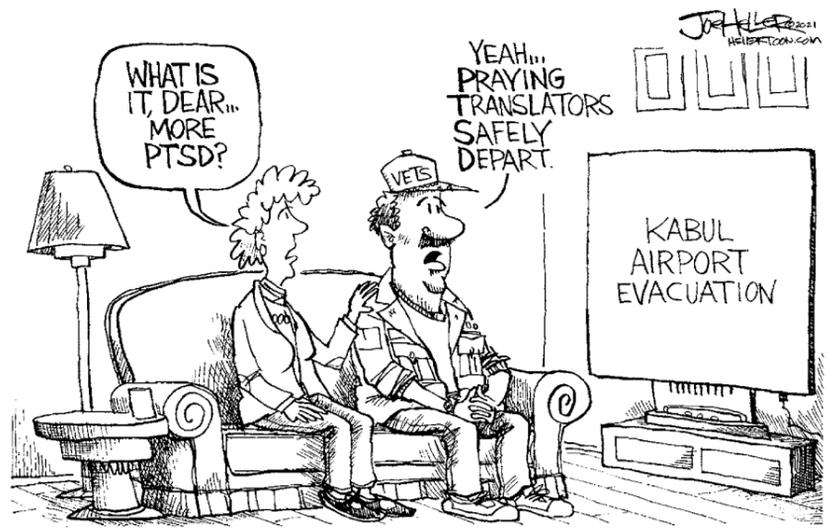
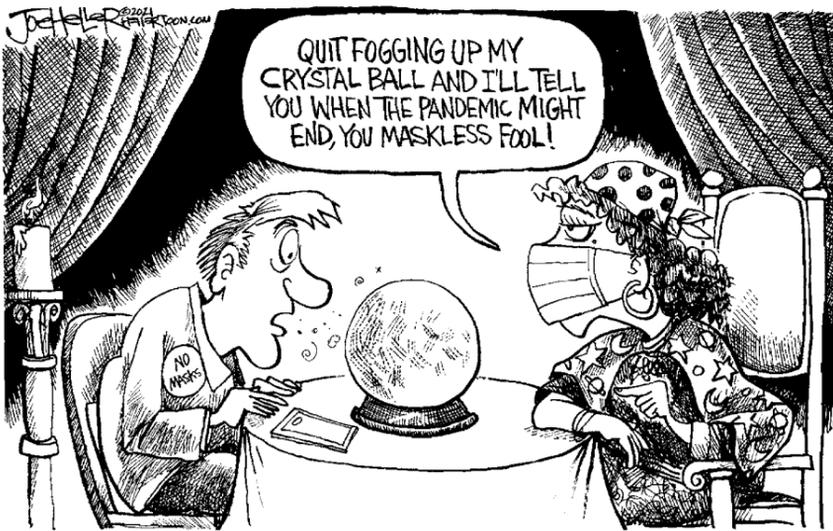
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A review of viral cartoons
from nationally syndicated
cartoonist Joe Heller



Resolve to move beyond the chaos of the day

As I was scrolling through my Facebook news feed the other day, I ran across a meme that seemed familiar, a picture of a row of porta-potties engulfed in flames with the caption "If 2021 was a scented candle"



DAVID COLBURN

A quick Google search ensued, and sure enough, those toasty toilets had already made the social media rounds last year, then captioned "If 2020 was a scented candle"

Welcome, it seems, to our new normal.

Common to both years has been the unrelenting coronavirus pandemic. More mind-boggling to me than the loss of more than 800,000 American lives, including more than 10,000 Minnesotans, is the callousness of how readily so many people accept and dismiss them.

With great fanfare

and solemnity, this past September we collectively marked the tragic deaths of nearly 3,000 people who died in the horrific terrorist attacks of 9/11, and rightly so. Yet more than 266

times that many have died since the start of the pandemic, more than 5,000 on a single day last February.

But because they haven't been gathered together by the hundred and thousands when they passed, there's been no coming together as a nation to mourn. Perhaps that's because there's no closure, no end in sight, and no malevolent enemy to blame. Surely, some people have tried to place the blame on China, and as a result many have lashed out with unjustified malice toward people closer at hand— hate crimes against

Asian Americans rose 76 percent in 2020 and continued apace in 2021.

Equally as tragic to me is how a virus that does not discriminate based on party affiliation has become politically weaponized. The pandemic in the U.S. has inflamed a nasty, bitter political divide the likes of which I don't think we've seen as a nation in my 60-plus years on the planet. To be sure, that divide had been growing for nearly three decades, but the current level of vitriol, particularly from many conservatives, is as bad if not worse than that of the fever-pitched witch hunts of the McCarthy era.

The government-dictated lockdowns and restrictions and mandates implemented to combat the pandemic provided fertile fuel for a firestorm of extremist rhetoric and actions that have pitted American against each other. For most of my life, Republicans and Democrats staked out their positions without acting as

if they were mortal enemies. That's no longer the case. Officials who have acted to protect public health have been hung or burned in effigy, and to those opposed to any restrictions, those who support them are un-American, anti-freedom, socialists, fascists, etc. They're the enemies of America and "true" American "patriots."

Of course, this is something that goes well beyond mere reactions to the pandemic. Some would blame Donald Trump, but I see him more as a dangerous and willing catalyst for extremism that had been building well before his first campaign for president.

Trump didn't create the discontent, but he embraced it, amplified it, gave voice to it at the highest level. He demonized his opponents as un-American, right down to a campaign survey where respondents were given the choice to identify as "American" or "Democrat." He won the embrace of evangelical Christians who would have

scorned any Democrat who behaved as he did as the Antichrist.

His deliberate self-aggrandizing and malicious attempts to undermine the integrity of our electoral system, to proclaim that he could only lose if there was massive voter fraud and then persist in his fraudulent claim that it happened despite any evidence at all, have caused the U.S. Capitol to come under violent siege and threatened the very foundation of our representative democracy.

These divisions are difficult enough to deal with in "normal" times. With the added stress and uncertainties of the pandemic sapping our strength and vision, it's virtually impossible to make any headway.

And so, the image of Johnny-on-the-Spots going up in flames rings too sadly true for the present day.

But now is that time of year we always look to the future. It's a time we engage in the age-old tradition of making resolutions for a

new year, to do something to better ourselves and our communities.

Now, more than ever, we need resolve. Resolve to minimize our differences. Resolve to rediscover those things which cause us to reach for a common good. Resolve to rid ourselves of hate and willful ignorance.

And to do that, I can think of no better New Year's resolution for us all than to suggest these very familiar, very American words, with the hope that each of us will embrace the ideals they embody in our simple everyday interactions and long-term aspirations for ourselves, our neighbors, and our fellow Americans:

"RESOLVED: We the People of the United States RESOLVE to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."

Letters from Readers

Thanks to all who raised concerns about Rep. Stauber

Thank you to the many folks on the Iron Range who paid for and wrote the ad on the back page of the *Timberjay* calling out Rep. Pete Stauber for his total dereliction of duty to those he serves in the Eighth District. I have felt like a lone voice in the wilderness as I have emailed him many times over these past two years with deep concerns and

anger over his poor voting decisions for those of us who live in northern Minnesota. I have only received canned responses written by his staff that have not addressed one issue I have raised. I now no longer feel alone. We must support a viable candidate to run against him and put all our efforts to return this beautiful district to someone who will work for OUR best interests, not the interests of the dangerous Trumpers. Pete either supports Donald Trump or he supports us. Let's make the right decision in 2022.

Pamela Kelsey Bemidji

All I need to do is watch NBC news

When talking about Eagles Nest Township services at the Dec. 21 board of supervisors meeting, do not lecture me about national politics. You, and I mean everyone on the board, allowed this to happen. It made my stomach turn, and being on the fire department since the Mother's Day Fire long ago, I've seen a few things and they don't compare to this at all. I know now that I do not have to go to town meet-

ings anymore. All I need to do is watch NBC news, and I will know where the township is heading.

Keep it local. I feel a belch coming in the future.

**Rob Mattson
Assistant Chief
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Simply...Have a Happy Holiday!
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**Artist • LUCA SUNSDAHL
Grade 5**

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from **North Star Credit Union**

**Winning Artist • Shainah Christianson
Grade 2**

This award-winning community newspaper published each week serves the communities of Tower/Soudan, Cook/Orr, and Ely.

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HAVE A MAGICAL HOLIDAY SEASON!
from **Park State Bank**

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Grade 4**

Best Wishes For You in 2022!
from **ZUP'S GROCERY-TOWER**

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Week of Jan. 3

TOWER-SOUDAN ELEMENTARY

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 Jan. 18.

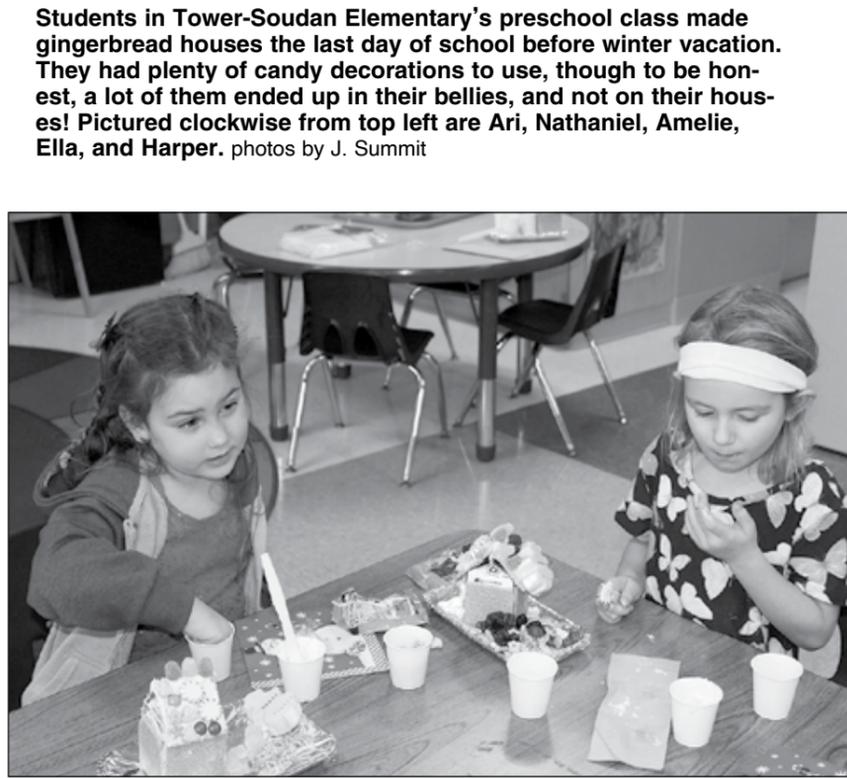
Greenwood Fire Dept.- Meetings on the first (business meeting) and third (drill) Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

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

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

Tower/Soudan Community Bible Study- Thursdays from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at the Tower Elementary School cafeteria. All are welcome. Call 218-984-3402 for more info.

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



Students in Tower-Soudan Elementary's preschool class made gingerbread houses the last day of school before winter vacation. They had plenty of candy decorations to use, though to be honest, a lot of them ended up in their bellies, and not on their houses! Pictured clockwise from top left are Ari, Nathaniel, Amelie, Ella, and Harper. photos by J. Summit

ARROWHEAD LIBRARY SYSTEM

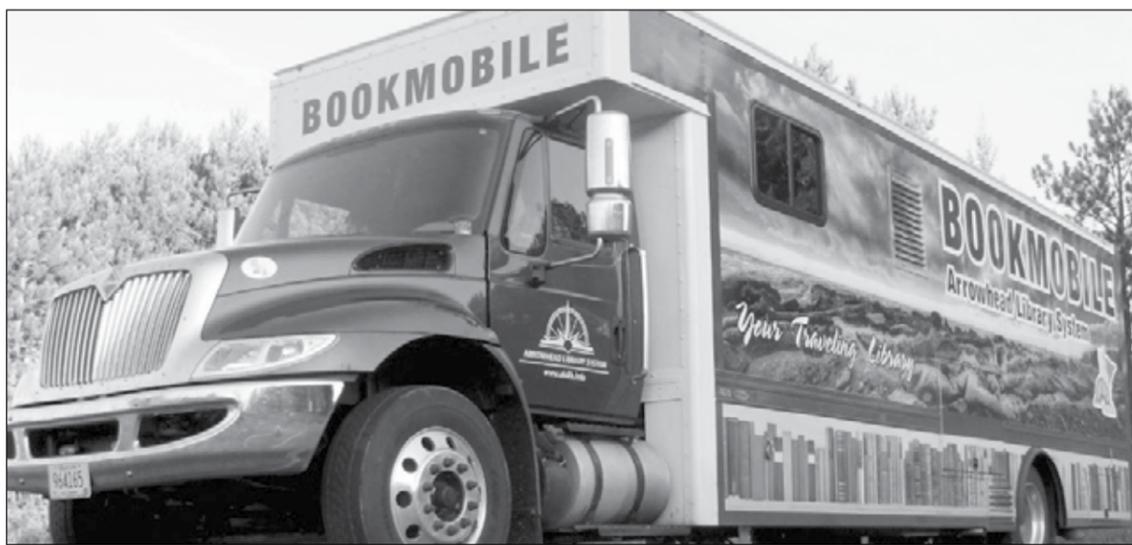
It's a new year, time to start reading more books

REGIONAL- When you can't come to the library, the library will come to you. Visit your library on wheels, the Arrowhead Library System Bookmobile. Look for the Bookmobile at these locations and times in 2022:

Hall): 12 - 1 p.m.
Soudan (Post Office Vicinity): 2:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Tower (Civic Center): 3:45 - 4:30 p.m.
Embarrass (Hwy 135 & Hwy 21): 5 - 6 p.m.

Thursdays
Jan. 6 and 27; Feb. 17; March 10 and 31; April 21; May 12; June 2 and 23; July 14; Aug. 4 & 25; Sept. 15; Oct 6 and 27; Nov. 17; Dec. 8 and 29
Nett Lake (Community Center): 9:30 - 11 a.m.
Crane Lake (Ranger Station): 12:30 - 1:45 p.m.
Orr (Lake County ReMax building): 3 - 4 p.m.

Wednesdays
Jan. 19; Feb. 9; March 2 & 23; April 13; May 4 and 25; June 15; July 6 and 27; Aug. 17; Sept. 7 and 28; Oct. 19; Nov. 9 and 30; Dec. 21
Britt (Sand Lake Storage): 9 - 9:30 a.m.
Bois Forte (Boys & Girls Club): 11 - 11:30 a.m.
Greenwood (Town



bookmobile schedule on the website, alslib.info/services/bookmobile. For more information on the Bookmobile or Mail-A-Book services, contact the Arrowhead Library System, 218-741-3840, email at als@alslib.info, info, or check our web site at www.alslib.info.

HAVE A MAGICAL HOLIDAY SEASON!
from **Frandsen Bank & Trust**

Winning Artist • Norman King
Grade 5

SEASON'S GREETINGS!
from GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

Artist • ELLA TRANCHEFF
PRESCHOOL

Merry Happy Everything!
from **Gruben's Marina**

Winning Artist • Nash Lenci
Grade 2

Happy Holidays
from us to all of you...**The Timberjay**

Winning Artist • Nai'lee Moyer
Grade 5

BE MERRY THIS SEASON!
from Vermilion F&F and Soudan Store

Artist • Audriana Olson
Grade 5

Wishes For Happy Holidays!
from Vermilion Senior Living

Artist • Raymond Boshey
Grade 2

HIGHER EDUCATION



The Vermilion Community College in Ely graduated its 36th class of Park Ranger Law Enforcement Academy students last week. The class of 2021 includes, front row, from left, Brittany Wilkins, Joseph Frage, Kahsha Hyde, Clair Lovgren, Chelsea Larson, and Elle Maculan. Middle row, from left, Tyler Kuemper, Dylan Thompson, Esme Navarro, Lauren Flowers, Ally Deegan, Madison Springer, Mindy Bolar, Nicholas Tate, George Sadler, and Peter Wessels. Back row from left, Hunter Leno, Luciano Estrada, Matthew Egan-Ostrokol, Cooper LaPlante, Sam Harvey, Thomas Weedon, Dylan Russell, Brett Wawers, Matthew Schnettler, and Jonathan Huju. The application process is open for the next Park Ranger Law Enforcement Academy. Vermilion's dual MN POST and National Park Service academy begins on August 15, 2022. Go to <https://www.vcc.edu/programs.../law-enforcement-ems/prlea/> for more information. submitted photo

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2021

2022



the new year begins
a fresh slate lying ahead
anticipate joy

SUPPORTING THE ARTS

'Winnie' honored by Ely Music and Drama Club

ELY - The Ely Music and Drama Club has honored Ely citizens for their community service to the arts for many years. Each year, the organization puts out a call for nominees, and usually, they receive one or two nominations from the public for the award.

However, 2021 was completely different. According to club member Sara Skelton, this year, they received 10 nominations by email and phone to celebrate Winifred "Winnie" Thaisen for her contributions to the arts in Ely.

"Winnie was active in the Ely Music and Drama Club, the Ely Community Musicals, and other community music offerings as a member of an award-winning trio," Skelton said. "In addition, she brought music to the Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital Coronary Care unit to improve the physical and mental health of patients."

Winnie is originally from Zim. "In high school,



she contracted tuberculosis and was sent to the sanitarium in Nopeming to recover. As part of that recovery, her doctor recommended she take up singing to improve her lung capacity, which started a life-long enjoyment of music," Skelton said.

As the story goes, while in Nopeming, a gentleman came to visit another patient, which started a life-long love relationship with Ben Thaisen, of Ely. Ben and Winnie married and moved together to Ely



after WWII.

Winnie became active in the arts in Ely right away, joining the Ely Music and Drama Club in the 1950's, followed by many roles in the Ely community theater, starting with a melodrama, "Gold in the Hills," where she played "Nellie, a pearl of virtue," according to Skelton. She went on to appear in several productions in the Ely musical theater, including "Ado Annie" in "Oklahoma," "Bye Bye Birdie," "Fiddler on the Roof," "Guys and Dolls," among others.

When contacted recently, Skelton said

Winifred "Winnie" Thaisen said her crowning achievement was playing Dolly Levi in "Hello, Dolly" in the Ely community theater production, shown here with her husband, Ben. submitted

Winnie indicated that her "crowning achievement" was as "Dolly Levi" in "Hello, Dolly" (see the accompanying photo). Another favorite role was as the "Grandmother" in "Pippin," where, she indicated, chuckling, "I had a very long song and I don't think I ever got all the words right, but no one but me ever knew!" she said.

Besides her roles in Ely theater, Winnie was active in the American Legion Auxiliary, including belonging to an award-winning vocal trio that performed across the state, and the church choir at Bethany Lutheran (now Grace Lutheran), and caroling for shut-ins.

Later in life, Winnie went to school to become a nurse and served in the cardiac unit. "In my interview with her, Winnie

indicated that she had read some research that music could improve mental health and encourage physical health," Skelton said. "Winnie worked to bring music to the patients in the Coronary Care Unit as part of her mission to serve."

After her husband's death, Winnie relocated to Duluth and joined the Elam Lutheran Church Choir. Winnie continues to reside in Duluth, still living on her own at age 98.

"The Ely Music and Drama Club is proud to honor Winifred Thaisen as our 2021 "Community Service to the Arts" award recipient," Skelton said. "Thank you to all of you in the community who reached out in support of Winnie and her life-long involvement with the arts in Ely."

GONE FISHIN'

Ice Report

After a wild week of weather including over 1.5 inches of rain, then snow, we have had excellent ice-making weather. Majority of anglers are reporting 8-11 inches of good solid ice on area lakes, a few brave anglers have been seen driving small trucks on some area lakes. Slush has not been an issue for

anyone. Won't be long now and trucks will be a common sight on area lakes again. Ice roads continue to be maintained to popular spots.

Fishing Report

Walleye - Walleye anglers have been getting out their permanent houses out to popular walleye haunts and reports are showing it. Many anglers

have reported good to excellent walleye fishing so far, during the evening and overnights. 20 feet of water continues to be the most popular depth for catching eyes along with a good lively minnow.

Pike - Pike angling continues to be excellent for many anglers, with many anglers catching their new personal best. Sucker

minnows continue to be the most popular bait of choice, but it seems dead suckers have been a little better than alive. Anglers should focus on weedbeds, with green weeds, in 5-12 feet of water.

Crappie - Crappie anglers have finally started getting out to winter crappie locations and are catching fish. Anglers have been

finding fish in 20-30 feet of water, in typical mud basins. Once anglers locate the crappies, a small crappie minnow, fished under a bobber, next too an actively fished jig and soft plastic, has been a deadly one-two punch. Many anglers have reported catching good numbers and size crappies, so far this year.

Arrowhead Outdoors

AROUND TOWN

Ely and Babbitt firefighters were dispatched late Wednesday afternoon, Dec. 22, for a house fire in Ely. The fire was reported just before 4 p.m. at 1420 White Street. According to the Northland FireWire, the fire was contained to the kitchen area and attic. No injuries were reported. The cause of the fire is under investigation. The Ely Ambulance Service was on the scene to provide medical standby. photo by K. Vandervort



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 Ledgerrock Church, 1515 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

NORTH WOODS SCHOOL

Creations reveal students' minds to the world

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP — If you're driving out in the countryside this spring or summer, there's a chance you might see something you didn't expect — a young woman seated in the back of a truck transmuting the landscape to acrylics on canvas.

"I really enjoy doing landscape paintings because it just brings a sense of calmness and beauty," said North Woods senior Olivia Udovich.

But here in the cold of winter, Udovich and the other students in art teacher Rachel Betterley's senior art class at North Woods have turned their creativity toward landscapes not so readily visible or easy to depict. They've been exploring how to represent the inner landscapes of their own unique thoughts and feelings through various styles of artistic expression.

Questioning

"I've always been a fan of the freedom of expression, the process of art and the meaning behind the art, not necessarily about it having to look a particular way," Betterley said. "I think that if you're more emotionally invested in the art, you're ultimately going to make better quality art. That's why a lot of my assignments stem from an overarching question, and the question has to be interpreted through their art."

The products of one recent assignment, on display in a glass case in the hallway, are fanciful flights of imagination as different and complex as the artists who created them.

"The question was, 'What is your inner world?'" Betterley said. "They had to try to interpret that question and showcase how their brain works, or how they view the world."

Creating

Little in life is black and white, but for this project that's all the students had to work with — a black Sharpie and white paper. Aside from a requirement that their work incorporate nine distinct

elements of artistic design, students were left to figure out what imagery might best reflect what goes on in their heads, with encouraging prompts from Betterley.

A tree with a huge trunk crowned with branches and leaves is a central figure situated between land, sea, and a starry sky, sprinkled with curious elements such as a space fish that reflects a world of impossibilities made possible in the mind of Trey Gibson.

"That tree is part of a much bigger world in your mind and how it can be so fascinating," Gibson said. "There are so many things that are impossible in our world, so many things that could be dreamed of and could be made a reality."

That theme is reflected in the artist's statement that accompanies Gibson's "Luvita," something each student is required to do that explains both the meaning behind the work and the technical aspects of how they used the nine design elements.

"There is a person in every plane in this artwork, and they are traveling in this big and expansive world, dealing with many situations that lay ahead," he wrote.

It's a far cry from the doodling Gibson said he once enjoyed, and now he's thinking about studying art, film, and perhaps literature in college.

Tensions

But the world is filled with challenges as well as possibilities, and many works reflect the anxieties often felt by high school seniors dealing with finding their way in social relationships, juggling responsibilities, and looking ahead to futures far different from what they've been accustomed to in school. Those anxieties also are expressed openly in their artist statements.

"You learn a lot about kids and their life in general in their statements," Betterley said. "Some that look like they have it all together and seem fine, you read the statements and discover they're going through things, too. It kind of makes you take a step back. It's nice that they trust me enough to read

that. That's a big thing."

A unique feature of Timothy Lilya's piece is the incorporation of strong geometric elements, within which more fluid patterns and forms take shape. A vertical line splits the page and an oval abstract face in half, one side feeling cluttered and busy, the other conveying a sense of serenity and calm.

"This is sort of like day and night," Lilya explained. "There's the busier side of life. Then there's a sort of peaceful kind of place, where we don't really go in reality, but we want to go in our imagination."

It's that busy side of the page that provides a window into one of Lilya's concerns as a senior.

"I knew last year that I was going to be making more decisions this year, but I didn't realize the weight it would have on my future," he said. "Like choosing the right college and getting the right degree to get the right job and make a living trying to live your life outside of school. Just going to school every day is easy, it's like a routine. A break from that routine, graduating, and not knowing what to do outside is kind of scary. It really freaks me out."

Contemplating "The Unhinged Sky" by Udovich is an exercise in discerning elements bold and discrete, simple and complex, familiar and bizarre. Whether it is the tentacles emanating from a compartmentalized head, binoculars dangling from a crescent-shaped moon, or tiny winged keys likely to elude a casual glance, all of it comes together to speak to some aspect of thought or anxiety.

"The concept is life being crazy and you trying to reach up and finding that calm, trying to do everything to find the key to the problem," Udovich said. "All people have that sort of stuff somewhere in their head. They just don't necessarily show it. It's cool that I can take my emotions and thoughts and channel them into something that's productive."

This form of expres-



North Woods senior Timothy Lilya used contrasting motifs to visually reveal the struggle between activity and serenity in his inner world.

sion is a big but rewarding departure from the world of painting the natural world, Udovich said.

"I've never created stuff like this before, never dug that deep," she said. "It's almost like therapy."

Translating the inner world of thoughts and feelings to paper and ink was a challenge for Sierra Jensen. The common stresses of life and the added concerns of life after graduation were all too familiar, but finding a direction was elusive at first.

"It was like everything was kind of off, it wasn't working," Jensen said. "I wanted to give up on it quite a few times, but then I just kind of pushed through it. My actual piece is so different from what I originally had planned."

What emerged was something distinctly different from all the rest. Central to Jensen's piece is a cartoonish figure with a panicked expression who is frantically sprinting up a spiral staircase of thin glass panels in space, shattering with each pounding footstep. Sands draining through an hourglass complete the theme

of "I've Got No Time," a condition described in clear detail in Jensen's artist statement.

"I suppose it represents how my mental health has plummeted within these past months since school started," she wrote. "I feel like I'm always running out of time and I'm running from my paranoia (but it never goes away). The space theme could represent how sleep deprived I am. I never really do get much sleep, worrying about too many things."

And as Jensen talked about her work, it sounded as if she's been pushing through those emotions, too. Everyone has moments of feeling overwhelmed; it's clear that art, both visual and performing, not only helps with those times but will be integral to her professional goals.

"I'm just a creative person in general," she said. "I sing a little, I have a keyboard and a guitar. I want to go into both art and music. I plan to do animated stuff but also incorporate my own things into it."

Support

Not surprisingly, the revelations that come through students' art and artist statements resonate with Betterley on an interpersonal level.

"When I read stuff that's really intense, I'll kind of internalize it," she said. "Then I'm like, OK what can I do to help this particular student continue to feel like they can reach their potential? I try to be a little more personal and positive."

Patience and positivity have been important for students who have experienced the social disruptions brought on by the pandemic. Sharing thoughts and emotions wasn't automatic when students returned to school this year, but over time Betterley has built a climate of trust and acceptance that is now paying dividends.

"It's a pretty open place to just do whatever you want and no one's going to judge you for it," Lilya said. "It's your own ideas, your own thoughts and opinions, and nobody talks down to each other."

Currently, the class is studying the art of surrealism, and their project is to showcase an anxiety they have in surrealist style. Similar projects to connect students' inner worlds with artistic expression will follow.

"It's getting them to not be afraid of their own thoughts, no matter what it is, and finding a way to interpret that," Betterley said. "What these assignments do is pretty much to make them have to be authentic. A lot of them have things that are really deep. I feel like I'm there to help them along the journey, more like a mentor than a teacher saying do this, do this, do this."

"It's kind of like a roller coaster," Betterley said. "But ultimately, art helps them kind of ride that roller coaster a little bit easier."



"Luvita" by Trey Gibson



"I've Got No Time" by Sierra Jensen



"The Unhinged Sky" by Olivia Udovich

SEWER...Continued from page 1

advise the sewer district's board, eventually walked away from the project after the board dismissed their suggestions for solutions that university professionals believed would be less costly and potentially more protective of water quality.

Since constructing its sewage treatment plant over a decade ago with a combination of state and local tax dollars, the sewer district has faced financial challenges due to high operating costs and a limited number of customers. They faced catastrophic freeze-up of portions of the collection system which were improperly installed. They have sought ways to expand their reach into neighboring areas, sometimes at baffling expense and in the face of considerable opposition, in order to increase the flow — and accompanying revenues — to a plant that was oversized for the community it served.

In other words, it's been a challenging period for the sewer district board, its customers, and its detractors, who rarely see the district's various difficulties the same way.

Permit violations

Among the many challenges the Crane Lake facility has faced in recent years is meeting the pollution standards in its discharge permit, which was reissued by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency earlier this year. According to a Notice of Violation issued by the MPCA to the CLWSD on July 29, the district's sewage plant has routinely exceeded pollution standards.

The violation notice lists a total of 25 violations, documented between January 2019 and February 2021. Of those, six are for violations of fecal coliform bacteria. Since February, the facility has violated fecal coliform levels twice more, in May and July of this year.

Under the facility's permit, they're allowed up to 200 units of the bacteria in a 100-milliliter sample. Yet, on at least five occasions, and as recently as July, the facility reported 2,420 bacterial units in that same 100-milliliter sample, or just over 12 times the limit.

Most of the other violations aren't as drastic, and include modest exceedances of total phosphorus, suspended solids, and what's known as biological oxygen demand, which is another indicator of bacterial activity. Yet, to critics, the violations confirm their

worst assumptions about the district and its claim that it's fulfilling its mission to protect Crane Lake's water quality.

"Simply put, the CLWSD is polluting the very waters they claim to be protecting," said Brent Bystrom, an engineer and seasonal Crane Lake resident. "They are incompetent, yet they expand their reach under the guise of protecting the waters of the only national park in the state."

The MPCA issued no fine for the violations, but did require the sewer district to implement a corrective action plan within 30 days. According to the MPCA's John Thomas, the sewer district responded in a timely manner to the notice and is taking steps to address the issues.

That includes a plan to install what's known as a flow equalization system to even out the flows into the plant. "The influent flows and loads fluctuate as Crane Lake has a large population of tourist and seasonal visitors to the town," wrote Rob Scott Jr., in an Aug. 24 response to the MPCA's notice. Rob Scott Jr., the son of board chair Bob Scott, is superintendent of the Crane Lake treatment plant.

Bob Scott is confident that the sewer district has a handle on the problem. He said the district plans changes to the treatment plant, to install larger and improved recirculation tanks which will allow the plant to hold more wastewater and treat it for longer periods before being discharged back into the environment. He said those upgrades were in the works even before the MPCA issued its notice of violation. According to Bob Scott, plant operators were aware of the exceedances for some time.

"We finally said we needed to take care of the problem," he said.

Board minutes show that the district had begun working with engineers from SEH on the flow equalization project more than a year ago. Plans for the upgrades are currently in the design phase, with construction scheduled to begin in the spring.

The district reported that it is also working with a company that provides equipment to disinfect the plant's effluent using ultraviolet light to understand why the equipment doesn't appear to be working.

"We replaced and installed all new bulbs, outer liners and end nodes

last August 2020," wrote Scott Jr. in the district's response to the MPCA. "Since then, we have had several samples that showed high fecal coliform counts. We have done several water clarity tests and collimated beam samples to try and find the reason why the UV light system is not treating the fecal coliform as effectively as it should. We have stepped up our efforts in cleaning the effluent line leading up to the UV trough system and will continue these efforts in the future."

While Bob Scott said the district is taking the violations seriously, he argues that the violations haven't been significant, nor particularly harmful to Crane Lake's water quality. He cited language drafted by SEH engineers in response to questions posed by the *Timberjay*.

"It should be noted that none of the discharge limit exceedances resulted in a degradation of the natural water body that receives the treated wastewater," wrote SEH's John Friel, in talking points he provided to Scott on Dec. 20. "The exceedances were intermittent and short-term and applied to a small percentage of the volume of water the facility discharges to the natural environment. Such is the case with nearly all permit quality exceedances at other treatment facilities in the state. Permit limit violations, while not something to take lightly or ignore, are problematic only when chronic and excessive, neither of which applies to the violation conditions at the Sanitary District facility."

The MPCA's Thomas says the impact of violations can vary depending on several factors.

"Concentrations of total phosphorus over 1.0 mg/l do not automatically create conditions that will degrade water quality, but depending upon the frequency/severity of the violations as well as other sources of phosphorus and environmental conditions (wet/dry summer, cool, warm summer, etc.) could impact water quality."

While the fecal coliform levels on several occasions were well above levels that would trigger health warnings for swimmers, Thomas noted that any discharge from the treatment plant would be substantially diluted once it reached lake waters.

Regardless of the violations, Bob Scott was bullish on the quality of the plant's discharges.

"I'd be more than happy to drink a glass of what comes out of there," he said.

Questions about transparency

The revelation of repeated violations at the Crane Lake facility would certainly come as a surprise to anyone who follows the board's activities by reading the minutes posted to the sewer district's website. The board's minutes make no mention of the MPCA's notice of violation. What's more, the district's monthly minutes routinely quote Rob Scott Jr. indicating that the plant met all effluent limits, even when the MPCA's records show otherwise.

The district's Aug. 4, 2021, minutes quote Scott Jr.'s claim: "We met all effluent standards for last month." In fact, the district had received its notice of violation just days before, and the July 2021 discharge tests showed violations of both fecal coliform and biological oxygen demand.

That wasn't just a one-time error.

► At the board's June 2 meeting, Scott Jr. reported: "We met all effluent levels for last month."

Yet, according to the MPCA, the treatment plant exceeded its fecal coliform levels the prior month by nearly eight times the limit.

► At the March 4, 2020, board meeting, Scott Jr. reported: "February — There was not much new to report. All MPCA effluent limits were met and the new chemical pump seems to be working fine." Yet, according to the MPCA, the treatment plant exceeded limits in February 2020 for both phosphorus and total suspended solids.

► At the Sept. 4, 2019, board meeting, Scott Jr. reported: "Plant operations went smoothly for the month of August. We met all the effluent limitations." But MPCA data show the plant violated standards for fecal coliform, total suspended solids, and total phosphorus by 2.3 times.

The discrepancies between the sewer district's minutes and the results of their monthly testing has longtime critics of the board's management of the system crying foul.

"Obviously, the CLWSD is not being transparent with their operation of the [wastewater treatment plant]," said Brent Bystrom, an engineer by profession, who has been sharply critical of the board's decision-making for several years. "This

combined with the fact that they received a Notice of Violation from the MPCA that was not included in the monthly meeting minutes or even discussed, is beyond me."

Bob Scott said he was surprised to see the discrepancies when the *Timberjay* questioned him about the errors. He said limited administrative staff can lead to mistakes, but that any discrepancies were inadvertent and he said he takes responsibility.

"I want to make sure we clean that up," he said. "We're not trying to hide anything."

Scott noted that, regardless of what the minutes report, the monthly water testing all goes to the MPCA.

"That's important," he said. "We have the professionals looking at it."

Planned expansions?

Even as treatment plant operators have struggled, at times, to meet pollution limits, the sewer district's board has explored expanding its reach by annexing neighboring pockets of development in the area. One such area is known as Kicker Blvd., a pocket of cabins located just north of King Williams Narrows, on the south shore of Sand Point Lake.

The proposal faced considerable opposition from affected residents, who are mostly seasonal, and discussion of the proposal has been limited at recent CLSWD board meetings. But Kicker Blvd. residents continue to monitor the situation and worry that the proposal will come back again.

"After learning about the CLWSD's pollution violations, it absolutely floors me that they would even attempt to add more properties to their system," stated Jay Kanive, a resident of the Kicker Blvd. area. "They can't handle what they have now."

Bob Scott says discussion of the Kicker Blvd. expansion has been shelved for now, even though he said he's often asked why that cluster of cabins was never connected to the treatment plant. According to Scott, the sewer district did attract some initial support for the plan from the MPCA, which provided a \$50,000 grant to begin the process of annexing the area into the sewer district.

"But we hit a bees' nest and they came screaming. I don't see it coming to the surface in the near term at all."

While talk of annexing Kicker Blvd. is now on the back burner, the district board voted last month to expand the district's management program to include property owners outside the current district boundaries, a proposal that Scott says has been approved by St. Louis County. The latest proposal has raised suspicions among critics of the sewer district, but Scott insists the new plan is not intended to connect more areas to the treatment plant. He said the district is taking a page from Ottertail County, which has implemented a sewer district that manages individual septic systems for residents. Under Crane Lake's new voluntary program, residents in more remote locations who wish to take part would be charged an initial assessment of \$7,500 to buy into the program. That's followed by a modest administrative fee (currently \$8 a month) to cover the cost of oversight of the system. The district would ensure that the systems are well functioning and would take on the burden of replacing systems as necessary, at no additional cost to the homeowner.

"You never have to worry about that system for the rest of your life," said Scott. "It's a thing of beauty."

While many of the more remote residences in the Crane Lake area are unlikely to ever be connected to the treatment plant, Kanive said he's worried about planned expansions in and around Crane Lake's Gold Coast, which almost certainly will add to the volume of sewage at the plant.

"The Town of Crane Lake is actively looking at a significant expansion of camping and RV sites in town as part of a planned visitors center," noted Kanive. "In light of the past performance of the CLWSD, it would appear that there would be a high probability that significant adverse environmental impacts to the water quality in Crane Lake would continue with increased waste streams should nothing change."

Bob Scott is confident that the upgraded treatment plant will be able to handle the anticipated flows.

"We designed a plant here to basically handle Edina," he said. "We're not even hitting 60-percent capacity even at the peaks. It's a process issue, not a capacity issue."

Surround Yourself With Joy!
from Russ Hyppa Accounting



Winning Artist • Donelle Villebrun
GRADE 6

Have Yourself Happy, Happy Holidays!
from PELICAN BAY FOODS



Winning Artist • Audrey Rutchasky
Grade 1

Surround Yourself With Joy!
from Subway-Cook



Winning Artist • Myray Maroste
Kindergarten

Fill The Universe With Holiday Love!
from The Vermilion Club



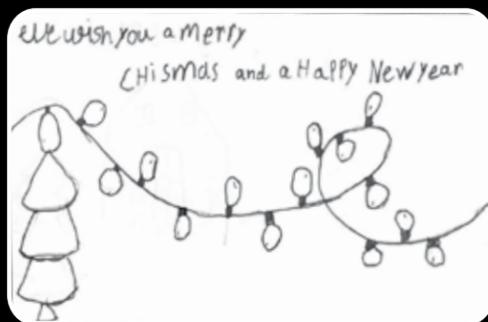
Winning Artist • Kaidence Scofield
Grade 4

Have a Dazzling Holiday Season!
from Waschke Family Chevrolet-Cook



Winning Artist • Everett Crain
Grade 1

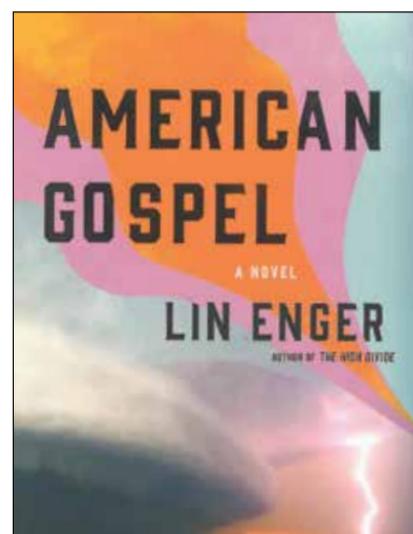
We Wish You A Very Merry Christmas!
from VERMILION MINI STORAGE



Winning Artist • Kasen Dostert
Grade 5

BOOKS OF THE NORTH WOODS

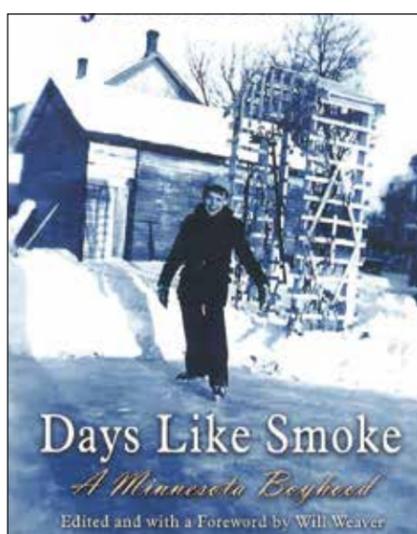
Find your perfect book to start the new year

**American Gospel by Lin Enger**

On a small farm beside a lake in Minnesota's north woods an old man is waiting for the Rapture, which God has told him will happen in two weeks, on August 19, 1974. When word gets out, Last Days Ranch becomes ground zero for The End, drawing zealots, curiosity seekers, and reporters—among them the prophet's son, a skeptical New York writer suddenly caught between his overbearing father and the news story of a lifetime. Into the mix comes Melanie Magnus, a glamorous actress who has old allegiances to both father and son. Meanwhile, Richard Nixon's resignation has transfixed the nation.

Writing with clear compassion and gentle wit, Lin Enger draws us into these disparate yet inextricably linked lives, each enacting a part in a drama forever being replayed and together moving toward a conclusion that will take all of them—and us—by surprise. Set during a time that resonates with our own tension-filled moment, *American Gospel* cuts close to the battles occurring within ourselves and for the soul of the nation, and in doing so radiates light on a dark strain in America's psyche, when the false security of dogma competes with the risky tumult of freedom.

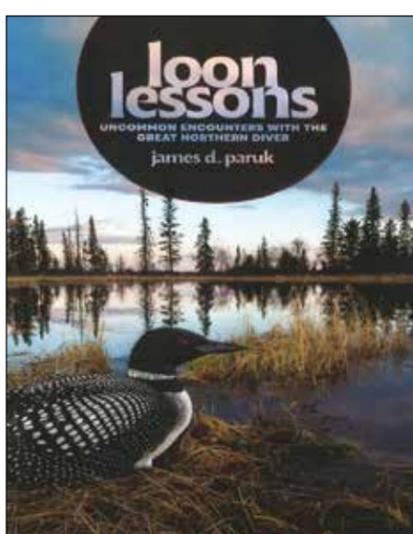
Published by the University of Minnesota Press.

**Days Like Smoke, A Minnesota Boyhood by Jon Hassler**

Beloved Minnesota novelist Jon Hassler, who chronicled small-town Midwestern life in such popular novels as *Staggerford*, *A Green Journey*, and *North of Hope*, left the manuscript for one important story unfinished when he died: his own. *Days Like Smoke: A Minnesota Boyhood* is Hassler's previously unpublished memoir of his youth in rural Minnesota during the 1930s and 40s, giving us his memories and experiences through a writer's acute and detailed observations. He remembers piano lessons, small-town secrets, his passion for movies, and his holy duties as the only altar boy at St. Joachim's.

He imagines how Sylvia Pofford spent the night of the prom that they did not attend together, and he recalls Miss Glaswitz, his unmarried neighbor "who kept . . . a neat, overfurnished house on Broadway, in each room of which was a glass-covered dish filled with hard candy," who "surprised us all by selling it and marrying a cattle buyer from St. Paul." With chapters organized by simple themes such as houses, lessons, and groceries, and ever attuned to the idiosyncrasies of the people around him, Hassler reviews his early years and occasionally reveals when a particular neighbor, teacher, or friend inspired a character or scene in his writing.

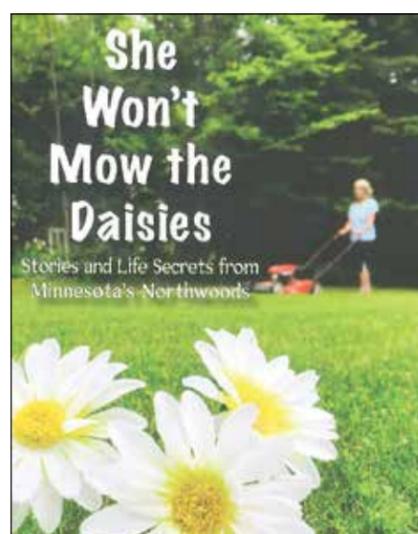
Published by Afton Press.

**Loon Lessons, Uncommon Encounters with the Great Northern Diver by James D. Paruk**

Even those who know the loon's call might not recognize it as a tremolo, yodel, or wail, and may not understand what each call means, how it's made, and why. And those who marvel at the loon's diving prowess might wonder why this bird has such skill, or where loons go when they must leave northern lakes in winter. For these and so many other mysteries, *Loon Lessons* provides evolutionary and ecological explanations that are curious and compelling. Written by one of the world's foremost experts on the subject, the book is a compendium of knowledge about the common loon and an engaging record of scientific sleuthing, documenting more than twenty-five years of research into the great northern diver.

James D. Paruk has observed and compared loons from Washington and Saskatchewan to the coasts of California and Louisiana, from high elevation deserts in Nevada to mountain lakes in Maine. Drawing on his extensive experience, a wealth of data, and well-established scientific principles, he considers every aspect of the loon, from its plumage and anatomy to its breeding, migration, and wintering strategies.

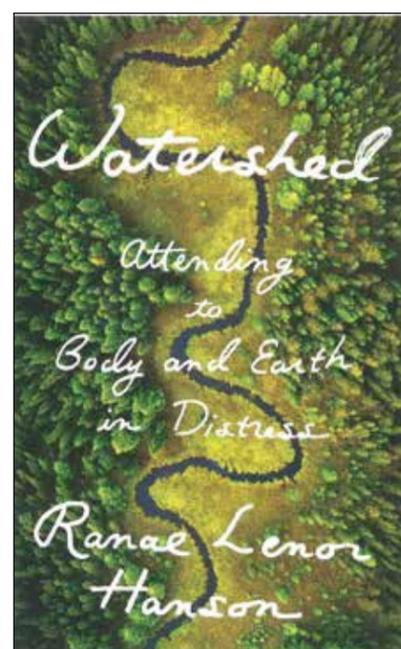
Published by the University of Minnesota Press.

**She Won't Mow the Daisies, Stories and Life Secrets from Minnesota's Northwoods by Leo Wilenius**

The stories comprising *She Won't Mow the Daisies* include accounts of first love, talking with wolves, surviving loss, remembering Mom, a history of life, wood duck wisdom, a Shakespearean take on outhouses, applying Einstein's Theory to fishing tackle, the secret art of getting along and lessons on life from honest people who very much resemble your neighbors. It's a challenge organizing chapters to such a range of subjects so don't be surprised if you see a few curve balls as you read along. You'll likely find that many of these stories are your stories. You really are quite interesting, you know.

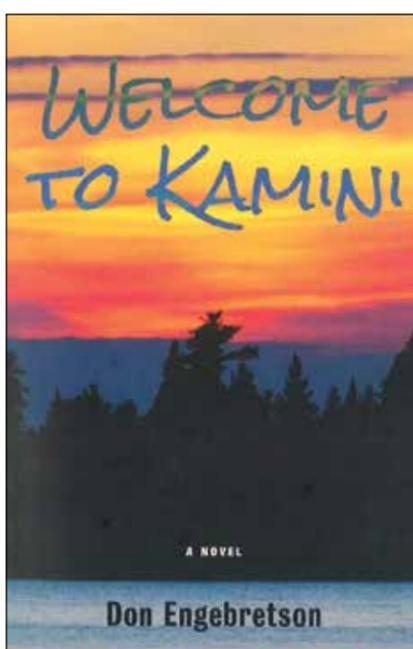
Leo Wilenius is retired from a career in the energy field and resides in Northern Minnesota near his boyhood home, which is the subject of many of the stories within. He writes articles for several publications and has plans for another book offering in the same spirit as *She Won't Mow the Daisies* to be released in 2022.

Prepress by North Star Press. Available at Piragis in Ely and other local retailers.

**Watershed, Attending to Body and Earth in Distress by Ranae Lenor Hanson**

The body of the earth, beset by a climate in crisis, experiences drought much like the human body experiences thirst, as Ranae Lenor Hanson's body did as a warning sign of the disease that would change her life: Type 1 diabetes. What if we tended to an ailing ecosystem just as Hanson learned to care for herself in the throes of a chronic medical condition? This is the possibility explored in a work that is at once a memoir of illness and health, a contemplation of the surrounding natural world in distress, and a reflection on the ways these come together in personal, local, and global opportunities for healing.

Watershed helps us to consider our place and our part in the health and healing of the world around us. Published by the University of Minnesota Press.

**Welcome to Kamini by Don Engebretson**

American Russell Dean's meticulously crafted career has brought him awards, wealth, fame, an idyllic lifestyle and a beautiful wife. But now his wife is divorcing him, he's surrounded by fools and Russell is in a tailspin. A golf vacation to a remote Ontario resort town is exactly what he needs to skate through a rare rough patch.

Or not. Mysterious natural forces far beyond his control and the eclectic characters he meets—including three skilled, powerful women and a mirthful Ojibwe fishing guide—have decidedly different plans.

Welcome to the Canadian wilderness, Mr. Dean. Welcome to Kamini: danger, suspense, mysticism, romance and live bait.

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SULFIDE MINING

MPCA reaffirms decision to issue air emissions permit

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has reaffirmed its decision to issue an air emissions permit after questions about the permit were raised by environmental groups and the courts.

The decision wasn't a surprise, as the agency had argued repeatedly in court that its permit was sound and well-reasoned. In their 21-page findings of fact and order, signed

by Commissioner Katrina Kessler, the MPCA determined that PolyMet is committed to complying with the air permit issued three years ago whether or not production at the facility is higher than the company's original proposal of 32,000 tons per day.

Several environmental groups and the Fond du Lac Band had argued that the MPCA failed to consider information suggesting that PolyMet planned to build a much larger mine that would

emit more pollution than what was covered under the air permit.

The Minnesota Supreme Court ruled in February that the MPCA was not required to investigate those claims and sent the case back to the Minnesota Court of Appeals to determine two smaller issues. In a ruling last July, the appeals court asked the MPCA for more explanation as to how it arrived at its decision, and to clarify whether PolyMet had provided any false or misleading

information about its plans.

The agency determined that whether or not PolyMet opts to expand its operations, the company would be able to comply with its air emissions permit. If not, the agency claimed it has rigorous enforcement authority to force the company to meet the terms of its permit. While the agency may have the legal authority, it has often struggled to enforce permit violations against mining operations on the Iron Range.

PolyMet officials hailed the MPCA's decision as a victory for their plans to build the state's first copper-nickel mine near Babbitt. Environmental groups, meanwhile, indicated they were considering an appeal.

PolyMet still faces several additional hurdles before it can begin work on the project. Other major permits — including the project's main "permit to mine" issued by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, a

water quality permit also issued by the MPCA, and a wetlands permit from the federal Environmental Protection Agency — all remain in limbo because of ongoing court cases or administrative work.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has also begun to plan a contested case hearing for one of the contested permits, which is expected to take place before a state administrative law judge early next year.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Regional airports will benefit from Congress-Biden infrastructure bill

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Several local airports around the North Country will be benefitting from the bipartisan infrastructure bill recently passed by Congress and

signed into law by President Biden.

Airports in Tower, Orr, and Cook, will each receive \$110,000 in funding for improvement projects, while the Ely airport is slated to receive \$159,000.

The money can be

invested in a variety of projects, including runways, taxiways, safety and sustainability projects, as well as terminal, airport-transit connections and roadway projects.

The Federal Aviation Authority, or FAA, is

encouraging airports to prioritize projects that increase airport safety, equity, and sustainability.

The infrastructure bill approved a total of \$15 billion for airport-related projects. A total of \$2.89 billion of those funds are

being allocated in fiscal year 2022, which runs through Sept. 30, 2022. Statewide, Minnesota is slated to receive \$59.322 million from the program in the coming year.

Other northeastern Minnesota airports slated

for funding include:

► Falls International-Einarson Field- \$1.01 million.

► Eveleth-Virginia Municipal- \$159,000.

► Silver Bay- \$110,000.

► Range Regional, Hibbing- \$1.01 million.



From left, Tom Omerza, ISD 696, Sheila Gruba and Rod Gruba, Fall Lake Township, Bob Berrini, Morse Township, State Rep. Rob Ecklund, State Sen. Tom Bakk, Ely mayor Roger Skraba, and St. Louis County commissioner Mike Jugovich, at the Community Economic Joint Powers Board legislative meeting held Monday, Dec. 20 at the Grand Ely Lodge. photo by K. Vandervort

ELY...Continued from page 1

watershed about eight miles from Ely.

"The imposition of a 20-year moratorium on mining the Forest Service lands in the watershed (as proposed by the Biden administration) would seriously impair and impede Twin Metals' plans and stagnate and devastate economic development and job growth in Northeastern Minnesota," it stated.

The resolution called for the Joint Powers Board to "strongly oppose" the withdrawal application for the 20-year term of approximately 225,378 acres of U.S. Forest Lands in the Rainy River Watershed of the Superior National Forest from disposition under the U.S. mineral geothermal leasing laws.

The expected unanimous support from the group's voting members did not materialize. The ISD 696 representative abstained from voting,

apparently because of the last-minute agenda addition.

Opposition heard

"This resolution would be for the Joint Powers members," Skraba said in an attempt to silence any pro-environmental opposition.

Becky Rom, Ely resident and national chair of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters, immediately spoke up and said she and others who attended the meeting were looking forward to the analysis of the science on whether copper nickel mining in the headwaters of the Boundary Waters is appropriate.

Skraba gave Rom two minutes to speak on the issue before the board voted.

"I hope the Joint Powers Board supports both the state and federal analysis going on right

now to look at whether this watershed is the right place for copper nickel mining," Rom said. "The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency did a water quality analysis of these headwaters and found the water quality to be exceptionally clean and immaculate. It is the highest water quality of any watershed in Minnesota."

Rom added that the MPCA said the watershed deserves more protection.

"I would urge the Joint Powers Board not to rush to judgment and say we don't want our rules changed," Rom said. "You don't know the science. No rational person would think that you can protect the Boundary Waters with what is called the most toxic industry in the country."

She asserted that she is not attacking the state's taconite mining industry.

"We are happy everybody pays taxes, and no one is complaining

about the taconite industry paying taxes that go to the (Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation). The issue is putting a copper mine upstream of the Boundary Waters. We want those telecommuters, mayor, that you talk about to continue to move here. You can't have both. You have to pick," Rom said.

"Do we stay on our trajectory and protect the canoe country, like we have since 1902, or do we ruin it because we think there is some short-term economic prosperity? I think you are being handed a book of crap. All copper mines around the world are being rapidly automated. This low-grade (Twin Metals) mine is not economical unless it is highly automated. It is a dumb plan and will ruin the direction of Minnesota. Let's let the science play out," she added.

Skraba responded, "I respectfully disagree, Becky. There isn't one way to do it. We have to do a lot of different ways for economic development. There is not one way better than the other. There is a three-legged stool that we used to talk about many years ago with the mining, the logging and the tourism."

Before the board could vote, a Fall Lake Township resident, Brad Sagen, added, "I point out that there are a number of us here in the back that are here because of our support for the mining withdrawal. I think you and others have simply offered misinformation on this issue. Copper nickel mining is not safe, and has never been proven safe."

Skraba cut him off. "This discussion is among us (Joint Powers Board members)," he said.

Winton, Ely, Morse Township and Fall Lake

Township representatives voted in favor of the motion. The ISD 696 representative abstained from voting.

"The motion carries 4-1," Skraba said. "Abstention is a no vote."

Tom Omerza, the Ely school board member who represents the local school district, pushed back on the mining resolution.

"This is something I did not know was going to be presented. How can I vote when I am not able to consult with the school board or administration? I don't know why you put me in this spot. I can't vote when I haven't discussed this."

Skraba offered no explanation to Omerza or the group on the origin of the resolution or how it was added to the agenda.

"I understand your frustration," he said.

He did not allow Rom to comment again.

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JUNK...Continued from page 1

he's created at the transfer station.

It seems that when Archie had to miss several months of work this past summer due to health reasons, his little collection disappeared bit by bit.

Carla Arneson wanted to stress that "this is Archie's story," but provided some background. "Archie makes going to the dump fun. He had this little sanctuary for the birds he collected from the unwanted items his customers would bring to discard. If he saw something like a bird feeder or a plant stand, or anything interesting, he would set it out," she said. "It was fun to see his little collection, and I'm sure the birds loved it."

These days, with the onset of winter and all the snow and heavy machinery parked in the area, Archie's sanctuary located at the corner of the metal garbage building at the facility is still functioning as a bird-feeding and squirrel-feeding station. Archie and his customers enjoy the wildlife. "I saw a grosbeak out here that was the biggest one I've ever seen in my life," he told a visitor last week.

"Once in a while, I would bring him a bag of sunflower seeds to set out," Arneson said. "I know I'm not alone in my support for Archie's efforts. Archie



Duane "Archie" Archibald, put out a "private property" sign at the St. Louis County Solid Waste Transfer Station, located south of Ely, to try and discourage dump customers from taking items from the wildlife menagerie he has displayed. photo by K. Vandervort

said he also purchases corn for the deer.

Archie was absent from work for a couple of months over the summer, due to some health concerns, and when he came back, so many of the things he collected were gone, she said. "People just came along and took the stuff with them. Archie was bummed and vowed he wouldn't do it anymore."

"I had two wooden

bears. One had a welcome sign," Archie said. "They were just natural wood and needed some work. I took one home and painted with a hundred bucks worth of oil-based paint I bought. A customer saw that and brought me another one, and I painted that one too. While I was 'gone on vacation' someone borrowed them. I doubt they'll be back. That's just the way it is."

Archie put up a "no trespassing" sign but it didn't seem to do any good. "When I was gone last summer and the stuff all disappeared, I kind of got a little frustrated with everyone messing with my menagerie," he said.

Arneson and others prodded him to restart his collection and it's prompted Archie to reconsider.

"A lot of my customers said they enjoy watching

the deer and the birds when they come to the dump. I'll probably start in again on it next summer.

As he gave a tour to a visitor, he mentioned the items that are no longer part of the menagerie. "The bears are gone. I had a big metal chicken that flew the coop. I had a bird bath. The sundial I had could tell the correct time within minutes. I set it myself. Lots of customers bring

out bird feeders, and some even have bird seed. I had some decorative wooden canoes, deer plant holders and some nice lawn furniture. It's just a little square of space. I keep it mowed in the summer. Some people just aren't very nice. Some people just picked up the stuff and took it out. Not much I could do about it. I'm working on putting it back together. I have a few things so far. People bring things out here that they don't want anymore. If I think it looks good in my menagerie, I set it out."

Archie has to miss some more work after Christmas. He said he didn't know how long he would be gone but hopes when he comes back to work he will see his menagerie still intact.

"I drive out here from Gilbert every day," he said. "I sure look forward to the spring when I can start putting the place back together the way it used to be."

Arneson said she is hoping for a little Christmas spirit this season. "It would be a great present for Archie if those people who took things away would bring them back. Or if you are going to throw something away, it may be nice to bring it out to Archie. This is a way we can all be kind to one another. We need more of that these days."

ST. LOUIS COUNTY

Two injured in one-vehicle crash near Mud Creek Road

EAGLES NEST TWP – The driver of a Chevrolet Silverado and a passenger sustained minor injuries in a one-vehicle accident on Tuesday, Dec. 21 on Highway 169 near Mud Creek Road.

According to an incident report from the Minnesota State Patrol, the 2020 Silverado pick-up was traveling southbound on Highway 169 at Mud Creek Road at about 10:30 a.m. that day when the driver, Nathan Mason, 43, of Hoyt Lakes, lost control and the vehicle went into the ditch.

The road conditions were reportedly snowy and icy.

A passenger, Tyler Mason, 18, also of Hoyt Lakes, sustained non-life threatening injuries. Both vehicle occupants were wearing seatbelts, police said. No alcohol was involved.

The St. Louis County Sheriff's Department, Breitung Police Department, Tower Fire Department, and Eagles Nest First Responders also responded to the scene.

POWER...Continued from page 1

transition away from coal to renewable sources of power was likely to lead to lower rates initially and rate stability for the foreseeable future.

Bakk said the news from Great River was helpful, but not enough to offset higher costs in other parts of the operation. "With costs increasing in many areas, we welcome stability on our largest annual expense," he added.

In addition to increased material costs, LCP is dealing with longer-than-normal lead times for items like transformers, meter bases, vehicles and other essential equipment. Some orders that typically required 4 - 6 weeks for delivery now range between 30 - 100 weeks.

"The supply issue has us feeling like we're one big storm away from failure," says Lake Country Power's Chief Operating Officer Derek Howe. "Those utilities who order as needed are running a huge risk of no longer being essential service providers. We are

in a business that needs to keep moving and we are doing all we can to meet that expectation."

The increase approved by the board calls for an increase of 1.67 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to the general service residential and small commercial rates. For the average co-op member consuming 600 - 1,000 kWh per month, this will result in a rate hike of about \$10 - \$16.

"Despite the unfortunate need to raise rates, we are proud that we haven't needed a general service increase in the past six years," said LCP Board President Craig Olson. "And, we have managed to keep it lower than our cost-of-service study suggested as we see utilities around us proposing steeper increases."

Lake Country Power serves approximately 43,000 members who reside in rural St. Louis County, northern Lake County, and parts of Carlton, Itasca, and Cass counties.

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HOCKEY

Ely slips to Broncos as rally falls short

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY- The Timberwolves nearly pulled off an upset of International Falls here last Tuesday, Dec. 21, in a game that saw momentum seesaw back and forth.

Ely scored four straight goals in the second period to grab a 4-3 lead for a time in the contest. But the third period belonged to the Broncos, as they

lit the lamp three times to head home with a 6-4 win. Yet, even in losing, Ely's hockey team is showing it's no longer content to be the region's hockey door mat.

The Broncos came out hot in the early-going, as they peppered Ely senior goalie Chase Sandberg with 20 shots in the first period to take a 2-0 lead. The Wolves managed just five shots to the net in the frame.

Two minutes into the second period, the Broncos found the

net once again as they took a 3-0 lead.

But that's when the tables turned, at least for a time, as Ely launched a four-goal scoring bonanza. At the 5:13 mark, Drew Marolt hit the back of the net, with assists by Brady Eaton and Logan Loe. Jace Huntbach scored at the 8:44 mark on an assist by Marolt and Wes Sandy to cut Ely's deficit to 3-2. Huntbach hit a one-timer at 9:35, and Marolt added another

score for the Wolves at 11:48, assisted by Deegan Richards, to take a 4-3 lead after two periods.

The Broncos weren't ready to lie down, however, and they took control of the game in the final period, scoring at the 5:50 mark to tie the score, 4-4. They took the lead on a power play at the 16:00 mark, and just 17 seconds later they added their final goal of the night and sealed the deal.

Ely took 23 shots to the goal.

International Falls had a total of 52 scoring chances for the night. Ely was blanked on four power play opportunities. The Broncos hit two of three power plays. Ely was called for three penalties and the Broncos were called for four penalties.

The Timberwolves (2-5) will restart their regular season at Bagley on Tuesday, Jan. 7.



A LIFE (and career) IN HOCKEY

Poderzay hits the big time

Tower native has turned his love of hockey into a career, now with NHL ties

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

REGIONAL- It all started when his mom asked him to walk over to Zup's to pick up a few groceries. It was only a couple of blocks, and in Tower it was not unusual to have young children running errands "downtown."

Brennan was seven, and taking after his father, a well-respected high school football coach, he already had a deep love for sports in general.

"There was a flyer on the bulletin board about playing hockey in Ely," Brennan said. "I ripped off the tab at the bottom, brought it home, and begged my parents to take me to Ely to play."

His parents probably didn't realize at first what they were getting into, and

“The goalies I get to work with every day... it's a dream come true.

driving to and from practices, games, and tournaments was only the start.

Brennan has made a successful career out of his love for the sport and was recently named the head NHL goalie scouting coach for the professional scouting organization Neutral Zone. The job is full-time but flexible, a perfect fit for his other work, which includes private coaching of goalies at the junior, college, and NHL levels, as well as working as a goalie coach for the U of M Golden Gophers and other professional hockey teams.

"It was always a dream of mine to play for a powerhouse like the U of M," he said. "Now I get to walk into those offices every day and see my name up



on the wall."

In addition, he said, it is an honor to work with athletes at that level.

"The goalies I get to work with every day," he said, "it is a dream come true."

Brennan also has his own coaching company and works with goalies from the youth to NHL level, including Alex Staylock, a goalie for the Minnesota Wild.

"I get to have other NHL players come to shoot at the goalies," he said.

"I always wanted to be with the NHL as a player," he said. "But that couldn't be. Now I have the chance. I am so fortunate to be able to cross paths with so many great people."

Many of the players he has coached

Top: Brennan Poderzay with his wife Ashley and children Dax and Lydie.

Above: Poderzay works with Minnesota Wild goalie Alex Staylock. submitted photos

at the college level have gone on to play professionally.

"A successful coach is one-quarter psychologist and three-quarters coach," he said. His mentors taught him that coaching needs to be a relationship-based position.

"It is only as successful as the relationship you have with the player," he

See PODERZAY...pg. 2B

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Wolves top Cook County on the road

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

GRAND MARAIS — The Timberwolves rebounded quickly from their Dec. 21 loss to Chisholm, easily outpacing Cook County, 56-38, here the following evening.

"We played great team defense," said Ely Head Coach Max Gantt. "We took care of the ball and had composure down the stretch."

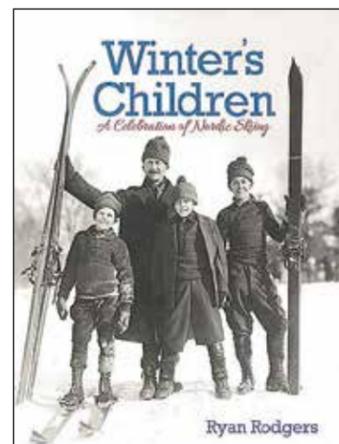
Grace LaTourell had a high night offensively, pouring in 24 points to lead all scorers. Madeline Kallberg also hit double digits, with 13 points.

"Madison Rohr and Ande Visser gave us great defensive energy," said Gantt. "Sarah Visser attacked the basket and took care of the ball for us all night. It was a nice win before we head into the break."

The Wolves have played well on the road so far this season, but they've struggled on their home court, where they've yet to record a win. "We have Carlton and Deer River up next at home in our holiday tournament. Hopefully we can go on a winning streak and get our first home wins!" said Gantt.

BOOKS

'Winter's Children' celebrates history of Nordic skiing



REGIONAL — In the winter of 1841, a Norwegian immigrant in Wisconsin strapped on a pair of wooden boards and set off across the snow to buy flour—leaving tracks that perplexed his neighbors and marked the arrival of Nordic skiing in America. To this day, the Midwest is the nation's epicenter of cross-country skiing, sporting

See SKIING...pg. 2B

TAXES

Cook council OKs five-percent levy hike

Mayor Johnston appoints himself to HRA board of directors

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- The property tax levy in the city of Cook is going up for 2022, but not as much as the maximum hike would have allowed.

At their Dec. 16 meeting, council members approved a five-percent increase in the levy that is projected to bring in \$22,262 more than 2021. The maximum allowable increase of eight percent was set back in August, but council members and city staff found savings to

remain consistent with recent past levy increases.

Total combined operating expenses of \$603,964 projected for 2022 will be offset by property tax revenues of \$467,510 and additional local government assistance from the state. Total revenues of \$604,005 would leave the city with a \$41 surplus.

There was no discussion of the levy or budget during the Truth in Taxation meeting, although two individuals appeared to protest their property tax bills, which was outside the scope of the meeting. They were

advised to contact the county assessor's office to have their property valuations reviewed.

HRA appointment

The council received the resignation of Cook Housing Authority Board Vice-Chairman Tim Mankowski, who noted in a letter that it was a decision he reached "with sadness." The resignation was effective immediately.

When an HRA resident board member position became vacant last spring, months of disputes ensued between Mayor Harold Johnston and

CHRA Executive Director Reed Erickson about the process for naming a successor to the board.

No such controversy existed this time as Johnston has the statutory authority to fill vacant regular board positions by appointment, with consent of the council, and Mankowski's position was up for reappointment in January.

Rather than wait for January, Johnston announced that he was appointing himself to the board temporarily, and would make the appointment permanent in January, with the council's

approval.

"I don't feel I can ask anybody from the community to fill this," Johnston said. "It's going to be a lot of trouble."

Johnston noted that the city's attorney had confirmed that self-appointment was allowable, as long as Johnston abstained from the vote. Council members approved an interim appointment for Johnston, and will take another vote at January's council meeting on a long-term appointment.

LOCAL BUSINESS

New insurance office will host Jan. 5 open house

COOK - A century-old insurance business is expanding in downtown Cook.

The North Star Insurance Agency (NSIA) has opened a new office at 8 S River Street in Cook as a better way to serve the community.

NSIA purchased the 100-year-old independent insurance agency, formerly located

inside the North Star Credit Union, four years ago.

"We are excited to have our own store front in downtown Cook. This will make us much more visible to the community, and the extra space will make it more convenient and comfortable for our customers," said NSIA President Rich Crettol. "We have a wonderful relation-

ship with the people of our region and having our own office will help us better serve their insurance needs."

NSIA provides home, cabin, property, lakeshore, automobile, boat, and recreational vehicle insurance. Agents Cathy Aune and Lisa Towner will provide guidance for property, casualty, and commercial insurance

options that work for their customers. They provide local, friendly service and are committed to serving the community.

The public is invited to attend an open house from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 5, to celebrate the new office space. Snacks, refreshments, and prize giveaways will be featured.

"We are excited to host an

open house to welcome people to our insurance agency," said Aune. "It means a lot to us to be a part of the Cook business community and offer insurance to people in the region."

The agents at NSIA can be contacted by calling 218-666-4030.

PODERZAY...Continued from page 1B

said. "And being a hockey goalie is the most challenging position in any sport, in my opinion."

Brennan said he learned the basics of coaching from his father, Robert, who has been a volunteer football coach in both Tower and Ely.

"My dad is a really good football coach," he said. "But now he is learning to be a hockey goalie coach. He texts me with his own scouting reports."

Scouting talented players these days is mostly done through videos and doesn't involve much travel. This is a perfect fit, he said, since he has a young family.

The scouting job is basically full time. He is given a list of goalies to observe, watches lots of videos, and then writes up scouting reports. Scouting is basically getting a really good idea of a player's "intangibles," Brennan said.

"Do they skate well, what level are they competing at, how are their fundamentals," he said.

It also, he said,

includes research into what the player is like as a person, and off the ice.

A hockey kid

Those early trips to Ely, often on slippery winter roads, built the foundation that has allowed Brennan to create a career in the sport. And Brennan wasn't just any regular hockey player, he was a goalie.

"It is a crazy, demanding position," said Brennan, "and I saw the stress it put on my parents."

But his family members were also his greatest fans, along with those who had watched him grow up in Tower-Soudan and followed his career from the juniors, to college, to Europe.

Brennan said his three-year-old son Dax seems to love all sorts of sports, though he thinks all of them are called hockey. If Dax does end up playing hockey, Brennan joked, "I just hope he's not a goalie."

He and his wife Ashley also have a month-old daughter, Lydie. The family lives in Minnetrista,

a small town just west of Minnetonka.

Brennan ended up playing high school hockey in Hibbing, and then went on to play in junior leagues for three years. He then played at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, earning a degree in Business Management. He spent six years in Europe on professional teams in France, Holland, and Slovenia. In France, he was based just minutes outside of Paris, and in Holland, near Amsterdam.

"I got to see the world and get a paycheck while doing it. It is incredible where the game has taken me," he said.

His time in Europe, especially his years in Slovenia, were very special.

"People would call into the ticket office and tell them they were related to me," he said. "I now have a Slovenian passport and citizenship."

With his grandparents coming from Slovenia and Germany, Brennan got to meet many relatives while living overseas. It also

gave his parents a chance to visit relatives as well as watch Brennan play. His grandfather, Thomas Poderzay, was born in Soudan, but his parents came from Slovenia. The Poderzay siblings were well known in our area for their accordion playing. Tom met his wife Delores, who was born in Germany, while he was serving overseas in the U.S. Army. These family ties made Brennan's time in Slovenia, and games played in Germany, extra special.

Coaching and scouting

After retiring from playing, Brennan took up coaching. He spent six years coaching at the University of Minnesota-Mankato, coaching Dryden McKay, who was a three-time WCHA goaltending champion, two-time All-American, and a finalist for the Hobey Baker Award Hat Trick. In his time at Mankato, the Mavericks won five WCHA regular season titles and advanced to the NCAA Frozen Four for the first time in the

program's history.

"Out of nowhere I got a call from the University of Minnesota hockey coach," Brennan said, "and soon after they offered me the job."

Brennan said the Golden Gophers' current goalie, Jack LaFontaine, is one of the most talented players he has ever coached. "I wouldn't be surprised to see him go to the NHL," he said.

In a press release, U of M Coach Bob Motzko said "Brennan has a wonderful, track record of developing elite goaltenders and we're certainly excited to have him start working with our group. His experience and expertise will be a huge benefit for our goaltenders and our team."

Along with coaching, Brennan began scouting work, first for the USA Hockey National Development team.

"The hardest position to scout in the NHL draft is goaltenders," said Neutral Zone, when announcing the hiring of Brennan. "When Brennan came across my desk it was

a no-brainer. He trains NHL-bound goalies, he's got a great eye and understanding of the position, and will be a major boost to our NHL Draft staff."

Brennan said when he first got the call from Neutral Zone, it was from a player he had formerly coached at Mankato.

"At first I thought they wanted me to scout for Junior Hockey," he said. "But then they started talking about being head of the NFL draft for goalies."

And while Brennan's plate is now full of hockey, he is happy that he has found a career that lets him skate, coach, and observe promising young players, as well as spend time with his young family.

SKIING...Continued from page 1B

a history as replete with athleticism and competitive spirit as it is steeped in old-world lore and cold-world practicality. This history unfolds in full for the first time in *Winter's Children*.

Nordic skiing first took hold as a sport in the Upper Midwest at the end of the nineteenth century, giving rise to an early ski league and a host of star athletes. With the arrival of a pair of brothers from Telemark, Norway, the world's best skiers at the time, the sport—and the ski manufacturing industry—reached new heights in Minnesota, only to see its fortunes fall after World War II, when downhill skiing surged

in popularity. In *Winter's Children*, Ryan Rodgers traces the rise and fall of Nordic skiing in the Midwest from its introduction in the late 1800s to its uncertain future in today's rapidly changing climate. Along the way he profiles the sport's stars and stalwarts, from working-class Norwegian immigrants with a near-spiritual reverence for cross-country skiing, to Americans passionately committed to the virtues of competitive sport, and he chronicles races like the thrilling 1938 Arrowhead Derby (which ran from Duluth to St. Paul over five days) and the American Birkebeiner, the nation's largest cross-country

event, which takes place every year in northern Wisconsin, snowpack permitting.

Generously illustrated with vintage photography and ski posters, and featuring firsthand observations drawn from interviews, *Winter's Children* is an engaging look at the earliest ski teams and touring clubs; the evolution of cross-country skis, gear, and fashion; and the ambitious and ongoing effort to establish and maintain a vast trail network across the Minnesota state park system.

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Obituaries and Death Notices



Eva R. Gramse

There are no words, just Jesus and the Holy Spirit...

Eva Rochelle Gramse, 72, of Faribault and Lake Vermilion, died on Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021, at her cabin near Tower. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 12, 2022, at Hosanna Church in Lakeville. Visitation will be held for one hour prior to the service at the church on Wednesday. For people who have traveled to be here for the service, we will have a gathering on Thursday afternoon so we can have an opportunity to visit further, if you are able. Interment will be at Maple Lawn Cemetery in Faribault at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given to Healing Mission in Brazil, Ruth's House of Hope, or to the Gramse family to be used for Christian children's education and outreach, to include bringing kids to camp in Eva's honor. Arrangements are with Boldt Funeral Home of Faribault.

Eva was born on Nov. 15, 1948, to Carroll and Genevieve (LeMieux) Froman in Faribault. She graduated from Faribault High School in 1966. She met Michael Gramse in high school and they married on July 26, 1969, at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Faribault. Mike served in the U.S. Navy and they lived in California and Sasebo, Japan. During Mike's years of service and after, they developed lifelong friendships with several of the Hector Navy families, their children and grandchildren. The group has gathered every three to five years since 1979.

Eva was previously employed by Holiday Cafe, Wimpy's Restaurant, and Burkhartzmeyer Shoes in Faribault as well as a variety of places while living in California. Eva and Mike started a tool and die business with a partner in July of 1979. The partnership dissolved, and Mike and Eva continued the business as MRG Tool & Die in Faribault.

Eva enjoyed spending her time with Mike, their five children and 17 grandchildren. She en-

joyed traveling throughout the United States and abroad, downhill skiing and snowmobiling, water-skiing and boating, teaching and sharing her gifts of cooking and sewing. She devoted years of service to Peace Lutheran Church and School and Faribault Lutheran School, serving on the Board of Education, leading Bible studies and participating in study groups with friends. Eva volunteered with Ruth's House of Hope in Faribault for many years. The last few years she had been attending Hosanna Church, The House Church, and a church with her friends in Ely. She was involved in Half-Time Institute for 30 years where she recently completed a fellowship, got involved in Bridges to Rwanda, and was currently hosting a student at St. Olaf College.

Eva and her daughter Chelle ran a summer day camp, Chelle Bean Camp, for at-risk kids on Shields Lake for a couple of years. Eva's mission was to provide opportunities to kids that they wouldn't otherwise have had, being at the lake, cooking over the fire, learning to bake, and teaching them how to be kind and accepting of others. Eva hoped to one day be able to bring another group of kids up to Lake Vermilion to experience this same type of learning and wonder.

Eva was purposeful and deliberate in connecting with people and maintaining friendships, and those relationships were of utmost importance to her. She had a joyful spirit and personality, a bright familiar smile, and a peaceful presence with comforting love that she shared with so many people.

Eva devoted time every single day to growing her faith, sharing it with others, teaching and guiding her children and grandchildren to grow their own personal faith. Strengthening her Christian faith was vital to her life. Her relationship with the Holy Spirit was cultivated through diligent devotion, searching and trust.

Eva had nearly completed writing a devotional book about what she had learned dealing with loss and conflict. Eva wanted to reach out to women who experienced the loss of a child in the womb, including women who had abortions or miscarriages. She wanted to provide encouragement and comfort during the grief process and for them to know there was hope in the Lord and to find God's love during the healing process, looking to Jesus for strength, understand-

ing and peace.

Before the end of her life, Eva came to the realization that at times there are just no words, and we can only rely on Jesus.

She is survived by her husband, Mike; children, Rod (and Jen) Gramse, Chelle (and Troy) Marquardt, Ryan (and Jessica Finnegan) Gramse, Russell (and Karmin) Gramse and Rebecca (and Adam) Thomas; grandchildren, Riley, Nathan, Reagan, Aaron, Olivia, Adrianna, Mateo, Jayce, Myris, Raziland, Violet, Eva, London, Dylan, Jade, Myles and Faith; siblings, Margaret (and Dan) Montag, Tricia Burmeister, Caroline (and Jeff) Gelhar, Bernadette (and Dennis) Tatge, Pauline (and Dave) Thielbar, Ben (and Marie) Froman and Paul (and Colleen) Froman; in-laws, Glenn (and Retta) Gramse, Bernard (and Lois) Gramse, Jim (and Kathy) Gramse and Pam Gramse; several nieces, nephews and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sisters, Kathleen Hanson and Genevieve Froman; in-laws, Edward and Irene Gramse; and son-in-law, Bruce Morelan.

Willie S. Salo

Willie Simon Salo, 80, originally of Soudan, entered his heavenly home on Monday, Dec. 20, 2021. Funeral services were held on Tuesday, Dec. 28 at Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his son, Dean; daughters-in-law, Kristie and Lynn; grandchildren, Megan Salo and Michael Salo; brother, Donald (Vi) Salo; many beloved nieces and nephews; bonus daughters, Linda (Mike) Sweno and Lisa Street; bonus grandchildren, Tony, Nezia and Sophia Wiswell, Marina and Marissa Kelly; and bonus great-grandchildren, Tanner, Dennis, Milani and Gianna Boshey.



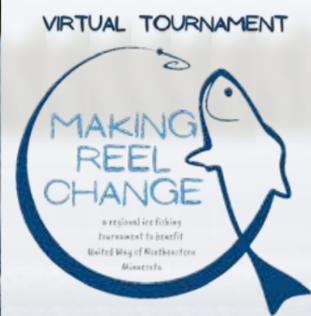
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OPERATION SANTA • THANK YOU!

A Big Wow

We Did It Again! The continuing pandemic is creating ongoing challenges for area families, but Operation Santa donations, once again, were there to cover the need. Toys, gift cards, and cash (to purchase more toys) started coming in early and didn't stop until right before Christmas. We knew that we had more families in need this year, and the community stepped up with a bang. We had enough for every one of the children on our list, plus last-minute families who signed up the week before Christmas, and enough extra to put together gift bags for the senior citizens who use the food shelf.



We put together large gift bags with toys, warm clothing, and hats and mittens for over 50 area families (again totaling almost 200 children). Teenagers also received gift cards. But the most amazing part of this story is we still had enough donations on our shelves to reach out to other children in our community who are in need (referred through area schools).

All told, your donations meant we could deliver gifts of toys and warm clothing to over 225 children in our community. Special thanks to Lake Country Power's Operation Roundup Program for their \$3,000 donation to the Tower Soudan Civic Club that was used to purchase warm winter items such as coats, hats and mittens, socks, pajamas, and sweatshirts.

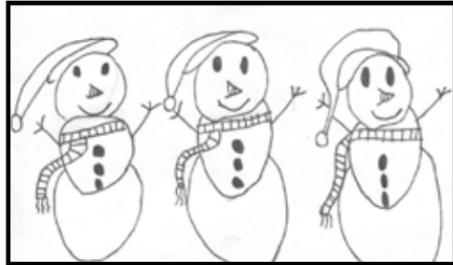
Thanks to the individuals and organizations who made larger contributions to the drive this year: Tower-Soudan Civic Club, Wendy and Jim Tuominen, Aronson Boat Works, St. Martin's Bazaar-goers, St. James Presbyterian, St. Paul's Lutheran, Cindy Myre, Richard Johnson, Joanne Connell, Marcie Moe, Jet Galonski, Shelby Karakas, Adrienne DeVries, Laura and Ron Alarcon, Bear Creek Acres/Wycoff Family, Mollie and Mark Sanford, Art Dale, Northern Red Hat Belles, Faye and Dan Mobilia, Tim and Lori Tomsich, Patti and Jamie Quick, Tom Mesojedec, Carol Wright, Vermilion Club, Sue and Zane Beaton, Carol and Paul Knuti, Tim and Nancy Kotzian, Charles and Nancy Tekautz, Lori and Steve Vukelich, Barb and Roger Rinne, Jim and Cathy Wright, Madeline Manion, Mary Batinich, The Little Church of Vermilion Lake Township, Steve Abrahamson, Ron and Sue Norha, Laurie and Rolf Anderson, Lynn Dee and Mark Lehto, Debra Andrick, Muriel and Lynn Scott, Nancy Wagner, Peter and Colette Johnson, Enestvedt Family, Patricia Helmberger, Elaine and Peter McGillivray, Joan and Jeffrey Jauss, Faye Tekautz, Nancy Larson, Vermilion Dream Quilters, Quilters in Soudan, Lamppa Manufacturing, Inc., Ellen Hintz, Stephanie Ukkola, Julie Horihan, Mary Oman, Liz Villnow, Colleen Lepper, Linda Kronholm, Maggie Manion, Vickie Lange, Kathryn Sacchetti, and Barbara Schmidt. Thanks to both Target of Virginia and Walmart of Mt. Iron for donations/discounts for our shopping this year.

Many other anonymous individuals made donations of gift cards and cash. If we inadvertently missed your name, we apologize; sometimes donations are left at the Timberjay office when I am not there, and names are not recorded.

And thanks to all those who volunteered their time: Kathy Lovgren and her crew from the Tower Soudan Civic Club (Mary Oman, Julie Horihan, Elaine McGillivray, Peter McGillivray, Bergetta Indihar, Corky Eloranta, Jeff Lovgren), Mary Shedd, Victoria Ranua, Jacqueline Peters, Pat Helmberger, Clair Helmberger, Stephanie Ukkola, and the crew at the Timberjay for all their help.

Jodi Summit-Operation Santa Coordinator
 Kathy Lovgren-Tower Soudan Civic Club

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EMPLOYMENT

HELP WANTED RECEPTIONIST

Computer skills and people skills a must! Drop off your resume at Peshel Accounting, 1704 E. Camp St., Ely or call 218-365-2424 tfn

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@vermillioncountry.org or call Jodi Summit at 218-753-2950

CAMP VOYAGEUR Grounds/Maintenance Person Wanted

Construction and plumbing experience helpful Please call 218-365-6042 or email us at cvspirit@campvoyageur.com. tfn



Part-time/Full-time at Ameriprise in Cook, includes work from home opportunities.

Send resumes to Adam Maki at adam.r.maki@ampf.com 12231

POSITION OPENING Ely Public Schools Substitute Bus Drivers

Ely Public Schools is accepting applications for substitute bus drivers for the 2021-2022 school year. A background check is required.

- Qualifications include:
- ▶ Minnesota Class B driver's license
 - ▶ Minnesota School Bus Endorsement
 - ▶ Minnesota Passenger Bus Endorsement
 - ▶ Must have good driving record
 - ▶ Pre-employment drug test required

Application available at: www.ely.k12.mn.us

A complete application must include: District Application

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

Rate of Pay: \$18.73/hour

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 24 & 31, 2021

POSITION OPENING Ely Public Schools Long-Term Substitute Art Teacher 1.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Ely Public Schools is looking for a Long-Term Substitute Art Teacher starting February 4, 2022 through approximately May 4, 2022. Salary and fringes as per the Master Agreement between ISD #696 and the Ely Education Association and School Board policy. A background check is required.

- Qualifications include:
- ▶ Current Minnesota teaching license
 - ▶ Previous teaching experience preferred
 - ▶ Excellent communication skills including verbal and written

Application available at: www.ely.k12.mn.us

A complete application must include the following:

- ▶ District Licensed Application
- ▶ Resume
- ▶ Copy of official transcripts
- ▶ Current Minnesota teaching license
- ▶ 3 letters of recommendation

Return materials to: Ely Public Schools, Attn: Superintendent Erik Erie, 600 E. Harvey St., Ely, MN 55731 or email mwognum@ely.k12.mn.us. Contact Memorial Principal Megan Anderson at (218) 365-6166 ext. 1726 or manderson@ely.k12.mn.us with any questions.

Application review to begin: January 7, 2022; open until filled.

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 24 & 31, 2021



Work at the TIMBERJAY!

The Timberjay has an opening for a part-time staffer to work in our Tower office. Duties include general office work, local reporting, editing of community notices, page layout, photography, and more. Lots of variety, flexible hours as long as work gets done by our deadline. Job would be about 12 hours a week (Tuesday through Thursday), with more hours available if desired. Looking for someone who enjoys working in a fast-paced environment, has good attention to detail, and enjoys dealing with the public. Job requires office computer skills (typing, email, familiarity with basic software programs). We will train the right candidate on graphics/page layout software.

For more information, call Jodi at 218-753-2950 (office), 218-750-3513 (cell), or email editor@timberjay.com.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Vermilion Lake Township Notice of Filings

Filings for the following offices will open on Tuesday, December 28, 2021 and close on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

Supervisor 3-year term
Clerk 2-year term

Filing fee: \$2.00

Candidates: File Affidavit of Candidacy by appointment only at the CLERK'S OFFICE, 6703 Wahlsten Rd. The clerk's office will be open the last day of filing from 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Call 218-749-2902 and leave a message.

Election will be held on Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Crystal Alaspa, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 17 & 31, 2021

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEIDING TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF FILINGS

Filings for the following offices open on Tuesday, December 28, 2021, through Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 5 p.m. for the offices of:

1 Supervisor: 3-year term
1 Clerk: 2-year term

Filing fee is \$2. File the Affidavit of Candidacy at Clerk's Office. Please call 218-355-0163 (cell) for the clerk's office hours.

Marie Milan, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 17 & 31, 2021

Super Crossword

Answers

L	O	O	T	E	R	Z	E	N	I	M	A	M	R	A	M	B	O		
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Adult Day Services (ADS)
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FT Medical Laboratory Tech (MLT)

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FT & PT Nursing Assistant (Wage starting at \$16.36/hr - \$1,500 Sign-On Bonus)

PT RN/LPN (\$4,000 Sign-On Bonus)

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Activities
PT & Casual Activities Assistant

Environmental Services
FT Housekeeper

Casual Laundry Aide

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More Info? Contact Human Resources

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humanresources@cookhospital.org

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

King Crossword answers on next page

ACROSS

- 1 Russian range
- 6 First lady before Michelle
- 11 Salem's state
- 12 Cancels
- 14 Mexican revolutionary
- 15 "Are you happy I'm back?"
- 16 Low digit
- 17 Omits
- 19 Soak (up)
- 20 1492 vessel
- 22 Rock's Brian
- 23 Spanish ayes
- 24 Devour
- 26 Religious doctrines
- 28 — Moines
- 30 Actress Long
- 31 Fairly shared
- 35 Snares
- 39 " — Smile Be Your Umbrella"
- 40 Director Howard
- 42 Half a sextet
- 43 Egg (Pref.)
- 44 Pale purple
- 46 Club —
- 47 "New World Symphony" composer
- 49 Recital piece
- 51 Bagel choice

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

- 7 Black birds
- 8 Young — (tots)
- 9 Putin's land
- 10 Nearly
- 11 Ultraviolet filter
- 13 Old photo tint
- 18 Ky. neighbor
- 21 Actress McDonald of "Private Practice"
- 23 Brainy
- 25 Pod dweller
- 27 "Shoo!"
- 29 Picket-line
- 31 Trudges
- 32 Gunned, as an engine
- 33 Idle
- 34 "You've got mail" co.
- 36 Designer Giorgio
- 37 Bakery pan
- 38 Fizzy drinks
- 41 Twangy
- 44 Hobbling
- 45 Musical finale
- 48 Squealer
- 50 "Kidding!"

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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.

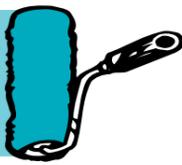
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

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

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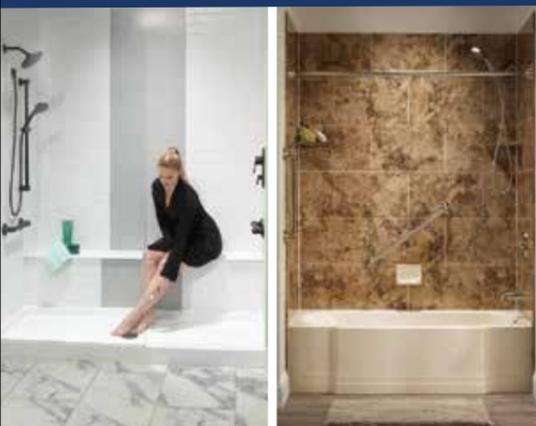
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WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to slow cooking.

NTUOECR

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Counter

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: K equals R

QAA LFW KWQJT-LV-JKPME

XKVJYHLD PM LFPD DYXWKRQKEWL

HVRW PM NVLLAWD VMAT.

PL'D DV YM-HQMMT.

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