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# The TIMBERJAY

Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989

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FOR A GOOD CAUSE

## Blizzard Tour raises \$1.6 million for ALS

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook/Orr Editor

Tomassoni daughter-in-law inspired by senator's fight

right in Duluth and get the latest and greatest in trials and therapies for ALS."

That's welcome news for the family of the tour's "rookie of the year" fundraiser, Tiffani Tomassoni. Her father-in-law, well-known state Sen. David Tomassoni, of Chisholm, announced last July that

See...ALS pg. 10

REGIONAL- The only thing better than being out on a snowmobile cruising regional trails for three days would be to help others by doing it, and that's what 250 riders in last week's 23rd annual Black Woods Blizzard Tour did. They raised a whopping \$1.6

million to help in the fight against amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, along the way.

One of two major annual fundraisers sponsored by Hermantown-based Never Surrender, Inc., this year's take is

helping to bring cutting edge ALS experimental trials to northern Minnesota. They could lead to major breakthroughs in treatment of the rare debilitating motor neuron disease, one with no cure that has a higher incidence rate in the Midwest

than anywhere else in the country.

"We've made a huge donation and investment in the HEALEY ALS Platform Trials," Never Surrender President David Kolquist said. "Trials are going on throughout the

country, and our funding now is bringing these trials to Duluth, partnered with Essentia Health. So now if you have ALS, anywhere in northern Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, or the UP of Michigan, you'll be able to go to Essentia Health

### ELY WINTER FESTIVAL



Wade Pharr, of Ely, adds fine details to a snow sculpture in Whiteside Park.  
photo by K. Vandervort

## Snow sculpting: 'Why, just why?' Ely artist describes the medium and the muse

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – After a decade of trial and error, a Louisiana transplant to this community continues to embrace the purely northern tradition of sculpting snow into art. Cade Thibodeaux, known as Mr. T to many students here, is often asked, "Why, just why?"

In the midst of the Ely Winter Festival this week, Thibodeaux answered that question and many more at a Tuesday Group gathering. He didn't bring

Cade Thibodeaux, at right, endured temperatures cold enough to frost his beard last weekend at the Snow Sculpting Symposium in Ely.  
submitted photo

a block of snow into the Grand Ely Lodge conference room, but he brought some of his snow sculpting tools and, above all, his infectious enthusiasm for not only winter, but winter in Ely.

He is a full-time res-

See...SNOW pg. 12



### ISD 696

## Ely school sticks with face mask mandate for now

Advisory council hopeful COVID decline continues

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – The new interim superintendent for ISD 696 presided over his first Ely Safe Learning Plan Advisory Council (ESLPAC) this week, and he was lobbied by some members to lift the school campus face mask mandate that has been in place since the beginning of the school year.

John Klarich took over as lead administrator for the district last week following the resignation of Erik Erie. The long-time school administrator, twice retired, left his last superintendent position just over two years ago, and just prior to the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

"COVID is all new to me so I'm kind of learning on the fly," he said as he sat in the school district office with Ely Principals Anne Oelke and Megan Anderson, and conducted the advisory council meeting via Zoom.

He related that as the mayor of the city of Buhl, their COVID-19 precautions included the temporary closing of city hall, library and senior citizens center.

"That was our solution, and after that we required some masking and now everything (in Buhl) is wide open," he said.

About half of the 18 ELPAC members

See...ISD 696 pg. 9



### CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

## Omicron variant signs look encouraging for state and county

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook/Orr Editor

Regional hospitalizations, however, remain high

itively.

"Just based on numbers, we were at a pretty high case rate towards the end of January," Leslie said. "Now that case rates are really down, at under 150 cases, that's promising."

But Leslie quickly tempered his comments by noting that

See...COVID pg. 11

REGIONAL- National and state health officials alike are signaling that the worst of the Omicron COVID wave is now behind us, but the struggle continues for healthcare systems in northeastern Minnesota as hospital capacity remains strained.

Data from the Minnesota Department of Health show the state added 32,189 new COVID-19 cases in the seven days between Feb. 2 and Feb. 8, for an average of 4,598 new cases per day. That's down from an 11,165

new case daily average the week prior. The most recent seven-day case positivity rate also continued dropping, from 21 percent to 14.9 percent.

St. Louis County's seven-day case average hit a high of 401.7

on Jan. 18, but has since fallen by almost two-thirds, registering 142.9 on Feb. 4.

Steve Leslie, COVID response coordinator for the St. Louis County Public Health Division, viewed the trend pos-



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# Community notices

## Sisu Heritage annual meeting set for Sunday, Feb. 27

EMBARRASS- Sisu Heritage, Inc. will hold its annual meeting at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 27 at Embarrass Town Hall. The featured speaker is Doug Workman of the Tower-Soudan Historical Society (TSHS), who will talk about the ongoing TSHS project to restore and repurpose the historic Tower fire hall.

The business portion of the annual meeting includes the president's report and the financial report, voting on new and renewing board members, and information about 2022 events and projects, including the Apostolic Church and the Seitaniemi Housebarn. There will be time to socialize with fellow Sisu members over coffee an' - and perhaps even win one of the door prizes.

Sisu members are encouraged to attend. All community members are invited to join them for the afternoon. The meeting is a chance to learn more about the preservation work Sisu Heritage is doing and how to support it. Memberships are just \$10 per year.

Embarrass Town Hall is located at 7503 Le-vander Rd. Call 218-984-3024 with any questions.

## Veterans Wellness Passport program – Snowshoe on Thursday, Feb. 17

REGIONAL - Veterans and service members living or working in the United Way of NE MN's service area are invited to bring their families to snowshoe Thursday, Feb. 17 at the Minnesota Discovery Center. Snowshoes will be provided. Registration is required for this free activity offered through the United Way's Veterans Wellness Passport program. Visit [www.unitedwaynemn.org/veterans-wellness-passport](http://www.unitedwaynemn.org/veterans-wellness-passport) to sign up today.

## Craft show at Embarrass Town Hall set for Feb. 12 and 13

EMBARRASS – There will be a craft show at the Embarrass Town Hall on Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 12 - 13 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Bring a friend and come to join us for beautiful hand-crafted items, greeting cards, doll clothes, blankets, artificial flower arrangements, baked goods, hats, scarves, mittens, and other unique items. Coffee and cookies are available.

## Mesabi Symphony Orchestra sets upcoming concerts in Ely and Virginia

REGIONAL - The Mesabi Symphony Orchestra will present two concerts this month, on Saturday, Feb. 19 at Vermilion Community College in Ely, and on Sunday, Feb. 20 at the Goodman Auditorium in Virginia. The concerts will feature the Young Artist Competition winners, Natalie Sandor on violin, and Rufina Robbins, soprano. Both concerts will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Organizers say they expect a high turnout for both performances and strongly recommend that patrons purchase tickets in advance to avoid delays at the venues. Visit [www.mesabisymphonyorchestra.org/](http://www.mesabisymphonyorchestra.org/) for more information and to purchase tickets.



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EARTH FEST

# Grants offered for sustainability projects

REGIONAL - The 12th annual Iron Range Earth Fest will be held on Saturday, April 23 in Mt. Iron. The focus this year is "Energizing the Future," with an emphasis on building more local sustainable energy projects, such as solar and wind power.

Returning this year, after a pandemic hiatus, are the Community Sustainability Initiative (CSI) grants. There are four \$500 grants awarded from the Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability (IRPS) to area organizations for a public project that improves sustainability on the Iron Range. The IRPS works to support and encourage sustainability projects within our communities. Organizations, students, groups, churches or businesses that have a project idea to advance the health and sustainability of Iron Range communities, but need funding, are encouraged to apply for the CSI. The top four proposals will win \$500 to implement projects. These grants might be for a community garden, a school forest, or an educational presentation.

What might your group do with a \$500 CSI award this spring? The grants let your organization make positive changes in your community. Working within the idea of environmental, communi-

ty, and economic sustainability, there is plenty of room to be innovative and unique with a proposed project. Proposals may be for a stand-alone project, or one that is part of a larger goal. Visit [www.irpsmn.org/csi](http://www.irpsmn.org/csi) and fill out the online submission form to submit your proposal by Sunday, April 3. Previous contest winners are listed on that page if you need inspiration. The possibilities are endless.

Recent CSI-winning projects include:

- The Washington School Forest committee used a grant to help create a new outdoor classroom near their campus in Hibbing, fostering a love for the outdoors among the school's young students.
- The Scenic Rivers Health Care facility in Cook used a grant to build

gardens and flower beds to brighten up an unused city lot and make more fresh food available at a local food shelf.

In addition, a \$200 People's Choice Award is voted on by attendees at the Iron Range Earth Fest each year. If you have questions about the contest, or would like to submit your proposal in writing, please contact Janna Goerdts at [fatchick-enfarm@gmail.com](mailto:fatchick-enfarm@gmail.com). The CSI contest is supported by the IRPS Silent Auction, which takes place each year at Earth Fest. Participants place bids on goods and services generously donated by local individuals, businesses and organizations.

ARROWHEAD LIBRARY SYSTEM

## Paper Design Collage Take and Create Art Kits available Feb. 14 – 28

REGIONAL-The Arrowhead Library System (ALS) will be providing Paper Design Collage Take and Create Art Kits to member public libraries to distribute Feb. 14 - 28. The kits were designed by COMPAS teaching artist Teresa Cox. This art activity explores color relationships and design using geometric shapes and is for anyone wanting to experiment with using paper to create an original collage. Patrons will get to experience drawing, color relationships, cutting, sharing and discussion. Kits will be distributed at the following libraries: Babbitt Public Library, Cook Public Library, Ely Public Library, Virginia Public Library, Arrowhead Library System Bookmobile, and Arrowhead Library System Mail-A-Book (patrons must qualify for Mail-A-Book services).

This is an all-ages program. Kindergarteners and first-graders may need extra assistance. Please note each location has a limited number of kits; feel free to contact your local library for more information.

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

## Connect with Lake Country Power at this year's district meetings

REGIONAL – As inflation continues to soar and prices continue to rise all around, it's time for Lake Country Power members to reconnect with their co-op community to find out what changes are coming in 2022. Despite the challenges impacting the electric industry, Lake Country Power is being proactive and committed to meeting member expectations for quality service, reliability, safety and value.

Members of the co-op community are invited as Lake Country Power hosts meetings in each of its nine districts in February and March. Presentations will include information about the recently announced electric rate changes, inflation impact, the supply chain crisis affecting cooperatives, and how LCP is planning to meet its mission as an essential service provider.

Each meeting starts with dinner at 5 p.m., followed by staff updates and time for member questions.

Co-op members are asked to R.S.V.P. if they plan to attend by calling Anne Larson at 1-800-421-9959, extension 2248. Members may also R.S.V.P. by email to [lcp-meetingsvp@lcp.coop](mailto:lcp-meetingsvp@lcp.coop) with name and meeting date.

Meetings in the local area include Wednesday, Feb. 16 at the Side Lake Community Center, Monday, Feb. 21 at Grand Ely Lodge in Ely, and Thursday, March 24 at North Woods School in Cook.

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WINTER TOURISM

# Local snowmobile clubs an important asset

Maintain trail network, benefitting many area businesses

by BRIAN K. ANDERSON  
Contributing writer

REGIONAL—The vital role that the Vermilion Penguin Snowmobile Club plays for winter tourism is not lost on businesses like Fortune Bay Resort Casino, the Vermilion Club, Bayview, and others.

“People come from all over to enjoy the trail system that the Penguin Club and other clubs groom,” said Fortune Bay Director of Public Relations Brian K. Anderson. “The work they do greatly contributes to the success of our business and many others in the area. The same can be said about other clubs like the Cook Timberwolves Club and the Ely Igloo Club.”

Vermilion Penguin Snowmobile Club President Mike Indihar said the club receives many “thank yous” from area business owners as they know how important their work is to winter tourism. It’s not uncommon to walk into an establishment to see a row of helmets and snowmobile jackets on display as snowmobilers enjoy a meal or beverage before hitting the trails again.

“Snowmobiling really helps our seasonal businesses stay open year-round,” said Indihar. “It helps them pay their bills. We look at it from the tourism side of it as, if we do our part —people will come here to snowmobile and help these businesses survive.”

In typical years, the popular Fun Run raises money to help clubs like these with their operating expenses. However, due to the ongoing pandemic, that

successful event has been shelved two years in a row.

Although it won’t make up nearly as much as the Penguin Club would receive from the Fun Run, Fortune Bay and its guests recently raised over a thousand dollars with its Ticket In, Ticket Out promotion. Guests raised just over \$554, while Fortune Bay added another \$500 to the tally.

“Fortune Bay has always helped us with the Fun Run activ-

ities,” said Indihar. “We always looked at that being used as our future investment money, but with COVID it has been hard, so donations like these help us out.”

Indihar said the club receives roughly \$30,000 from the state’s grant-in-aid program, which is then used for the club’s annual operating costs.

“The additional money like this check is all invested in the future for equipment and supplies,” said Indihar. “People who donate can feel comfortable knowing it goes to equipment and fuel needed to groom the trails. It is expensive to operate and maintain our equipment.”

Especially since the club is responsible for 30 miles of trail,

which equates to 60 miles each time the groomer heads out.

“Our trips can take anywhere from five to eight hours for someone to do it,” said Indihar. “We do it twice a week, and if needed, we go out three times a week. We also helped the Babbitt Club the other day.”

All of the work is done by a hearty group of volunteers who have a vested interest in keeping the trail system in excellent condition.

“Our operators threaten to quit if we try to pay them,” said Indihar. “So, when you see a groomer operator or one of the club members working, take the time to thank them because they are not getting paid.”

And the work doesn’t just involve grooming the expansive trails. It can be a year-round job as the trails need to have brush and fallen trees removed. The club also stakes 62 miles of Lake Vermilion, thereby creating another trail system that connects snowmobilers with businesses and shortcuts to their next destination.

The club’s grooming efforts don’t only reflect volunteer time. The job also puts hours and stress on the club’s equipment. Up until a couple of years ago, the club stored its equipment outside, but then the club decided to make an investment in its future by build-



**Right: Vermilion Penguin Snowmobile Club Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Lepper, seated, and Club President Mike Indihar, inside the club’s new headquarters.**

photos courtesy B. Anderson

ing a permanent structure. Since its completion, club members have marveled at how the club headquarters, located on County Rd. 77, has made their work much more manageable.

“For some reason, our equipment never breaks down when it is warm out,” quipped Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Lepper. “We now have warm feet and hands and don’t have to work around some pine trees to make repairs when it is 30 below.”

Lepper said the heated building is also better to store the club’s aging equipment. He believes the structure is adding years to the life of the equipment, but added that new purchases will be needed in the coming years, if not sooner.

Indihar agreed and talked about the club’s 15-year-old groomer, which cost \$140,000 brand new.

“It is now pushing \$350k for a tractor, and we own a 1997

model, too,” said Indihar. “We have a lot of costs coming down the road, and we have to figure out how to pay for them.”

Given the exorbitant costs for equipment, the club will most likely have to look for grant money when the time comes to invest in new equipment.

However, local businesses and residents can help out by joining the club. A single or family membership is just \$20, while a business membership is \$100. Checks can be sent to: Vermilion Penguin Snowmobile Club, 1735 County Rd. 77, Tower, MN 55790.

“The local support is really important, and it has been pretty steady,” said Indihar. “Their support helps us understand that people are paying attention to the trails and the work we do, and we appreciate it very much.”

THE LEGISLATURE

## “Prove it first” sulfide mining bill reintroduced in St. Paul

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Legislation that would require companies that hope to mine copper-nickel deposits in Minnesota to prove they can do it safely, before receiving permits, was re-introduced in the Legislature this week.

“This is not like iron mining,”

said state Sen. Jen McEwen, DFL-Duluth, at a Monday press conference. “This is different, and current laws have allowed supporters to just bulldoze these projects through. We’re just saying, prove it first.”

The legislation is modeled on the so-called “Prove It First” law enacted by large bipartisan majorities in the Wisconsin legislature in 1998. It would require

that companies seeking permits to mine sulfide-based ores, such as those proposed for mining in northeastern Minnesota, demonstrate that they have operated and later closed a similar mine for at least ten years, without causing pollution.

“Copper-sulfide mining has a perfect record of polluting,” said Chris Knopf, director of Friends of the Boundary Waters,

which is backing the legislation. “Simply put, Minnesota should not be a guinea pig for this type of mining,” he said.

Backers of the bill say it has 64 supporters in the Legislature, mostly in the DFL-controlled House. The bill’s prospects in the GOP-controlled Senate appear doubtful, in part because the measure faces strong opposition from Iron Range lawmakers.

Sen. Tom Bakk, I-Cook, said the legislation, which was introduced last year without final passage, has mostly angered residents of his district, where the proposed copper-nickel mines would be located. Bakk, a longtime DFLer, left the party two years ago, in part because he viewed the party as opposed to copper-nickel mining.

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# OPINION

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## Editorial

### Dems and rural voters

Democrats are struggling even as they offer solutions over division

Exactly twelve years ago, the Democrats held 59 seats in the U.S. Senate. That included three of the four Senate seats from North and South Dakota, and both Senate seats from the states of Arkansas and Montana. Today, Democrats hold just one of these eight seats in the U.S. Senate, which helps to explain why the party is struggling to enact its agenda in Washington.

We hear from many left-leaning commentators that the very structure of the U.S. Senate, which inarguably provides over-representation to rural states with small populations, gives Republicans an unfair advantage.

Yet the structure of the Senate, and the advantages it provides to small states, has changed not at all in recent decades, and certainly not since the election of 2008, when Democrats briefly held a whopping 60-vote majority in the body.

What has changed is the voting habits of working-class voters, typically young men and those influenced by them, who used to regularly vote for Democrats in places like Montana, the Dakotas, and here in north-eastern Minnesota. These are voters working in mines on the Iron Range or in the oil fields of the Bakken. Some are union members, many are not. They voted Democrat in the past because that was the party associated with workers and the party that supported industries that employed many of those workers. Today, those same voters are electing Republicans in states that, until a decade ago, regularly sent Democrats to the U.S. Senate. They should reconsider, in part because Republicans have nothing to offer rural America. Just ask Tom Bakk.

State Sen. Tom Bakk, who left the Minnesota DFL, and who now calls himself an independent, (although he caucuses with Senate Republicans), pointed to the Democrats’ diminished support for dirty, extractive industries, like copper-nickel mining and new oil pipelines, as one reason why voters in the region have voted against them in recent elections.

This is, unquestionably, a change in policy on the part of Democrats and Bakk believes it has fueled rural resentment. “If you’re in a rural area, you drive to the Cities and you see a lot of prosperity there,” noted Bakk in a recent interview. “People feel they’re being left behind and they want to take it out on someone and the voting booth is one place to do that.”

When asked what the Republicans have proposed to help northern Minnesota, Bakk didn’t have an answer. The last time the Republicans

had power in Washington, their only significant accomplishment was a tax cut that went overwhelmingly to big corporations and the uber-rich, not exactly a fix for what ails rural America.

“They’re a party without ideas,” Bakk acknowledged.

Indeed, the GOP is so lacking in ideas and principles these days that the party never even issued a platform for the 2020 campaign. The GOP has become the Donald Trump party, surviving on conspiracy theories and rural resentment.

Say what you will about the Democrats. At least most of them are willing to take a stand for important things—even when it might challenge them politically. Take the oil sector and its impact on climate change. We know, because scientists have run the numbers, that if we burn all the oil reserves in places like Saudi Arabia, the Bakken, or the tar sands region of Alberta, that we will cook the planet, creating an existential crisis for humanity and most other life here.

That’s why many Democrats no longer support building new oil pipelines, because we’re going to have to leave some oil in the ground if we hope to survive.

Republicans say it’s because Democrats no longer support working people, which is nonsense. Climate change will affect working people in rural America as much, if not more, than anyone else. The Democrats are proposing solutions, like investing hundreds of billions of dollars to transition our economy to non-carbon-based forms of power. That transition would create many times more good-paying middle-class jobs than exist in the oil and gas sector today. Many of those jobs would be created on the northern Plains, where wind resources are abundant, while reducing the risk of catastrophic climate warming.

Not surprisingly, the party of no ideas proposes to do nothing, other than exploit the issue as another means to divide Americans for political gain. They tell voters global warming is just another conspiracy theory, hatched by liberal, urban elites, because they hate working Americans. What garbage.

Democrats should stop assuming they have no future in rural America. They should quit complaining about the unfair structure of the Senate and bring the fight back to places they used to win not that long ago. Democrats actually have ideas and some of them might even help the places that have been left behind.

Rural voters can help themselves as well. They would do better looking for solutions rather than scapegoats.



## Letters from Readers

### Books are treasures, not to be burned

A book is a treasure chest filled with words, ideas, thoughts, and stories. Each book is an art form, created by the unique voice of the author. To destroy such a treasure is in my mind sacrilegious, a horrifying practice. Yet at this time, book banning and even book burnings continue to spread across this nation.

In my mind, books are one of the most powerful tools to build bridges of understanding. Through the power of literature, one reads about the experiences and stories of those whose lives differ so vastly from one’s own. Through books, one experiences past times and present struggles. One captures the voices of those who have been oppressed and silenced. Through books, one develops empathy and compassion. Yet, during these challenging times, we watch as individuals storm libraries and schools, demanding that students only read books that mirror their own lives. In too many instances, timid souls comply.

One of the most chilling images ever is that of large piles of burning books in Nazi Germany—great works of literature torched in flames as German citizens cheered. Just as chilling is a similar display that took place recently in Tennessee. Crowds hooting as books were flung into the flames. Works of literature, destroyed. Ignorance applauded and cheered.

I look at the stack of books on my desk, each presenting an opportunity for me to develop knowledge and understanding of those whose lives and backgrounds differ vastly from mine, as well as an opportunity to delve into the history of this nation.

I am currently reading “The Underground Railroad,” by Colson Whitehead, a book I highly recommend. I also read “The Nickel Boys,” also by Colson Whitehead. This was the story of a black teenager sent to a “reform” school, even though he had not committed a crime. Beatings, abuse, and death were often the experiences for the

majority of the black boys in the facility. The story was based on the true account of a reform school in Florida. The story took place in the 1960s, a time when many of us were teenagers, the same age as the protagonist in the story.

Both books deal with uncomfortable content. Would some demand they be banned?

“Banning books is just another form of bullying. It’s all about fear and an assumption of power. The key is to address the fear and deny the power.” (James Howe in “The Misfits.”)

I think about the experience of walking through an art gallery. One looks at paintings in the gallery, savoring the beauty of some, yet questioning the purpose of others. No one takes down a piece that one does not like nor does one complain to the curator and demand that it be removed. For me the same is true with books. Each piece an art form, the words and phrases sculpted by the author, writer, or poet. Each book a treasure chest of words, ideas, thoughts, and stories.

**Ellie Larmouth  
Tower**

### Time for a new face in the Third District

I don’t believe I’m alone in thinking it’s time for someone new to represent the Third District in the Minnesota Senate. I think Keith Steva, who is dedicated and qualified for the job, is that person. That’s why I’m excited that Keith is seeking the DFL endorsement. He deserves our support.

Keith is not a professional politician and is certainly not a man who seeks the limelight and power for himself like some officeholders we’ve seen. He’s one of us who firmly believes the first job of an elected official is to both listen to and respond to his or her constituents, not just those who have money and influence. The Keith I have come to know listens to everyone and believes everyone’s opinion matters.

I am confident that if we elect him, he’ll work for us, doing his best to make the lives of people better. Let’s be honest, the fact

that Keith is coming from outside of the political establishment is a plus in my mind. One look at what Keith has done with his life will convince you he’s bringing a wealth of knowledge and personal experience to the job. He grew up on a small farm and took those lessons of hard work and struggle to eventually succeed in business on a world scale.

Like many of us, Keith and his wife Amy know these are challenging times in our rural district. We all know not everyone is living the life they may have imagined for themselves. We need new ideas, fresh perspectives, and original thinking based on the input of all of us, to overcome our challenges. Keith understands that no one individual has all the answers. He is running to solve problems, like staffing our rural hospitals, making healthcare available to all residents, assuring that our children and grandchildren can enjoy the world as we have by tackling climate change. He will honor the past, but understands we need creative solutions to tackle the problems we face to prepare for the future.

Our democracy should never be about political insiders and the powerful choosing who’s going to represent us. That’s the job of people like you and me. I trust that Keith Steva will be responsive to our needs, and he will listen to us. That’s the man I’ve come to know. He is the breath of fresh air we need representing us in the Minnesota State Senate and I hope you’ll join me in supporting his candidacy. Take the time to read his Facebook page or look at his website and you’ll see exactly what I mean.

**Kelly Dahl  
Cook**

### We welcome your letters

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

# There’s no place like home... when it’s mold-free

When my phone rang one mid-December evening, I couldn’t have imagined the request I received. I’d assumed my son was calling from Minneapolis to announce that, because of the latest COVID surge, he and his family would not be visiting for the holidays. But instead, this was a call for immediate assistance, a rare occurrence



**KATHLEEN  
MCQUILLAN**

since his leaving home at sixteen to attend the Perpich Center Arts High. He adjusted quickly to “life in the big city” and at an early age became surprisingly self-sufficient.

He described his current dilemma. He had discovered mold in his basement that had to be remediated, “asap”. After he shared more information about his

circumstances and the daunting process that lay ahead, I knew he needed my help.

I began putting things in order so that I could be gone for an indefinite length of time, feeling fortunate that I had few obligations and that my spouse, John, would be willing and able to hold down the fort. A big concern was how my rescue pup, Duffy, would react. We’d never been apart since his arrival a year ago. But John offered ample reassurance through our final good-byes.

I’m fine with the drive until

I’m thrust into that place I call “the heart of the beast”, where I-35 splits in two heading me toward I-94, where I’m really shown how rusty my high-speed driving skills have become. It’s then I begin to feel like the lead character in that now ancient film, “Ma Kettle in the City”. I’m totally “Ma” as she’s hurtling down the highway with folks flying by on both sides of her at a furious clip! I can feel other drivers’ frustration and anger, palpable through the thin sheets of glass and whooshing air that barely separate our vehi-

cles from disaster. When I see a middle finger go up, my muttered apologies and prayers became my meagre means of self defense.

Soon, with a sigh of relief, I am pulling into Corey’s driveway and turning off the key, very ready for his long-awaited hug. No thanks to COVID, it’s been a long time since we’ve shared one.

Corey is quick to fill me in on our project. Through the course of time, his beloved wife Hayley has developed an

See **MOLD...**pg. 5



COMMENTARY

# Can America navigate the next few years?

A few weeks ago, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman made a startling suggestion. He proposed a cross-party 2024 presidential ticket: Joe Biden and Liz Cheney, perhaps, or Kamala Harris and Mitt Romney, or another combination of a leading Democrat and an anti-Trump Republican.

Friedman’s reasoning is that the U.S. is at a crossroads, and he contends that the main body of the Republican Party “has shown that it isn’t committed any longer to playing by democratic rules, leaving the United States uniquely threatened among Western democracies.”

Under these circumstances, he wrote, the country needs a “broad national unity vehicle” that would draw members of both parties. “We all have to be small-d democrats now, or we won’t have a system to be big-D or big-R anything,” he continued.

To buttress his argument, he turned to Israel’s current national unity government, which united members of the right and left in an effort to turn down the heat generated by former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s bid to delegitimize the government and judicial system. As Israeli leaders “treat each other...with a little more respect, and a little less contempt, because they are out of Facebook and into face-to-face relations again, stuff is getting done,” Friedman writes.

It was certainly an attention-getting column, and it’s hard to argue with the idea that we and our democratic system remain in perilous times. It may well be that to avoid a lurch toward authoritarianism, or at least toward a government that willfully violates democratic norms, some dramatic development like Friedman’s suggestion will prove appealing to many Americans.

But looking back at the sweep of American history we also need to keep in mind that our system as it stands now, for all its flaws, has served us remarkably well. For over 200 years, through some very tough times, we’ve wrestled with the problem of how government should work in a democracy. We’ve persisted through economic turmoil, world wars, a terrible depression, and social and racial tumult. Each time, though the path has at times been harrowing, we’ve adjusted, found common ground, passed legislation that, in general, has made this a fairer and more just nation, and moved forward.

It’s worth remembering that this is a pragmatic country that mostly prefers the middle to the extremes. In a writeup noting that 2021 saw the balance in party identification shift from leaning Democratic toward leaning Republican as the year wore on, Gallup pointed out that, overall last year, “an average of 29 percent of Americans identified as Democrats, 27 percent as Republicans and 42 percent as independents. Roughly equal pro-

portions of independents leaned to the Democratic Party (17 percent) and to the Republican Party (16 percent).” Ours is still an electorate that is most comfortable in the center.

The truth is, it’s impossible to see around the next political corner. There’s no question that there are worrisome trends, especially the taste for restricting and possibly even overturning the vote that we’ve seen in recent years in Republican-dominated state legislatures and the increasingly outsized influence that sparsely populated states hold on Capitol Hill. Yet if there’s one thing that our centuries of experience with representative democracy tell us, it’s that Americans are fiercely creative about exercising their democratic rights and that when things get out of kilter they pull the country back on course.

Don’t get me wrong. When Lincoln asked at Gettysburg whether this nation “so conceived and so dedicated” can endure, he was posing a question for all time. Our status as a democracy and as a land of opportunity for all has never been a given, and

never will be. Lincoln spoke at a battlefield that was the result of the last time we failed utterly to navigate deep national divisions; the Civil War left such deep scars that we’re still not over them.

Clawing our way back from perilous times to a government in Washington that is capable of “getting things done,” as Friedman put it in his column, will take time, patience, and a willingness to compromise—on both sides of the aisle—that’s been in short supply in recent years. But we’ve done it before. My hope and belief is that we can do it again.

*Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

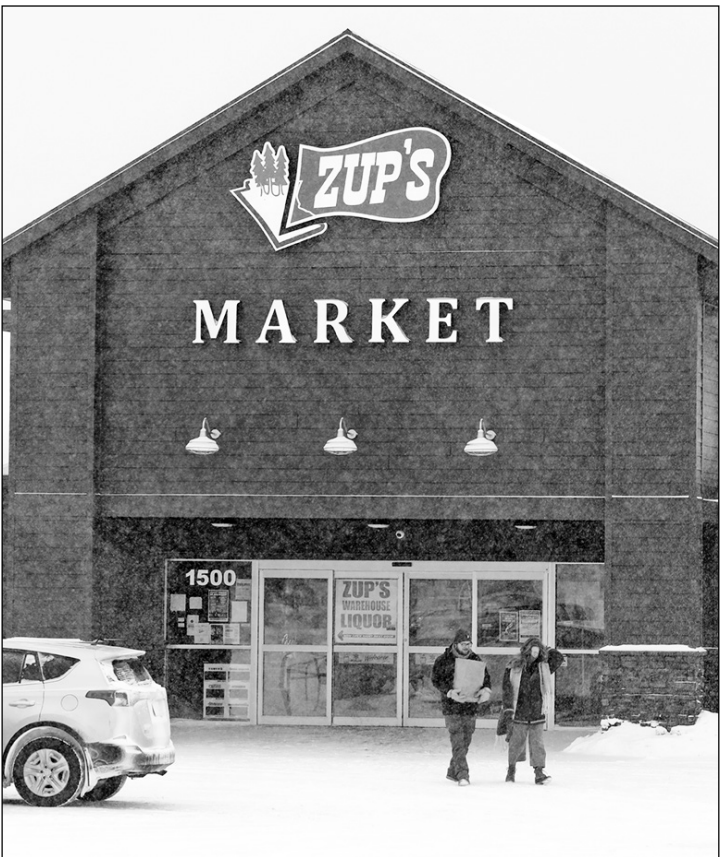
# IRRR assisted with Zup’s grocery expansion

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – The Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation is touting its involvement in the new Zup’s Food Market expansion project here. The \$7 million project, which allowed Zup’s Brothers, Inc. to greatly expand their retail grocery and provide additional services, was helped by a total of \$516,795 in IRRR community development grants passed through the city of Ely. A story on the project was included in a recent issue of *The Ranger*, the IRRR’s online newsletter.

The grants helped pay for sitework, foundation reinforcement and interior demolition as Zup’s Brothers, Inc. transitioned its operations from its existing building into a larger redeveloped building along Sheridan Street, less than one mile east of the former store.

“Our family and staff are deeply dedicated to the community of Ely, and to northeastern Minnesota,” said Jim Zupancich, co-owner of Zupancich Brothers, Inc. “Our new store offers quality food at good prices, and we’ve expanded our offerings to dry goods, apparel and medicines. We are very thankful to everyone



Customers leave the new Zup’s store in Ely last weekend as snow falls. photo by K. Vandervort

who worked to make this project possible, including our employees and our loyal customers who shop with us each week.”

Zup’s purchased the vacant Shopko building, expanded the

footprint and transformed it into a 36,000-square-foot grocery store featuring groceries, dry goods, a fresh deli, catering service, butcher shop, apparels, a liquor store, and a pharmacy.

Zup’s popular Old World sausage-making capacity was more than doubled in the new location. The 105-year-old northeastern Minnesota grocery enterprise officially opened its new doors in Ely last October. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for May.

Zup’s also purchased the Northland Market building, the city’s only other grocery store, and sold it, along with the prior Zup’s site. Both buildings are now under redevelopment. Former Northland Market owner Donna Richards and all of her employees are part of the new Zup’s operations, with some of their specialty items available for sale at the new location.

“The people and city of Ely benefited immensely from this business relocation and expansion. We’ve now have a great retail outlet with a large variety of products and services,” said Harold Langowski, Ely’s clerk-treasurer. “Plus, both the Northland and former Zup’s buildings are now sold and under redevelopment which created new investment into the downtown area.”

Zup’s is a family-owned business originally established in Ely in 1916 by John Zupancich. “Grandpa John” operated the business with his seven sons,

and it quickly became popular for its wide variety of products and Old-World sausages.

Today, Zup’s has four other locations (in addition to Ely) across the region including Cook, Babbitt, Tower and Silver Bay. All are owned by Zupancich Brothers, Inc. and operated by the founder’s grandsons and great-grandsons.

About 90 people are employed in the new facility, a combined workforce from Zup’s and Northland Market. In addition to serving local residents year-round, the new store is a key shopping destination for visitors to Ely and those on their way to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

“Zup’s is a vital part of the region’s economy and supplier of essential goods. It provides jobs and tax revenue to the region’s communities,” said IRRR Commissioner Mark Phillips. “Our agency’s infrastructure investment supported a solid business that has been committed to northeastern Minnesota for over a century.”

For Community Development grant information, email Chris Ismil or call him at 218-735-3010.

## MOLD...Continued from page 1B

array of unexplainable and serious physical symptoms. Medical testing has ruled out many possible explanations for her illness leaving them searching for other causes including those labeled “environmental”. A professional inspection and analysis finally pinpointed colonies of “black mold” in their home, very likely the culprit. Thorough decontamination was the only real solution. That would be our mission!

Anyone’s home can become infected with mold growth, commonly after incidents of basement flooding or seepage, roof leaks, excessive window condensation, or anywhere chronic moisture occurs. Many of us live with mold without our knowledge or concern but sometimes our immune systems become hyper-reactive, causing mild to even severe illness. In Hayley’s case, it was severe. Once black mold is detected, elimination becomes the goal.

Black mold is a fungus with a very important

function. It breaks down organic matter into nutrients that help sustain other plant and animal life forms. Decomposition is a necessary part of the natural life cycle and tends to cause little or no issue for most humans when encountered in outdoor settings. But once mold moves into indoor spaces, fungal reproduction produces spores that thrive on moist, decomposing wood and other organic materials, releasing toxic fumes into the environment, similar to volatile organic compounds (VOC’s). Both microscopic spores and mycotoxins can wreak havoc with our health. Corey’s basement didn’t smell of must or mildew, nor was there flooding other than the occasional washtub overflow or minor floor drain back up that when discovered were quickly dealt with. But those dusty boxes stored in corners hadn’t been moved in years....

Mold mitigation involves many steps. All

exposed surfaces must be thoroughly vacuumed, scrubbed with a concentrated solution of high-powered detergent, rinsed, and scrubbed again with a solution of hydrogen peroxide, vinegar or other anti-microbial agent. Any other exposed vulnerable surfaces must be wiped with peroxide and then coated with an anti-mold/mildew paint. Anything that couldn’t be treated by this process had to be discarded. As we completed the house tour, the magnitude of our mission became very clear. That evening we mapped our strategy and gathered supplies.

For the first four days we targeted the furnace and ductwork. Yikes! After a quick look, we suspected much of the system hadn’t been touched since its installation in 1957. For the next three weeks, we cleaned and treated every available surface, including the inner workings of the washer and dryer, and contents of every cabinet.

In my off-time, I

read pamphlets scattered about that explained mold “behavior”, its production of spores and mycotoxic fumes that when released, can enter the lungs and spread through our bloodstreams affecting other vital organs. I began recalling my previous encounters with indoor mold growing on surfaces that I’d given nothing more than an occasional wipe down, with little concern other than its unsightliness — places like the bedroom windows furthest from the wood stove, where warm air hits cold glass and condenses, creating a super-moist environment perfect for mold formation. Never will I look at those spots in the same way again. At first signs, I’ll be out with the scrub brush and peroxide to nip them in the bud!

Finally the day came when our mission was complete. The basement had been transformed from a dreaded unhealthy space to one big open room, with light in every corner, freshly scrubbed, decon-

taminated, and painted with tender, loving care. Truly livable!

Now, we thought, it’s time to move upstairs for Phase Two. Since no “hotspots” had been found there, my son felt confident that he could handle the main floor on his own. This meant I was relieved of duty. As I packed my bags, we recapped our success and patted each other on the back for a job well done. And with our final goodbye, I reminded him that I would remain on stand-by for further assistance.

As I made my way north, I reviewed our thirty-day sojourn “down under”. There was our “mission”, but it was also a time of getting reacquainted after twenty years living far apart... the memories we brought back to life, the previously untold personal sagas, some unknown chapters from our family history, and a lot of great music! Not once were there cross words. We were a team facing challenges, solving complex problems,

overcoming setbacks, and offering mutual encouragement and support. We felt proud of what we had accomplished together, and all in a spirit of love.

Hours later, I pulled into my driveway and turned the key with a sigh of relief. There was my little house intact, surrounded by trees that offered shelter from a stinging wind. After my month away, the cabin was engulfed by snow. I trod through the drifts and stepped inside, met by shadows and a subtle scent of woodsmoke. Oh, John had built a fire for me. Bless his heart. That warm welcome was all I needed to feel loved and happy to walk in that door.

Suddenly, I realized how everything fit together. This trip had shown me that Dorothy was right, but only when our house is safe and free of any threat to our health or well-being. Then, there really is no place like home!



Week of Feb. 14

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

Tower City Council- 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 14

**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 Feb. 15.

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

**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](http://vermilioncountry.org).

Skating parties set at Soudan Rink

SOUDAN- Skating parties will be held on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, weather permitting, after school at the Soudan Skating Rink. Jayne Sundeen is overseeing the skating parties this year. Hot and cold treats will be served. There will also be games out on the ice, and indoor games with Jayne in the warming shack.

Chimpy will be hosting a skating party on Saturday, Feb. 12 from 11:30 – 1:30 p.m. (or until the food runs out). Other weekend skating parties are being planned.

If you are interested in donating to help purchase the food for these events, contact Chimpy at Zup’s Grocery in Tower (people can make donations directly at Zup’s into the dedicated account).

The Soudan skating rink is open for skaters of all ages on weekdays from 4 to 8 p.m., and weekends from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. On holidays or other days that school is closed the rink is open from 11 a.m. to closing. The rink may close for inclement weather.

A separate skating rink for small children is now open.

Loaner skates are available in the warming shack, and boot skaters are always welcome.



by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

SOUDAN- With 40 years of service to Breitung Fire and Rescue, Steve Burgess was not ready to retire. But he was ready to usher in some younger leadership to the department. As of Feb. 1, Trevor Banks has assumed the role of Fire Chief, and Burgess is back to being what he was when he first joined the department, a regular volunteer fire fighter.

“I have proudly served as the Fire Chief of Breitung Fire and Rescue for 30 years,” Burgess said.

His biggest take-away from his time as chief has been the camaraderie found through the “brotherhood of fire service.”

“The department is not about having shiny new equipment,” he said.

“We believe in a culture that promotes service to the public in their time of need, the safety of our members, and the importance of being well-trained.”

“It is about the members I have proudly had the opportunity to lead,” he said. “My time as chief has been a great opportunity to lead, learn, and become a better person.”

Burgess joined the department 40 years ago. He grew up in Tower, graduating from Tower High School, and went to Vermilion Community College and then on to Bemidji. He and his wife Barb moved to Soudan shortly after the birth of their daughter, and Burgess worked at the Potlatch plant in Cook.

But the education he is most proud of is his longtime knowledge of firefighting, gleaned from years of training, classes, and on-call experience.

During that time, he has learned a lot about the science

**Tower-Soudan Elementary students had some afterschool fun with Jane Bradford and her helper Kim Zinski who led a Valentine’s Day craft class on Feb. 3. Youngsters cut, glued, and beaded their way through a variety of projects. The class was sponsored by Tower-Soudan Community Education. There are several upcoming craft classes for all ages. Preregistration is always required, and classes can be canceled if not enough people register. To register online, go to [slc2142.revtrak.net](http://slc2142.revtrak.net) and click on Tower-Soudan Community Ed.** photos by T. Trucano Majerle

SUPPORTING OUR FOOD SHELF

St. Martin’s hosting “Souper Bowl” fundraiser on Feb. 13

TOWER- The annual fundraiser for the Tower Area Food shelf, “Souper Bowl Sunday,” will be held on Sunday, Feb. 13. Volunteers at St. Martin’s will be serving a Booyah Dinner from 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the church social hall. Those attending will have the option to eat in or take

out. The cost is a freewill offering, and all proceeds are donated to the Tower Area Food Shelf.

This is the 18th year that St. Martin’s has hosted this event. The event began as a youth project but has now evolved into a parish project; the youth still participate but the adults of the parish

have joined in to assist. The work begins on Friday with the cutting of the vegetables, on Saturday the booyah and the desserts are made, and finally on Sunday the delicious meal is served.

Please join St. Martin’s to lend support to the Tower Area Food Shelf.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Breitung Fire Chief Burgess steps back from top role

Trevor Banks is Breitung’s new Fire Chief



Steve Burgess has stepped down from his role as Breitung Fire Chief, but is still an active member of the department. photo by J. Summit

and techniques of firefighting, along with fire department leadership. He began teaching fire fighter education classes, something he plans to continue. He also plans on providing mentorship and support, as needed, to the new chief as he begins his term.

“I wanted to help my community,” he said. After eight years on the department, he was promoted to assistant chief. Two years later, he assumed the role of fire chief, not realizing it was a job he would keep for 30 more years.

“I’ve been telling the department for four years that I was going to retire,” he said. “Thirty years is a long time.”

Burgess doesn’t expect the township to see another chief that stays for that long. The job, he said, has changed since he first started, and is more demanding and requires more time and training.

Banks is a veteran fire fighter and has been a member of the department since 1996. He has held

the role of Captain for the last nine years.

“Everything I know about fire fighting is because of Steve,” Banks said. “I’ve grown to be the person I am because of him.”

Banks is very aware of the size of the shoes he needs to fill.

“I hope to maintain the same level of professionalism that Steve has brought the fire department,” he said.

Banks is a St. Louis County Sheriff, and he started his career in law enforcement with the Breitung Police Department in 1994.

Burgess is most proud of the work done to move the fire department into its new dedicated quarters in the township’s newly renovated community center. Formerly, the department shared its space with the township government, which held its monthly meetings literally right next to the parked fire trucks.

When the township moved its maintenance department to an adjacent building, the former fire hall space was turned into township offices and a commu-

nity space. The fire department moved into the remodeled maintenance area, now brightly lit, with plenty of room for the department’s equipment, fire fighter lockers, and more.

The department now has 19 members, and about a third of them have at least 20 years of experience, Burgess said. The department meets once a month for a combined business meeting and training.

“There is a successful partnership between the township and our department,” said Burgess. “It promotes a positive culture.”

The fact that department members feel a sense of belonging, have a sense of pride in their work and training, have fun working on department goals, and feel appreciated by the township is key to their success, he said.

The new chief was voted on by fire department members, and then forwarded to the town board for final approval. Other officers this year include Matt Tuchel as assistant fire chief, Doug Carter as captain (previously held by Trevor Banks), and Lance Dougherty as lieutenant (previously held by Matt Tomsich).

The department, with its depth of experience, is seen as a leader in the area. The department has an automatic on-call paging system with both Tower and Greenwood, which means all three departments are initially paged for a fire in any of the three communities. Besides having four fire trucks, the department has a fire boat, rescue snowmobile, cold water rescue equipment, and extrication equipment. The department was formed in 1950.

VALENTINE’S DAY FUN



Above: Kim Zinski helps Shelby Troop with her project as Boone Broten looks on. Left: Jane Bradford gets Zaija Schroeder and Lily Russell started. Below: Ayva Anderson and Ivy Russell.



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Northern Community Radio  
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**89.9fm - Brainerd**  
**kaxe.org**



ELY MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

WINTER FROLIC

Ely high school students celebrated their “winter homecoming” last week



The 2022 Winter Frolic King and Queen, Matthew Janeksela and Willow Ohlhauser, were crowned last Tuesday at a pep rally. Royalty candidates also included Chase Sandberg, Jon Hakala, Drake Hanninen, Sydney Marshall, Lauren Olson and Abigail Reinbein. The high school band, below, provided entertainment.



Freshman Ben Leeson, above, and sophomore Ava Skustad, below, participated in feats of strength and skill during the pep rally. photos by K. Vandervort



Tuesday Group schedule

ELY – The Tuesday Group community educational lunch gathering meets every Tuesday at the Grand Ely Lodge. Participants have an opportunity to order lunch. For those interested in being a host, or who have a speakers suggestion, contact Lacey Squier by email at ElyTuesdayGroup@gmail.com or call her at 218-216-9141.

Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

**Feb. 15:** Peonies -- Minnesota’s Favorite Perennial with Laverne Dunsmore. Discover why Minnesota gardeners are so passionate about this perennial and why every northern garden should have one.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2021



dressed warm for winter  
first real thing in years rips  
snowflakes piling up

Libraries

Ely library

Hours: Monday – Friday,  
9:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.  
Closed on Saturday,  
Sunday, and holidays  
Phone: 218-365-5140

Babbitt library

Monday	Noon-6 pm
Tuesday	Noon-6 pm
Wednesday	Noon-6 pm
Thursday	Noon-6 pm
Friday	Noon-5 pm

Phone: 218-827-3345

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

SUPPORTING THE ARTS

Gardner Humanities Trust announces Spring Grants

ELY - The Donald G. Gardner Humanities Trust’s first grant cycle of 2022 has a grant application deadline of Monday, March 21.

“This will be the last time applicants will need to fill out a paper application,” said Keiko Williams, the Trust’s executive director. “The Trust is excited to roll out an online grant portal for its fall grant round this year. I think it will be a great improvement for applicants as they can either key in information and come back to it later. Or they can upload files already on their own computers.”

The Trust board recently updated its scholarship program to include Ely Public Library staff who are pursuing coursework in library science. “The board approved this change in its scholarship program because it supports not only our mission but also our community through the library and the services provided by its staff,” she said.

Artists and groups can apply for grants in the following five categories:

- Individual Artist Grants encourage developing and established artists with funding of up to \$1,000 to take advantage of an impending, concrete opportunity.
- Organization Project Grants support activities in the fine arts and for the Ely Public Library. Grant support is intended to make it possible for organizations

Keiko Williams to retire from charitable foundation

ELY - Keiko Williams, who has been the executive director for the Donald G. Gardner Humanities Trust since 2000, will retire by the end of June.

Her work with the board over the years to update and improve the financial and investment management of the original endowment will provide sustained arts funding for decades to come. The grant programs have also been updated to better serve the artists and art organizations of the Ely community; such as the Youth Grant and Community Giving Grant. Applicants will be able to use a new grant portal from the Trust website starting this fall that should improve the application process.

“I would like to credit the many dedicated community members who have volunteered as board members of the Trust during my time as executive director,” Williams said. “There have been so many great ideas from the board to enhance what the Trust already does and provide great art experiences for our community, its artists, arts organizations and the Ely Public Library. The city of Ely is also very supportive of our work and has always provided office space for the Trust. That is very appreciated

as it allows us to provide more funding for the arts each year.”

Williams has been well thought of in her position at the Trust, as shared by Liz Engelman, director of the Tofte Lake Arts Center. “As both an artist and an arts leader, Keiko’s contributions to the arts in Ely are unparalleled. Keiko creates community wherever she goes, and has taken the reins and lead strategically and programmatically to uplift the work of artists, the support for the arts, and the opportunities that artists need to thrive here in Ely. Whether it be as executive director at the Gardner Humanities Trust, board chair of Tofte Lake Center, educator or artist, Keiko wholeheartedly invests in sharing her time, talent, experience and enthusiasm with artists across generations, disciplines, and stages of career. Keiko’s personal and professional presence in this community has been foundational and inspirational,” she said.

A job description for the executive director position is available on the Trust website at [www.gardnertrust.org](http://www.gardnertrust.org). Applications for the position are due by April 1, 2022 and the position will begin on June 1, 2022.

to present or produce a fine arts activity.

► Youth Grants are awarded to Ely school students in grades 6-12 who have an interest in and demonstrate high motivation in the fine arts. The youth grants of up to \$750 can be used for workshops, classes, lessons or mentorships.

Youth Grant applicants need to schedule a grant review meeting with Williams to review draft

applications. This meeting is intended to help the individual youth make their applications as well written as possible. Youth Grant applicants must call or email Williams by Friday, March 4 to schedule their Grant Review Meeting.

► Scholarships are available for graduates of Ely Memorial High School who are in their third or fourth year of college studies or in graduate school. Trust scholarships

are awarded to students majoring in one of the disciplines of fine arts or library science. Scholarships are also available for staff of the Ely Public Library who are pursuing library science coursework.

► Operational Funding Grants fund high-quality, established Ely-area organizations that produce, or present fine arts activities or provide services to artists.

Individuals and organizations that would like

Registration is \$80 per team which will be collected at the event (cash or check only, please). This money will go to support ECR programming.

No yak-traks, skates or other grippy footwear will be permitted.

Sign up at <https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSfZL.../viewform...>

Broomball tourney this weekend

ELY – The Ely Jaycees Club will host a Broomball Tournament during the Ely Winter Festival on Sunday, Feb. 13 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Ely Rec Center.

No experience is necessary for this fun event. Brooms and helmets will be provided. Organizers encourage participants to bring

their own kneepads, elbow pads, and any other safety equipment.

Teams consist of five people playing at a time, plus up to five substitutes. The tournament is a double elimination event. The game will be played as a half-court version on the ERCrink. Minimum age is 16. All players must sign liability waivers. Spectators welcome.





# North Woods Winter Olympics

Junior Grizzlies go for the gold in educational extravaganza



North Woods elementary students got their own taste of the Winter Olympis last Friday with an afternoon festival created by their teachers, complete with Olympic music and aa grand procession.

Above left: Michael King, Cedar Holman, and Omari Mohamed ride a makeshift bobsled.

Above right: Jenny Burnett is propelled on a scooter as she tries to corral plastic balls with a basket.

Right: Addyson Manick leaps off a box as teacher Julie Holien supervises.

Bottom right: Annalee Miller catches a ball in front of classmate Daniel Zupancich.

Bottom center: Sarah Koch hides behind Silas Budrea as he gets ready to throw a ball.

Bottom left: Even makeshift bobsleds can crash, as Brittan Koskela, Alice Sopoci, Kalle Nelson, and Carsyn Burnett discover.

Left: Christopher Koch gives the Grizzlies' indoor version of curling a try.

D. Colburn photos



## NORTH WOODS SCHOOL SECOND QUARTER HONOR ROLL 2021-22

### A Honor Roll

#### Seniors

Erik Aune  
Morgan Burnett  
Tyler Chiabotti  
Bryce Chosa  
Ty Fabish  
Trey Gibson  
Alex Hartway  
Abby Koch  
Michaela Luecken  
Sean Morrison  
Jacob Panichi

#### Juniors

Cooper Antikainen  
Kohen Briggs  
Brielle Hujanen  
Loren LaFave  
Kiana LaRoque  
Karah Scofield  
Steven Sopoci  
Emily Trip

#### Sophomores

Evelyn Brodeen  
Jonah Burnett  
Annabelle Calavera  
Brandon Cook  
Emily Grah  
Addy Hartway  
Alexandra Holm  
Helen Koch

Riley Las  
Zefrym Mankowski  
Victoria Olson  
Autumn Swanson

#### Freshmen

Addison Burckhardt  
Alex Burckhardt  
John Carlson  
Ella Cornelius  
Ryder Gibson  
Aidan Hartway  
Sierra Schuster  
Amber Sopoci  
Lydia Trip

#### Eighth Grade

Lincoln Antikainen  
Isaiah Briggs  
Lauren Burnett  
Josephine Carlson  
John Danielson  
Isabelle Koch  
Brittin Lappi  
Victoria Mathys  
Isabel Pascuzzi

#### Seventh Grade

Alethea Bangs  
Corralyn Brodeen  
Presley Chiabotti  
Kaelyn Ehrbright  
Emarie Gibson

Andrew Hartway  
Carson Johnson  
Ella Kruse  
Sophia Mathys  
Victoria Phillips  
Merilee Scofield  
Kaycee Zupancich

### B Honor Roll

#### Seniors

Haley Bogdan  
Ivy Chaulklin  
Joshua Copeland  
Anthony Drift  
Samuel Fealy  
Erik Hagen  
Joseph Hoagland  
Kadence Holland  
Reuben Isham  
Sierra Jensen  
Nathan Palm  
Abigail Shuster  
Cole Snidarich  
Lillian Voges  
Ajay Zakrajshek

#### Juniors

Brenden Chiabotti  
Jared Chiabotti  
Dylan Cochran  
Thomas Debeltz  
Hannah Kinsey  
Lane Kneen

Grace Koch  
Benjamin Kruse  
Garrett Lappi  
Dillon Musakka  
Olin Nelson  
Anya Pearson  
Kaden Ratai  
Elias Smith  
Jacob Swanson  
Brian Swinson  
Avery Thiel

#### Sophomores

Hannah Cheney  
Sean Drift  
Talise Goodsky  
Evan Kajala  
Cadense Nelson  
Jessa Palmer  
Tiauna Peltier  
Madison Taylor  
Trinity Vidal  
Luke Will  
Anna Wilson

#### Freshmen

Kalvyn Benner  
Rory Bundy  
Aliya Ehrbright  
Nia Gaskell  
Talen Jarshaw  
Brielle Lindgren  
Jasmine Munson

Louie Panichi  
Richard Swinson

#### Eighth Grade

Levi Chaulklin  
Brynn Chosa  
Marriah  
Glowaski-Kingbird  
Mya Gogleye  
Charlize  
Lightfeather-Spears  
Blaze Markwardt  
Matthew Miller  
Scott Morrison  
Rogelio Noyes  
Payton Scofield  
Sadie Spears  
Megan Taylor

#### Seventh Grade

Alexander Boone  
Grace Bundy  
Kate Cheney  
Collin Grah  
Khloe Holland  
Augustine Jacobson  
Jordanna Lambert  
Elijah Lindgren  
Barbara Littlewolf  
Nathan Ploof  
Caleb Rutchasky  
Cash Rutchasky  
Aubrey Smith  
James Yernatich

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GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

Town board fumbles through meeting without an agenda

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOODTWP- In a meeting that started with an apology from Chairman Mike Ralston over the lack of an agenda, the Greenwood Town Board fumbled its way through its Feb. 8 meeting. “No agenda, no minutes from last month,” said Ralston. The board passed a motion to table approval of the January minutes, but never passed a motion to approve an agenda. They then proceeded with the treasurer’s report. Supervisor Sue Drobac noted that the printed report detailing receipts did not match the treasurer’s reported total of \$6,184. Treasurer Belinda Fazio went into her office to produce a correct printout, noting the treasurer’s report was missing its second page. Clerk Debby Spicer arrived slightly late to the

meeting and did hand out packets, but the attached agenda lacked anything under old or new business. She told the board that with all the “election stuff” she didn’t have time to prepare the agenda. She did tell the board they needed to act on the appointment of an absentee ballot board, which they did approve. **Employee versus independent contractor status** Fire Chief Dave Fazio told the board the entire department was in favor of going back to “volunteer” independent contractor status versus employee status, which would mean the township would issue 1099 year-end forms, instead of W2’s. This issue had come up at a previous meeting, and the board had asked the fire department for their input. Audience member Joanne Bassing pointed out that independent contractors were responsible

for paying the full cost of their own Social Security taxes, while employees get half of that tax paid by their employer. “More than one department member said the W2 income screws up their unemployment,” said Fazio. Bassing wondered if the township would still be responsible for workers compensation insurance if the members are not considered employees. “The township could get in trouble with the IRS,” she said. Supervisor Carmen DeLuca put a motion on the floor to make the change. But questions remained about the legality of the move. The township had switched fire department members to employee status back in 2016 due to advice from the Minnesota Association of Townships and their township attorney. “The fair labor standards act certainly allows it,” said Ralston. “They can

be paid up to 20 percent of what a full-time fire fighter would make.” “They do not fit being an independent contractor,” said Drobac. “We need to do more research.” Ralston said he would contact MAT for guidance, and the decision was tabled. **Board of Audit** The board conducted their Board of Audit, where townships are allowed to conduct a self-audit of the books from the previous year. Each supervisor was instructed to randomly choose a number for receipts corresponding to records from the calendar year 2021, and one random number for disbursements. Once a number was selected, the clerk and treasurer then presented the claim or disbursement that had been randomly selected. There was some confusion about some of these numbers not falling in the year 2021. The board had to note the books had a discrepancy in the township’s

end-of-year balance of \$150.51 (\$664,541.15 versus \$664,390.64)). Spicer said the problem appeared to be something in the CTAS accounting software they use and was working with MAT trying to track down the error. Spicer said she had spent about ten hours working on the issue with MAT over the weekend and was hoping to hear back soon so the problem could be corrected before the information needs to be submitted to the state. **Other business** In other business, the board: ➤ Heard that the fire department has purchased a 2016 Alumacraft boat with a 2018 25 hp Evinrude and trailer for \$11,000. The purchase was funded with a \$10,000 donation to the fire department and \$1,000 from fire department funds. ➤ Heard that the Heiam Foundation will be putting up a plaque to honor the township, because their

donations have now totaled over \$1,000. ➤ Clerk Spicer told the board she had erred in sending out individual emails requesting permission to attend a training. The registration deadline was before the next meeting date. She said the township attorney told her this wasn’t a violation of the open meeting law, because she is not a member of the board, but someone did question her actions and she apologized for the confusion. ➤ Ralston told the board he had prepared a draft request for proposals for a consultant to work on the idea of a regional ambulance service and would send it to the other supervisors to review, as well as send it out to those who receive notifications of township meetings. ➤ Heard the new water treatment system is scheduled to be installed on March 14.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Second-degree assault charges filed in Babbitt-area stabbing

BABBITT-A 70-year-old man was taken to the hospital in Ely late last month after he was allegedly stabbed in the neck by a 35-year-old woman. Amber Rose Pagel was arrested in the incident. She was booked on second degree assault

charges in Virginia last Wednesday, according to the St. Louis County Sheriff’s Department. Her bond was set at \$50,000. William George Dimich was treated for injuries he received from the altercation at Ely-Bloomenson Community

Hospital and released. According to police, a 911 call was placed by the victim in rural Babbitt around 3 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 29. The victim said he had been stabbed in the neck by a woman who was staying at his home. An

address was not released by the St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office other than saying it happened in “Unorganized Township U61R13, Babbitt, MN.” The sheriff’s report said the man was taken to the local hospital with what were believed to

be non-life-threatening injuries. The woman was treated for “superficial injuries” and then booked into the St. Louis County Jail. “This was an isolated incident and there is no danger to the public,” said Supervising Deputy Jon Skelton.

Assisting agencies were the Babbitt Police Department, Ely Police Department, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Embarrass EMS and the Ely Area Ambulance Service.

ISD 696...Continued from page 1

who were in attendance introduced themselves to Klarich. “It is my goal, and I assume it is the goal of the committee, to get through this pandemic together, to get to voluntary (masking) and then no-masking, eventually,” he said. “There is a plan and a way to get there. I know you worked extensively on that and I’m here to assist with that. I don’t know if we have to tweak it or not. I think as new metrics and numbers come in, we will be able to do more.” Klarich did not have any new COVID-19 public health updates from the Minnesota Departments of Health or Education to relate to the council. The St. Louis County Public Health Department representative did not participate in the meeting. Essentia Ely Clinic representative Heather Holthaus said the clinic has discontinued weekly COVID-19 vaccination clinics. “We had a clinic two weeks ago and vaccinated just 11 people,” she said, “including one child in the age 5-11 range.” Pfizer vaccines remain available Monday through Friday with an appointment. Coronavirus testing and positive cases continue their decline in Ely, according to Holthaus. “This is definitely a plus,” she said. A similar report of a

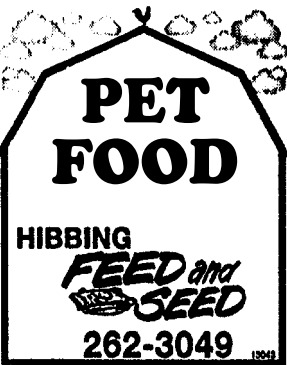
decline in reported positive COVID-19 cases was presented by Tiffany Zemke, of the Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital. Vaccines, both Pfizer and Moderna, remain available for distribution. R e c o m m e n d e d changes to the Ely Safe Learning Plan, in light of recent data, remain “in a holding pattern,” Klarich said. “We are waiting for a big break, preferably down, so we can start considering other options with the masking. I’m not saying this is going to happen overnight, but I think that as we have goals that are established, the principals and myself will be watching this very closely, as is everyone else on this committee. We will be open to further discussion as we watch the numbers, hopefully, reduce.” Devon Luthens, a parent, nurse and educator, and ELSPAC member since September, suggested that the COVID-19 case rate and data metrics in the Safe Learning Plan could be outdated. “There is a growing concern among parents that with all the changes that have taken place within the last couple of weeks, the metrics that we set could now be outdated,” she said. “Those were made to deal with the Delta variant and prior to the availability of (age) 5-11 vaccinations.” Luthens cited the vaccination rate in the Ely school community and

recent infection rates in saying “it would be reasonable to discuss that we have pretty good protection in our school population and maybe that (plan metrics) needs to be revisited.” She continued, “It is no secret that I want the mask mandate ended. There are lots of options for individuals should they choose to continue to mask that can provide protection.” Klarich responded, “Personally, I would like to see more movement of the cases going down. I do think we will have to start looking at this more closely as time goes on. I don’t think I’m ready to make a big move yet. If metrics need to be adjusted, I think this committee, as a group, would have to come to some sort of consensus on that to present it to the school board. Right now, let’s stay with what we have.” School board member Tom Omerza stressed the importance of hearing from local medical and health professionals on the effectiveness of the school face mask mandate compared to the rest of the

local community. Holthaus said, “That is a hard one to try to figure out. How things are going in town, that is hard to say. We don’t have anything to even try to research that.” “At what point are we going to make a move?” Omerza asked. “We have to make a move. I don’t think we are going to be in masks forever. Everybody on campus now has had the opportunity to get their first and second shots. There is a bit of ambiguity. Everybody is doing something different around the country and around the world. To get the local flavor from the local medical professionals would be nice to hear. I’m ready to listen and try to move forward with this.” Holthaus asserted that the Ely community seems to have reached the saturation point on vaccinations. “We’re not going to get there on vaccines,” she said. “I’m not seeing anybody coming in anymore. Whatever the vaccination rate is at the school is what it will be. I don’t see any improving in any shape or form. I think maybe we could be at our

(COVID-19) peak, and we might start to see a drop. I think that is the only way you’re going to get the masks off. Trust me, I want them off just as much as the next person, but I also want everyone to be safe.” Ely school district Athletic Director Tom Coombe weighed in. “I think it is obvious that now there is a train moving in a certain direction. Cases are going down and declining significantly in some parts of Minnesota, and there is no reason to believe that won’t happen here as well,” he said. “I hope that we are moving in the direction of having masks recommended. And I hope that is sooner rather than later. My hope is

that we jump on that train sooner rather than later.” Ely school nurse Betty Erickson also commented. “We’ve gone this far with masks. Let’s not jump ship and dive in without masks, and all of a sudden, some other virus (variant) comes along and here we are again back in the masks. I think we should give it some time. We have more time than anything to check this out. I think we’re doing fine here. Let’s not be in a hurry to rip off the masks. We’ll get rid of them eventually.” The next ELSPAC meeting is scheduled for the week before next month’s school board meeting at 3 p.m. on Monday, March 7.



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Call **365-2639** or email [info@gardnertrust.org](mailto:info@gardnertrust.org)  
Youth Grant applicants must call Keiko by Friday, March 4 to schedule a grant review meeting.



# ALS...Continued from page 1

he had been diagnosed with ALS.

“This is the largest snowmobile tour for a fundraiser in the world, I believe – it’s amazing,” Tomassoni said. “You can really see the positive effect it’s having on ALS in general, and that was shown this year by the HEALY trial that David’s now a part of.”

This was Tomassoni’s first time to actually ride in the event, but not her first time being involved with it.

“I had volunteered for the Blizzard tour years ago – a couple babies ago,” she laughed. “I was already really familiar with it, and I’ve donated to the cause. But this year really hit home after we got the diagnosis (for David) last summer. I just wanted to get even more involved, raise awareness and try to raise some money toward trying to find effective treatment and also a cure.”

With the help of family and friends, Tomassoni exceeded her goal to raise \$10,000, taking in \$11,420



Snowmobilers participating in last week’s 23rd annual Black Woods Blizzard Tour raised \$1.6 million to help in the fight against amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS. submitted photo

in donations, the highest of any first-time rider and 19th among all riders. Her mother and stepfather also participated in the event, Tomassoni said, and together they raised more than \$15,000.

But as important as the

fundraising is, Tomassoni said the relationships formed with other participants during the three-day trek, whose lives have also been directly impacted by ALS, is equally consequential.

“My favorite part of the entire experience was just gaining that sense of community with other people who have been there, because other people don’t really get it until you’re in it,” Tomassoni said. “It was just an outpouring of support because everyone there had a brother or a

father or a mother (with ALS). It was the first time since the diagnosis that we really found a community of people who rally around you, who tell you that you can call any time of the day, and you just met them five minutes ago. In the future, I want to be able to do that for someone else.”

Tomassoni said her father-in-law has coped remarkably well, despite his diagnosis.

“He is by far one of the most amazing men I’ve ever met in my life,” she said. “He just has a positive attitude. He’s staying

strong. He was just at the state capital last week, still out there working and representing the district. He wants to make a positive difference, given this diagnosis, and raise awareness and funding. It’s been amazing to see how he’s trying to find the bright side of it.”

Tomassoni said that her father-in-law has experienced some decline in motor function, which has given the family personal experience with the support Never Surrender can provide.

“It’s amazing what Never Surrender is doing for families with ALS,” Tomassoni said. “They’ve sent tools to help, and so we’re seeing both ends of this, what a great organization this is, how amazing the funds are that they’ve already contributed, and where we still have to go in the future.”

## Return to the Bay

When the riders revved up their engines in Proctor at the start of the tour last week, Fortune Bay Resort Casino was the ultimate destination on day one. It was a welcome return for the tour, as Fortune Bay wasn’t able to participate last year because of COVID-19 restrictions.

“Brian Anderson up there has been a great partner and helped us out,” said Kolquist, who noted the resort has been involved with the tour since its inception. “There was one year we didn’t have any snow, so we created the Blizzard Tour Olympics. We had a bunch of games and they helped

us with that. They’re really a partner with what we do, and they’ve been very good to us.”

Mindful of the current ongoing COVID surge, Fortune Bay took the additional precaution of serving the evening banquet in two groups, Tomassoni said. Riders who have collected more than \$100,000 were recognized with Blizzard Tour Hall of Fame awards. Tomassoni was recognized as rookie of the year, and the musical duo Deuces Wild from Duluth, who rode with the tour that day, again donated their performance talents as they have in years past, Kolquist said.

“This is an event we truly enjoy sponsoring,” said Anderson, Fortune Bay’s Director of Public Relations. “The work they do is very inspiring, and we are fortunate to be part of it. David Kolquist gave a motivating speech to those gathered for the event, so it is easy to see why all of the participants and sponsors are so passionate about the event.”

After breakfast Friday morning, tour participants headed off to Superior Shores, and completed the trek back to Proctor on Saturday. A “welcome home” celebratory dinner at Greysolon Ballroom in Duluth completed the activities.

With a mixture of humility and excitement, Kolquist talked about how the tour has grown since its first year’s fundraising of \$15,000 to an event that has raised over \$1 million for ALS for six consecutive years. He praised the contributions of around 100 volunteers who make the event possible.

“We have one employee, that’s all we have,” Kolquist said. “We don’t have an office. We’re about helping people with ALS. We’re all for volunteers.”

Kolquist was also excited to share the news that in December the Biden administration authorized \$100 million a year for the next five years for ALS research. Three years ago, the federal funding for ALS research was only \$5 million.

“Can we solve ALS? Yes, we just need to invest more in ALS,” Kolquist said. “So, we are making a difference, and we’re going to see significant changes in ALS here in the next couple of years.”

And while the research ramps up, Never Surrender will forge ahead with its fundraisers and support, driven in part by Kolquist’s memories of his brother, Kevin, who battled ALS for 11-and-half years before succumbing in 2007 at age 52.

“In 1995, my brother said, ‘Hope drives life,’” Kolquist said. “What he was meaning by that is that if you don’t have people raising funds and giving you hope, it’s a very hard disease to battle. What our events do is certainly give hope by raising money and having more people studying it to try to figure out the ALS puzzle.”

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# COVID...Continued from page 1

declining case rates don't reflect what hospitals in the region are seeing.

"In talking with health-care systems and the hospitals in the region, they're still full, they're still seeing a high, high caseload of COVID patients," he said.

That runs counter to what's been reported for the southern portion of the state, where capacity issues are easing, but it's not surprising that we're not seeing that here yet, Leslie said.

"From what I've seen over the past couple of years, I'd say we in the Northland are always behind a little bit," Leslie said. "If you see a surge elsewhere, usually it takes awhile to get to us. I think a lot of that has to do with distance and the rural nature of St. Louis County."

Also impacting the hospital crunch is the fact that increases in hospitalizations and death rates typically lag behind changes in case rates by two to three weeks, and that even with the significant drop in cases, the rates remain higher than during many periods of the pandemic.

Two other factors also potentially confound the case rate numbers and may result in underreporting actual case numbers. One of those is the prevalence of at-home testing, which isn't accounted for in MDH data unless a person gets a confirmatory test through a community healthcare provider.

The other factor, Leslie said, is the number of people who are getting tested. As Leslie works out of the county offices in Hibbing,

he's well acquainted with what's happening in the special testing sites in the Iron Range.

"I help lead the testing clinics we have up in the north," Leslie said. "We're doing three clinics a week in Virginia, Eveleth and Ely right now. We haven't seen huge demand, especially in our northern sites. At one time what we heard from the (state-sponsored) DECC site was that they had huge lines, but we just didn't see that need or uptake up north." Leslie also noted that demand at the county clinics may not reflect what's happening with other testing options such as community health care centers. He did say that a testing site in Hibbing

operated by the Minnesota National Guard has shut down so that personnel could be reassigned to help out with staffing shortages in nursing facilities.

Having multiple entities involved in providing services such as testing and vaccinations has sometimes been challenging during the pandemic, Leslie said, and can occasionally lead to some confusion for the public.

For example, the county health department has received an allocation of masks from the state that they are distributing to targeted and disadvantaged populations through community organization partnerships, Leslie said. However, those masks are separate from the allot-

ments the Biden administration is sending to states for distribution. "We don't have anything to do with that," Leslie said. "We haven't been told we're getting a supply, and I think most of those are going to be distributed among pharmacies and health care systems. We do meet weekly with the healthcare systems and try to do our best to coordinate with other county and area health care partners to do what we can."

Another measure used to compare different regions of the county has recently been showing that the northern region has fared far better than elsewhere in numbers of COVID infections, but Leslie said it's difficult

### COVID-19 tests at VCC

ELY – Free testing for COVID-19 continues in Ely for the foreseeable future by the St. Louis County Public Health Department.

The free weekly testing is offered "as long as the need remains high" on Thursdays from 1-3 p.m. at the Vermilion Community College gymnasium.

The county operated the testing site in Ely on a trial basis for two weeks and made it a semi-permanent site. Both nasal swab antigen tests, which provide results on one to three hours, and PCR saliva tests, with results typically provided in one or two days, are available. No appointment is necessary.

to know just what those numbers actually reflect. "These are all testing numbers, and you're not going to have a case unless you've had testing," he said. "Are people more apt to test in the Duluth area than the northern part of the county? Maybe those numbers are lower, but what's the context? Maybe they don't have as much access to testing. So, I really have a hard time saying one way or the other because of this or that."

"But again, as I said, the numbers are promising," he concluded.

## Pink Ribbon Riders cancel Ely event

ELY - The 2022 Pink Ribbon Riders Minnesota Snow Run fundraising event, scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 12, at the Grand Ely Lodge, is called off for lack of interest.

According to the group's Facebook post, "a decision was made, with the help of the current participants for the event, that there were not enough people attending overall for the event to go forward."

The annual Snow Run event in Minnesota is the main fundraiser for the giving that happens throughout the year, raising \$31,000 last year. "Our hopes are that we can postpone the event to something in the near future," organizers said.

"As we say, cancer does not cancel, we will not cancel the effort, we will come back big and strong hopefully in these crazy times. We are so lucky to have the support from those that were registered to help us make this very tough decision to not create further expenses and to focus on a future event or correlate into something that PRR is involved with in the near future."

The organization will be live on Facebook on Saturday, Feb. 12, at 6 p.m. to recognize their pledge program and participants for the 2022 Minnesota Snow Run.

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VERMILION COUNTRY SCHOOL

Farming and environment focus of schoolwide project

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editorw

TOWER- Where does our food come from? How is it produced? What are the environmental impacts? And what can be done to reduce the environmental impacts of the food we eat?

Students at Vermilion Country School delved into these questions, and more, as part of a schoolwide environmental education project this winter.

“We are so far removed from where our food comes from,” said VCS science teacher Paula Herbranson.

Students watched a documentary that featured a Canadian chef and his quest to find out where all his restaurant’s food was coming from, as well as finding ways to reduce the environmental impact of



**Dakota Hanninen researched the poultry industry for the environmental impact project at Vermilion Country School.**  
photo by J. Summit

Projects were presented to a small group of judges, consisting of school staff and volunteers, along with a peer judge. As part of the presentation, students also answered questions from the judges.

“Most of the students did a really nice job,” said Herbranson.

Students often were surprised at the multiple ways food production could impact the environment: excessive water usage, pollution caused by manure runoff, animal cruelty, issues related to herbicide

his purchasing decisions.

Then each student chose a food product and spent a couple of weeks researching how it was grown, what the environmental impacts were, and what could be and is being done to grow that product in a more sustainable manner.

The goals of the project

were to get students to see what the problems were and what could be done to reduce them.

Students had the option of presenting their research in any medium. While many chose more traditional posters or brochures, others wrote poems, created songs, or made podcasts.

and pesticide use, and more.

Many students said their research was making them think more about the choices they make when buying food.

“I learned some things I didn’t want to know,” said Dakota Hanninen, who researched the poultry industry. She related how injured chickens are culled from farms. “It’s so sad.”

On the other hand, Dakota said, chicken manure helps with soil health.

Brandi Strange researched almonds, finding out that about 80 percent of our crop is grown in California. Fruits and nuts that grow on trees can be environmentally friendly, because they do not require replanting every year. But these trees require a lot of water, which

is increasingly becoming a problem because of frequent droughts in California.

Alyssa Costello found that peaches, on the other hand, while requiring significant amounts of water, are generally grown in areas with enough natural rainfall. But there can be significant environmental impacts from the fertilizer and pesticides required.

Almost every project showed the complex reality of our commercial food production system. Students do get a chance to grow some of their own food, using the school’s solar greenhouse.

And hopefully, one day, some of these students will be working on finding out better ways to grow food on a large scale.

SNOW...Continued from page 1

ident of this community at the end of the road, moving from Fort Collins, Colo. in 2012. The Louisiana native moved to Ely with his wife and daughter when his wife, Leslie, accepted the position of director of programs at Northern Tier High Adventure Base.

Many around Ely know him as “Mr. T,” the name he is called while substitute teaching in the Ely School District, or leading the local Cub Scout Pack.

He was born in Baton Rouge in 1974. Thibodeaux attended a magnet arts high school and graduated from college with a Bachelor’s degree in Arts despite always claiming and desiring to be an electrical engineer.

He was introduced to the Ely Winter Festival Snow Sculpting Symposium about a decade ago when the family visited the community just prior to moving here.

“Leslie moved out here ahead of time and we came to visit right at the time the Winter Festival was going on,” he said. “That looked like a cool thing to do.”

He said that his Louisiana roots, with Mardi Gras celebrations, jazz fests, crawfish boils, and a real community spirit, fit right in with what he experienced in Ely at his first Winter Festival.

“We were complete strangers coming into town and we were welcomed,” he said. “That was something I wanted to be part of.”

Their first snow sculpting attempt, which included their daughter Tracy, three years old at the time, involved the smaller amateur or com-



**The Ely Winter Festival commemorative pin, above, is recreated in a snow sculpture at the Front Porch Coffee and Tea Co. on Sheridan Street. At right, Sigurd and Soren Kubes, of Ely, checked out the snow cabin snow sculpture, created by Rock Country Masonry, at Whiteside Park. Below, Deneena Hughes, of the “Eh Team,” works on a face in the snow.**

photos by K. Vandervort

munity snow blocks hosted by the Northern Lakes Arts Association.

“I was able to go out in the park and carve snow with Tracy,” Thibodeaux said. “That first weekend, all of a sudden, all these people showed up, walked around and talked to us. There was that same feeling I had growing up down in Louisiana.”

His snow sculpting efforts improved over time, but not without many trials and errors.

“I’m still not a pro. There are artists in town that are way better than me.” He noted Chris Koivisto’s “Fishing Gear” work with all the intricate detail, and

the German artist who created the geometric art.

“There are so many techniques and skills in snow sculpting that I don’t have,” Thibodeaux added. He questioned if he was the right person to be an ambassador of the Snow Sculpting Symposium. “But maybe I can be. I love to talk. I love to teach as well.”

He talked about some of the simple tools he likes to use, like a cross cut saw, hand saw, dry wall saw, and putty knives.

“Anything with a nice sharp tooth on it will cut through snow like butter,” he said. “That snow they pack into the forms is solid

and hard.”

The type of sculpting done at the Ely Winter Festival is subtractive sculpture.

“You have to see it in there. You have to look at that block and think there is something in there, and the work is removing everything that it is not,” Thibodeaux said.

He noted that the “real” work is moving all the snow out of the way that was removed from the block.

This year Thibodeaux and his daughter created a moon with a crystal bloom coming out of it and a sun face to it.

“My daughter is my partner. She’s my muse. She gives me my ideas. Tracy wanted crystals. She said you need the air and water to cleanse the crystals. That’s the snow. She also said you need the sun and the moon to recharge the crystals. They help bring balance and order to your life. Wow. We need a lot of that right now,” he said.



It took about 20 hours to complete. He said his carving partner was noticeably absent this year from the project. “The number one job of carving is scooping snow. A 13-year-old will sour on scooping snow very fast. I told her I’m going to have to see a little more output from her next year if she wants to stay on the team.”

Thibodeaux carved the smaller blocks from 2013 to 2018 and moved to the big blocks in 2019. Since then, he has continued to work on a smaller block carving project to continue

supporting NLAA.

“I also work with our Cub Scouts here in town to carve a block of snow over at Carefree Living to take the Winter Festival across town and not just in Whiteside Park,” he said.

“My snow carving would never have happened if it weren’t for the Winter Festival and NLAA,” he said. “The carving symposium has always been very welcoming to me. Ely and some of the things going on around here have really led to my advancement as an artist. Big kudos to the town in what you are and who you are.”



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## GIRLS BASKETBALL

# Wolves maul Huskies

Madeline Perry racks up 26 points to lead all scorers

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

ELY — Madeline Perry had a big night here during a Tuesday night makeup game, as she poured in 26 points to lead the Timberwolves to a 70-43 rout over Bigfork. The win

**Left: Ely’s Madeline Perry goes in for a layup. Perry led all scorers Tuesday night, with 26 points.**

photo by J. Greeney

improved Ely’s record to 10-8 as they head into the final two weeks of the regular season.

“Our defense has been improving and will have to keep doing so as we head into the playoffs,” said Ely Head Coach Max Gantt.

Ely led pretty much start to finish against the Huskies. Perry racked up a dozen points in the early going as the Wolves built a 34-21 lead by the break. Grace LaTourell had a hot hand as well, adding 17 points to Ely’s

effort. Madeline Kallberg was the third Ely player to hit double digits, with 12 points.

“We played great man-to-man defense in the second half,” said Gantt. “Madison Rohr and Sarah Visser were solid on both ends for us as well.”

Tuesday’s win came on the heels of a Monday drubbing at the hands of the state’s top-ranked Class A girls

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

## GIRLS BASKETBALL

# Tigers edge Grizzlies

North Woods routs Red Lake

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELDTWP- Tuesday night’s 72-63 home loss to the Cherry Tigers put the North Woods girls basketball team squarely in the postgame world of “what if” and “if only.”

What if the Grizzlies had been able to maintain a frenetic first-half pace in which they led the Tigers by as many as seven points during a ten-minute stretch?

If only they hadn’t gotten “so tired,” as Head Coach Liz Cheney put it, in the closing minutes of the half, giving Cherry a window to reel off a 15-4 spurt to grab a 34-24 lead at the break.

What if the Grizzlies hadn’t come out flat in the second stanza, allowing the Tigers to surge to a 21-point lead with five minutes to play?

If only the Grizzlies had opened the half the way they closed it, with a sharp and aggressive 18-6 run, this game may well have had a different outcome.

Tied 8-8, the Grizzlies grabbed the first sizeable advantage of the game when Talise Goodsky followed a Hannah Kinsey jumper with two buckets and a free throw on consecutive trips down the floor for a 15-8 edge. But with about three minutes left in the half, Cherry hit the first of three treys that fueled a 15-point run that the Grizzlies could only answer with two Kinsey buckets.

North Woods’ goose was apparently cooked with Cherry leading 66-45 with under five minutes to play, but a Goodsky trifecta pumped new life into the slumbering Grizzlies. The Tigers hadn’t yet dipped deeply into their bench, but the same players who had seemingly buried the Grizzlies were suddenly powerless to stop

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

## BOYS BASKETBALL

# Grizzlies get back on track

Break three-game skid with big wins over Blackduck and Greenway

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

BLACKDUCK- In demolishing Blackduck and Greenway this past week by a combined margin of 67 points, the North Woods boys put their three-game hoops losing streak solidly behind them.

In both the Grizzlies’ 87-50 home win on Friday against Greenway and their 84-54 road triumph Monday at Blackduck, the victory margins were less

**Above: Jonah Burnett ties up a Greenway ball handler for a possession change.**

**Right: The Grizzlies’ Jared Chiabotti puts up a shot against a Greenway defender.**

photos by D. Colburn

impressive than how they got there.

Three-balls have been

*See GRIZZLIES...pg. 2B*



## HOCKEY

# Ely slips 4-2 in final game on home ice

Notches fourth win of the season during Friday night action in Siren

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – The Timberwolves scored first, but North Shore scored more as they spoiled Ely’s final home hockey game of the season with a 4-2 victory.

Ely sophomore forward Drew Marolt lit the lamp at the 4:43 mark of the first period, with an assist from Deegan Richards. But Ely’s early advantage didn’t hold as the Storm answered with back-to-back goals at 9:11 and 14:24, to take a

2-1 lead.

Marolt scored again at 8:05 in the second period, assisted by Logan Loe, to tie the score in what proved to be a close contest. North Shore took a 3-2 lead on an unassisted one-timer at 12:27. The Storm held on to their slim lead until the 16:56 mark in the third period when they sealed the deal with a late goal.

Ely had four shots on goal in the first period, eight in the second period, and 11 in the final frame for a total of 23 scoring chances.

**Right: Ely senior goalie Chase Sandberg deflects a shot during Monday night’s game against North Shore.**

photo by K. Vandervort

North Shore had 39 shots against the Timberwolves’ senior goalie Chase Sandberg. Each team was called for one penalty in the game.

The Timberwolves traveled to Siren, Wis., last Friday night and beat the Blizzard co-op team,

*See HOCKEY...pg. 2B*





BOYS BASKETBALL

# Wolves fall to Deer River, Eveleth-Gilbert

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

DEER RIVER— It was a long bus ride back to Ely on Tuesday as the Timberwolves nursed a 99-49 shellacking here at the hands of the Warriors. “It was ugly from the start for us as they shot extremely well

and we turned the ball over too many times which led to many easy layup baskets for them,” said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald. “We struggled on both ends of the floor and Deer River took it to us.” Ely’s Joey Bianco led scoring for Ely, with 18 points and six rebounds, while Harry Simons

added ten points. It was a different game entirely for the Wolves last Friday when they hosted Eveleth-Gilbert, yet the outcome was the same as they lost 66-57. Ely played a strong first half, building a 50-38 lead by the half. But a second-half, 18-point run by the Golden Bears

turned the tide. “They shot the ball well in that stretch but we just got cold and lost the momentum,” said McDonald. Simons led the way for Ely in the game, connecting for seven treys as he racked up 25 points on the night, along with seven rebounds. Joey Bianco

had another good night as well, racking up 20 points, eight boards, and six assists. The Timberwolves head to Aurora on Friday to take on Mesabi East. They’ll be back on home hardwood on Tuesday, when they’re set to host Lakeview Christian.

## NW GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

them. With North Woods getting scores from Hannah Cheney, Kiana LaRoque, Tatum Barto, Goodsky, and Kinsey, and a revitalized defense forcing turnovers and intimidating Cherry shooters, the Grizzlies handily won the last skirmish of the game to close to within a more respectable nine-point deficit at the end. “We could’ve pulled this win off, and we just said that to the girls,” Coach Cheney said. “If they would have played like that last three or four minutes for the whole second half, this would’ve been different.” Goodsky and Kinsey tied for scoring honors with 17 each, and Cheney

dropped in nine second-half points. **Red Lake** North Woods rolled into its Feb. 3 home game against Red Lake as the favorite to pick up a win against the 6-12 Warriors, and the Grizzlies delivered, streaking to a 22-7 lead en route to a 68-49 beatdown. Cheney had the hottest hand in this one, hitting for 19 points as the Grizzlies led by as many as 31 in the second half. Goodsky and Kinsey weren’t far behind, with each tallying 14 points. “It was a fun game for the girls,” Cheney said. “We had good scoring happening, our press worked well for us, most everyone got

**Right: Talise Goodsky shoots from the paint during Tuesday night’s contest with Cherry.**

photos by D. Colburn

to see some playing time, so it was a good all-around effort.” With six games remaining in the regular season, the 10-9 Grizzlies have already doubled last season’s win total. North Woods was scheduled to host Fond du Lac on Thursday before back-to-back road trips on Monday and Tuesday to 7AA foes Mesabi East and Greenway. After a day of rest, the Grizzlies will square off at home against Ely on Thursday, Feb. 17.



## GRIZZLIES...Continued from page 1B

missing the mark for North Woods in the five games since they scorched the net with 41-percent accuracy against Floodwood on Jan. 11. The Grizzlies haven’t reached their season average of 30 percent since, dropping only 27 percent against both Greenway and Blackduck. What’s carried them to blowout wins in the past two games has been their inside game. The Grizzlies nailed a red-hot 60 percent of their two-pointers against Blackduck, and an even more astonishing 72 percent against Greenway. **Blackduck** The 12-5 Drakes looked as though they could be a stern test for the Grizzlies. They came into the game with a three-game win streak that included routs of 34 and 50 points,

and Blackduck had a height advantage at several positions. But the Grizzlies neutralized that advantage with withering defense that generated 28 turnovers, and they out-rebounded the Drakes on both ends of the floor, 41-31. North Woods scored its fair share of breakaway buckets, but the Grizzlies were at the top of their game in their halfcourt offense, whether dumping the ball down low to Sean Morrison or slashing into the lane and shooting or dishing the ball to an open teammate. Brenden Chiabotti had a knack for spotting other Grizzlies, collecting six of the team’s 19 assists. This game was more about relentless domination by the Grizzlies than flashy streaks, as North Woods

rolled to a 37-20 halftime lead and continued the onslaught with a 45-point second half for the win. “I thought our passing was outstanding,” Grizzlies Head Coach Will Kleppe said. “We really moved the ball well and used some inside-out action to get some quality shots. I think Coach (Jerry) Chiabotti really has the defense clicking these past two games. We are getting some excellent off-ball defense and guys are moving up in the passing lanes to get deflections and steals. We want to keep the opposing offense scrambling because we aren’t exactly surrounding the baskets with 6’5” and taller guys.” But the strong inside game on offense and the rebounding edge show the Grizzlies weren’t intimi-

dated by the Drakes. “We have some guys playing up around the rim regardless of height,” Kleppe said. “They hear it from us coaches often that the game at this level is played high in the air. I think Jared (Chiabotti), T.J. (Chiabotti), Alex (Hartway) and Sean (Morrison) are literally elevating their rebounding game. We are getting up in the air quickly on the boards and being physical with the ball, and that neutralizes some opposing height.” T.J. Chiabotti hit three treys and dropped in 23 points to lead the Grizzlies, followed by Morrison with 18 and Jared Chiabotti with 13. All 11 Grizzlies who played scored. **Greenway** North Woods used much the same strategy in

manhandling Greenway when the Raiders came calling last Friday. The Grizzlies dominated the glass with 41 rebounds to Greenway’s 21 and forced 22 turnovers. They dished out 16 assists with Brenden Chiabotti again leading the way. North Woods connected on 26 of the 36 shots they took inside the arc and 22 of 31 shots from the paint. The Grizzlies also got to the charity stripe 28 times, knocking down 17. And as they did against Blackduck, the Grizzlies steadily and surely pulled away, leading 39-24 at the half and outscoring the Raiders 48-26 in the second period for the lopsided win. Jared Chiabotti went 8-of-11 from the field and led the team in scoring with 18 points. T.J. Chiabotti

was right on his heels with 16 points, nine of those coming at the free-throw line. Brenden Chiabotti was the other Grizzly in double figures with 12. North Woods could be looking toward an extended winning streak as its next five opponents all have losing records, but those five games also come within a span of only eight days, which will test the Grizzlies’ stamina. North Woods had road games scheduled for Thursday and Friday against Fond du Lac and Littlefork-Big Falls before returning home to face International Falls next Tuesday. After taking Wednesday off, the Grizzlies will be back on the hardwood Thursday at Virginia and return home Friday to tackle Mesabi East.

## HOCKEY...Continued from page 1B

6-4, for their fourth win of the year. Ely’s junior forward Logan Loe drew first blood early, scoring an even-strength goal, assisted by Wes Sandy, to take a 1-0 lead. The Blizzard answered just a minute later and scored again at the 2:34 mark to take a 2-1 lead. Drew Marolt, assisted by Alex Merriman, evened

the score at two at the 7:25 mark. Siren took a 3-2 lead at 2:32 in the second period but Loe came right back for Ely, scoring his second goal of the night, with an assist by Kayden Zupancich. Marolt scored twice more in the third period, notching a hat trick, both times assisted by Loe, to give Ely a 5-3 advantage.

Siren came back to score on a power play late in the game, closing the gap to 5-4, but Kole Macho provided the insurance just 25 seconds later, on an assist by Marolt. Ely had 25 scoring chances for the night, to Siren’s 33. The Timberwolves played an aggressive game with seven penalties. Siren was tagged

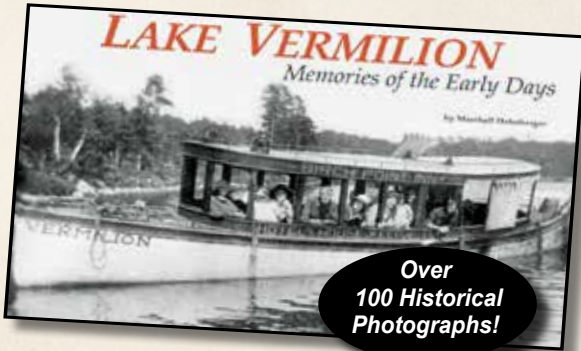
with four infractions. Against the Park Rapids Panthers last Thursday, Ely lost 4-1 on home ice. A late-game goal for the third time in a row saved the Wolves from a shutout. Ely skaters had 18 scoring chances for the game, while Park Rapids peppered Ely senior goalie Chase Sandberg with 52 shots on the mark.

The Panthers scored at the 3:24 mark in the first frame, and again at 12:52 to take a 2-0 lead. Neither team scored in the second period. The Timberwolves opened the third period with an unassisted goal at 2:04 by Kole Macho to close the gap to 2-1. Park Rapids came back at 11:08 and again less than a minute

later to take the 4-1 victory. Both teams had six minutes of penalty box time on three infractions. The Timberwolves were scheduled to travel to Moose Lake on Friday, Feb. 11 and to close out the regular season on Saturday, Feb. 12 with a home game against Mora, to be played at Babbitt.

## Memories of the Early Days

A fascinating look back at the early history of the Lake Vermilion area  
Written by Marshall Helmlinger • Published by the Timberjay



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## ELY GIRLS...Cont. from page 1B

team. Mt. Iron-Buhl, now 19-3, proved too much for the Wolves, as they fell 89-25 in Mt. Iron. “MI-B is number one in the state for a reason,” said Gantt. “They are extremely good.” The Rangers took a 60-12 lead into the break and let some younger players get in on the action in the second half. Grace LaTourell led Ely scorers with seven points, while Madison Rohr added six and Madeline Perry added five. Despite the loss, Gantt said the game was helpful. “It’s cool for us to play them and get that experience. We learned and get to see what that high standard of basketball looks and feels like. Hopefully that will make us a better team this year and next.” The Wolves had more success last Thursday as a second-half rally lifted them to a 55-38 victory over Eveleth-Gilbert. The Wolves trailed

by one midway through the second frame, but were up by as much as 19 within minutes. Madeline Perry poured in 12 points in the second half to lead the charge on her way to a game-leading 18 points, along with five steals. Sarah Visser notched a double-double, with 12 points and 11 rebounds. Madison Rohr added nine points for the Wolves. “Our man-to-man defense was as good as it’s been all year,” said Gantt. “We played a complete game, took care of the ball, and hit open shots. And we played stellar defense.” The Wolves were set to face tough competition when they host Mesabi East Thursday night. “That will be another good test for us,” said Gantt. Ely is scheduled to host Fond du Lac on Monday, with a 6:30 p.m. varsity start.



CLEAN WATER

VNP wastewater plan a mix of upgrades and new systems

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Voyageurs National Park, the only water-based park in the national parks system, is a 341-square-mile wonderland of forests, waterways and islands that attracts close to a quarter of a million visitors a year.

To ensure that the park’s waters remain clean and suitable for human recreational activities well into the future, the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board (VNPCJPB) has updated its comprehensive wastewater plan for the four access areas bordering the park.

The process began in 2020, with a target date of January 2021 for completion, but various challenges obtaining data for needs assessments and getting feedback delayed its completion by a year.

Developed by engineering firm SEH, Inc., the plan encompasses Ash River Unincorporated Areas, Crane Lake Water and Sanitary District, Kabetogama Township, and Rainy Lake/Rainy River Watershed. It incorporates existing infrastructure where feasible and recommends additional development strategies and system upgrades where deemed appropriate.

Each overall service area was broken down into smaller segments and a needs assessment was performed by SEH considering existing properties and those suitable for future residential or commercial development. Lacking the resources to conduct on-site inspections, SEH relied on a state-recommended alternative mix of soil survey data, government property records, and a review of plat maps to conduct the assessment.

In each of the four service areas, remote and sparsely populated areas will continue to be served by on-site septic systems, as building out the necessary wastewater collection system would be financially prohibitive.

Recommendations for areas with higher population and denser potential development encompass all three phases of wastewater processing, those being collection, treatment, and effluent discharge.

A key collection component to be utilized in all four service areas is low-pressure sewage grinder pumps. These units, installed at each structure, collect wastewater in a

chamber until rising water levels trigger a grinder that pulverizes any waste solids. The resulting fine waste slurry is ejected into plastic piping and conveyed by gravity to a larger pressurized plastic forcemain leading to a treatment location.

Estimated costs for recommended improvements include a 30-percent contingency and 25-percent engineering cost. Estimates do not include permanent easements or right-of-way acquisition.

Ash River

The needs assessment determined that there are approximately 81 existing wastewater producing parcels, including seven resorts, and another 47 properties with development potential in two of the three subdivisions of the Ash River Service Area. The third subdivision was not considered as a likely location for development and was not assessed.

A total of 32 existing septic systems were assessed as potentially non-compliant. Those systems will would be replaced or upgraded and properly maintained under the plan.

For the two main Ash River subdivisions, SEH recommends low-pressure grinder pump stations feeding into a centralized aerobic treatment system, as a traditional gravity-based collection would be infeasible due to the high bedrock and water table in the area and the bury depths required. Effluent from the treatment system would be discharged through a soil-based subsurface dispersion system.

The estimated cost for the recommended improvements would be \$24.437 million.

Crane Lake

Crane Lake was subdivided into 12 service areas encircling the lake and including its islands. The Crane Lake Water and Sanitary District wastewater treatment system services the most densely populated subdivision, including nine resorts and businesses, with the potential to serve a new national park campground.

There are approximately 200 wastewater producing parcels and 170 properties potentially developable in 11 of the 12 subdivisions.

Across all subdivisions, SEH assessed 66 existing septic systems as potentially non-compliant.

The recommended plan for Crane Lake focuses on the existing centralized low-pressure grinder pump system. The system can be expanded to accommodate future development within the subdivision. An additional alternative for seasonal properties with existing septic systems is to use the systems for preliminary on-site treatment and attach pumps to convey the effluent to the treatment plant for final treatment.

For properties in service areas further away from the existing centralized collection and treatment system, SEH indicated that septic systems with mound treatment systems are likely the most feasible alternative.

The estimated cost for the recommended improvements would be \$19.294 million.

Kabetogama Township

Nine subdivisions were established for portions of Kabetogama Township with Kabetogama Lake frontage, eight of which were analyzed for current use and potential development.

The subdivision, including Woodenfrog Campground, Voyageur Park Lodge, Moosehorn Resort and six other resort properties, referred to as K2 in the report, is partially served with a centralized collection and treatment system. Subdivision K4, which includes Northern Lights Resort, already has a collection and treatment system.

Development potential is more restricted in the area, as SEH identified 28 potential development properties. There are approximately 219 existing wastewater producing parcels.

SEH recommends connecting a subdivision adjacent to K2 by grinder stations to K2’s existing treatment system, which would have to be expanded to accommodate the increased flow.

Subdivision K4 would remain decentralized. Four subdivisions are recommended for centralized treatment via low-pressure grinder station pumping systems with a centralized treatment system and subsurface discharge, and two nearby resorts also could connect to the system.

SEH recommends that the subdivision at Slate Point be divided into two smaller centralized collection and treatment areas. Grinder stations and a low pressure forcemain

would be used for collection and a medium-sized onsite sewage treatment system would be used for treatment.

The estimated cost for the recommended improvements would be \$30.836 million.

Rainy Lake/River

Three subdivisions were established for the Rainy Lake/Rainy River Watershed area, which includes 581 wastewater producing parcels and 553 potential development properties. Subdivision Three was further divided into two sections.

A total of 56 septic systems across all subdivisions were determined to be potentially non-compliant.

An existing and planned sanitary sewer extension along County Rd. 71 would be used for a grinder pump system serving one subdivision and Grassy, Jackfish, and Grindstone Islands. Another subdivision would be served in similar fashion by an extension of an existing centralized system down County Rd. 96. Wastewater flow from these areas would be preliminarily treated at centralized stabilization ponds before being fed to a mechanical treatment plant operated by North Koochiching Area Sanitary District. Other areas would remain decentralized and served by septic systems.

The estimated cost for the recommended improvements would be \$30.356 million.

Public comment

Public review and comments for the Comprehensive Wastewater Plan are open until Feb. 23. To review and provide public comments to the comprehensive plan, please visit the project website at <https://www.sehinc.com/online/namakan>, where a PDF copy of the plan is available to download. The plan provides more detail of the service areas and subdivisions, including an extensive set of maps and line-item budgets.

The VNPCWJPB will meet at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 23 at the St. Louis County Public Works Facility located at 9558 Ashawa Rd. in Cook. The meeting will also be open to virtual attendees through Microsoft Teams meeting or by call-in at 872-242-7640, conference ID 998 975 921#.

Volunteers sought for Local Mental Health Advisory Council

REGIONAL - St. Louis County is seeking people to serve on the Local Mental Health Advisory Council serving the northern part of the county. Ideal candidates include anyone who has lived experience of their own or through a loved one, anyone with professional training related to mental health, and those who are passionate about improving services in our community. A stipend is available for people with lived experience who serve on the advisory council.

The advisory council started in the fall of 2020 with the goal of bringing together diverse perspectives on mental health to improve mental health services in our communities. The group works to identify existing resources and provide recommendations to St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services regarding changes, additions and improvements needed to local mental health services for children and adults.

The application deadline is Tuesday, Feb. 28. The Local Mental Health Advisory Council meets on the third Thursday of each month from 4:30-6 p.m. Advisory council members are asked to commit to serve on the council for two years.

More information about the work of the Local Advisory Council and a link to apply can be found online at [stlouiscountymn.gov/lac](http://stlouiscountymn.gov/lac).

Opioid remediation committee volunteers sought

REGIONAL - The St. Louis County Board of Commissioners will be making appointments to the Opioid Remediation subcommittee. As a result of the national settlement of a class action lawsuit involving several prescription opioid manufacturers and distributors, the state of Minnesota is estimated to receive \$300 million over the next 18 years, and of that, St. Louis County will be receiving the fifth largest local share. To determine how to prioritize use of these funds for the most meaningful long-term impact, the County is establishing an advisory committee and is seeking community expert involvement.

The committee will meet virtually and jointly determine the day and time to meet. Particularly welcome are representatives from diverse backgrounds, including people with knowledge of prevention, treatment and recovery, harm reduction, and criminal justice.

Persons interested in serving on this committee should submit an application by Friday, Feb. 25 to: Phil Chapman, Clerk of County Board, St. Louis County Courthouse, 100 North 5th Avenue West, Room 214, Duluth, MN 55802 or by email at [chapmanp@stlouiscountymn.gov](mailto:chapmanp@stlouiscountymn.gov).

To apply online, go to [www.stlouiscountymn.gov/clerk](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/clerk) and click “Application for Citizen Advisory Committee.” Paper applications are also available in the County Auditor’s Office in the Duluth Courthouse and the Government Services Center in Virginia, and in the Ely Government Services Building, or by emailing [chapmanp@stlouiscountymn.gov](mailto:chapmanp@stlouiscountymn.gov) or calling 218-726-2385.

Obituaries and Death Notices



Robert H. Mann

Robert Howard Mann, 91, of Cook, passed away on Saturday, Feb. 5, 2022. A celebration of life will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 12 at Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service. A luncheon will be held at the VFW in Cook immediately following the service. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

Robert was born on Aug. 18, 1930, in Cook, to Floyd and Myrtle (Lindsey) Mann. He attended school in Cook. Robert, as many young men

in that time, left school in the 8th grade to go to work. A few years later, he joined the U.S. Navy, honorably serving his country until 1959. He was united in marriage to Elizabeth Jane Geyerman on May 18, 1956. The young couple moved to Mitchell, S.D., to farm. After four years, the couple moved to Cook and purchased a resort on Lake Vermilion, which they named Mann’s Resort. They ran the resort for 13 years before deciding to sell. After they sold the resort, Robert worked as a logger for Bud Holm Logging, and as an independent carpenter. Robert was also a founding member of the Lake Vermilion Sportsman’s Club.

Robert enjoyed tanning and working leather, which he would often craft into wallets. He loved spending time with his wife and they did everything together. They loved to go on winter picnics and enjoyed many other adventures together. He enjoyed building things for her and fixing whatever she need-

ed done. Sadly, Elizabeth passed away on Dec. 15, 2001.

Robert had a fantastic memory and had a lot of knowledge of the history of Cook. He liked to tease and joke with his family and friends. He was a tough “ol’ coot” who also had a soft side and loved animals. Robert remained strong and independent, living a quiet life at home, the longing of joining his beloved Elizabeth never far from his thoughts. He is now at peace and with her again.

Robert is survived by his daughters, Debbie (Bruce) Maki and Diane (Alan) Brunner; grandchildren, James (Megan Gustafson) Brunner, Kaylee (Casey Mattila) Brunner and Melissa Maki; great-granddaughter, Shaelyn Maki; nephews, Larry (Becky) Barnes and Shane (Rachel) Johnson; and much-loved dog, Rosie.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Floyd and Myrtle; beloved wife, Elizabeth; and sisters, Donna Barnes and Linda Johnson.

Tabatha Vohnoutka

Tabatha “Tab” Vohnoutka, 36, passed away on Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022, in Biwabik. A celebration of life will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 12 at the Mt. Iron Community Center. Family services are provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by her children, Zoey and Arturo Cameron and Akron Hanson of Babbitt; father, William (Bill) Crottier of Babbitt; brothers, Andy Vohnoutka of Babbitt and Peter Cyr of Virginia; mother, Therese Vohnoutka of Gainesboro, Tenn.; grandfather, Joseph Vohnoutka; aunts and uncles, Stanley, Jody (Nelson) Russell and Wesley Vohnoutka of New Prague; uncles and aunts, Paula and Mike Shannon of Babbitt, Pete and Mary Crottier of Brooklyn Center; cousins, Kadee Crottier, Michelle Crottier and Billy J. Crottier; niece, Nevaeh Vohnoutka; and many other relatives and friends.

Rosalyn M. Domitz

Rosalyn Mae “Rosie” Heikkinen Domitz, 90, longtime resident of Angora, passed away on Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022, at her Edgewood Healthcare residence in Virginia. Rosie’s family would like to thank the staff and caregivers at Edgewood Assisted Living, especially Jordanna Childs (great-grandchild) for all of their loving care. A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Family services are provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by her children, Charlyn (Chuck) Childs of Virginia, Stuart (Judy) Domitz of Lino Lakes and Gail (Jerry Lanari) Domitz of Eveleth; grandchildren, Adam Domitz, Amanda Domitz and Jason Albin; numerous step-grandchildren; nieces and nephews.

Robert D. Clemenson

Robert David Clemenson, 61, of Detroit Lakes, originally of Babbitt, died on Sunday, Feb. 6, 2022, at his home surrounded by his family.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 11 at David-Donerhower Funeral Home in Detroit Lakes with Pastor Kim Schnitzer officiating. Interment will be in Lakeview Cemetery at a later date with military rites provided by the Lake Region Veterans Honor Guard.

He is survived by his fiancée of 21 years, Marlene Littler Lang of Detroit Lakes; children, Amanda (Jim) Hart of Denham Springs, La., Christy (Scott) Costa of Tavernier, Fla., David (Emma) Clemenson of Columbia, Mo., and Kayla (Derek) Schmiesing of Cold Spring; eight grandchildren; parents, Olaf and Marilyn Clemenson of Rochester; siblings, Greg (Julie) of Mazeppa, Steve (DeeDee) of Tower, Barb (Bob) Larson of Rochester and Shirley (Randi) Relander of Chaska; numerous nieces and nephews.





# Outdoors

Our lives in the Northwoods

Outdoors briefly

Deer WSI remains mild thanks to warm start to 2021-22 winter

REGIONAL — A colder-than-average January and an accumulating snowpack are continuing to add points to the winter severity index (WSI) for the area’s whitetail deer population. Yet, with winter now most likely past the mid-point, it looks like the winter will finish up on the mild-to-moderate side for deer, thanks mostly to this winter’s exceptionally mild start.

The winter severity index adds a point for every day with a below-zero temperature reading and another for any day with 15 inches or more of snow on the ground.

The index in most parts of northern St. Louis County is running between 50 and 65 points, the vast majority of those points based on temperature. Snow depth points have been limited to scattered pockets of the region up until this week, when most areas began exceeding the 15-inch threshold for snowcover.

With continued seasonal temperatures forecast for the foreseeable future, the winter severity index is likely to increase more quickly over the next few weeks, which could push the index into the moderate range.

For northern St. Louis County, a severity index of 120 is considered average, while an index of over 140 is considered severe. Last winter, the season ended with a WSI of less than 50 after one of the mildest winters on record. Two years ago, the WSI hit 166 in the Tower area.

Fishing reports

Ely area

Lake trout fishing was slow to very slow for the majority of lake trout anglers this last week. Anglers struggled to even mark fish, let alone get fish to chase. Anglers able to catch fish reported that bites were very light and trout had to be worked more like a walleye in order to get them to bite. Small but heavy spoons were the most effective baits last week.

Stream trout anglers reported good fishing this past week. Anglers targeting splake, found them in shallow water, 10 feet or less. Small spoons and small jigs tipped with wax worms were the most effective baits. Anglers targeting rainbows found the most active fish in 15-20 feet of water. Here again, small jigs tipped with wax worms or salmon eggs were the best baits.

With warmer temps, anglers continue to poke around looking for panfish, but reports continue to come back as poor.

Eelpout reports continue to improve as we get closer and closer to their spawn. Anglers are finding active eelpout around sunken islands, river mouths and large flats near deep water. Anglers have been doing best with heavy glow spoons, loaded with pieces of minnows and pounded on the bottom. After dark has been best but there have been a few reports of eelpout caught during the day now.

Courtesy of Arrowhead Outdoors, Ely



Left: Chuck Neil and Ida Rukavina enjoy a ski on the Howard Wagoner ski trails just outside of Tower.

High pine-studded rock outcrops and views of Lake Vermilion are among the highlights of the Pine Ridges trails now being developed on the hill on Tower’s north side.

file photos

PLANNING FOR RECREATION

# Tower trails plan now complete

Blueprint should help with planning and funding for future trail connections

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER—A planning process that began last summer has created a plan to enhance, connect, and build on the existing trail systems in the Tower-Soudan area.

“This covers the broader needs for all our trails,” said Nancy Larson, a local grant writer who has successfully written grants for trails projects in both Tower and Soudan. “This plan also will cover the needs for maintenance of existing trails and the development of new trails.”

“Having a master plan is really important when applying for grants,” she said. “And so is having the bigger picture in mind.”

The bigger picture, as envisioned by the local planning group, is to capitalize on the area’s central location for many types of trails by providing connections between existing trails, construction of new trails, as well as creating a centralized trail information area at the Tower Depot/Harbor area. That not only makes the community more attractive to visitors — it also makes it a better place to live. A number of recent studies have shown that regions that highlight outdoor recreation grow faster in terms of population and economic growth than other parts of the country.

The focus on outdoor recreation is already having an impact in the Tower-Soudan area. From paved trails for hiking and biking, like the Mesabi Trail, to wilderness-type hiking trails in the Ancient Cedars forest or the Lake Vermilion state park, to the city’s popular Wagoner ski

trails, to the Prospectors Trail for ATVs, there’s no shortage of opportunities out there. The key is putting it all together through trail linkages, informational signage, and promotion.

A group of interested community members, working with Russell Habermann, senior planner with the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, held a series of three meetings last year as work on the plan was underway. The group included local governmental and school officials, representatives from the DNR and MnDOT, and representatives from other existing trail organizations including the Mesabi Trail, Prospectors Trail, Vermilion Penguins, Wagoner Trails Club, and Lake Vermilion Trail.

As part of the planning process, the group conducted a survey of area residents, which had 200 respondents.

Survey results

In answer to the question about how people currently use trails in the Tower area, over two-thirds of respondents said they use trails for walking (69 percent), a little over half used trails for hiking (52 percent), and a similar number used trails for biking (53 percent). Other uses included snowshoeing (17 percent), mountain biking (15 percent), snowmobiling (33 percent), ATV/OHV (32 percent), and skiing (29 percent). Of those who completed the survey, 17 percent said they used trails at least once a day, 27 percent at least once a week, and 30 percent at least once a month.

While the community already has a well-developed trail infrastructure, the planning

group noted that parking areas, rest rooms, signage, and connections between trails need to be improved.

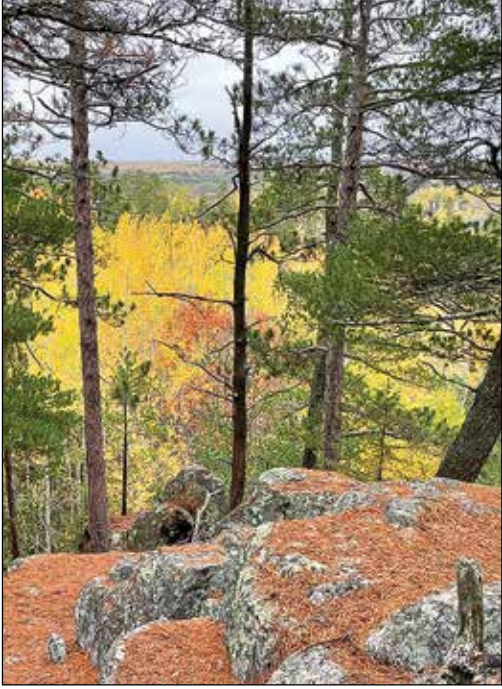
Potential improvements

The planners identified creation of a wayside rest and area trailhead near the Tower Depot/Harbor zone as a top priority. The plan also calls for developing an online information hub for trails on the city’s website. New trail connections are being planned that will link the city’s harbor zone to other existing trails as well as to the Standing Bear Marina through a potential new riverside trail. A new kayak and canoe route is also being planned along the East Two River that will link the harbor zone to Lake Vermilion as well as the nearby West Two River.

New trails, known as the Pine Ridges trails, being built and marked on the hill north of town will need to be more clearly linked with other existing trails, such as the paved Hoodoo Point to McKinley Park loop trail. Volunteers have already done much of the clearing and marking and have funding in place for signage.

Larson said what happens next will depend on which groups, governmental units, or individuals decide to take the lead.

“Hopefully some of these groups involved will take it to



the next step,” she said. “These projects will all need to be done independently.”

Future projects may also depend on cooperating with larger organizations. There have been some initial meetings, for example, with the North Country Trail Association, which is setting a nationwide trail route that includes a route through Minnesota.

The study was funded with help from the city of Tower, the Tower Economic Development Authority and IRRR. You can find more about existing area trails on the city of Tower’s website at <https://cityoftower.com/recreation>. A copy of the Tower Area Trails Plan is available at <https://ardcplanning.org/tower/>.






Trail report

REGIONAL— Recent snowfalls have left area snowmobile trails in their best condition of the season so far.

That’s prompted the Department of Natural Resources to upgrade the rating of both the Taconite and Arrowhead from last week’s “good” rating to “very good.”

## LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather

Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
																								
18 -21					3 -13					11 -9					13 -2					22 3				
Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.
01/31	20	6	0.00		01/31	na	na	0.02	0.3"	01/31	21	7	0.00		01/31	27	10	0.00		01/31	20	2	0.00	0.3"
02/01	29	14	0.01	0.2"	02/01	27	12	0.00		02/01	26	12	0.02	0.3"	02/01	25	-6	0.00		02/01	27	10	0.00	
02/02	24	-13	0.01	0.1"	02/02	24	-14	0.00		02/02	23	-13	0.01	0.1"	02/02	-4	-17	0.00		02/02	24	-18	0.00	
02/03	-2	-37	0.00		02/03	-4	-40	0.00		02/03	-6	-30	0.00		02/03	3	-35	0.00		02/03	-4	-41	0.00	
02/04	8	-38	0.01	0.2"	02/04	5	-41	0.00		02/04	-2	-34	0.00		02/04	7	-20	0.00		02/04	6	-41	0.00	
02/05	9	-21	0.00		02/05	7	-25	0.07	1.0"	02/05	5	-20	0.02	0.4"	02/05	9	-20	0.00		02/05	7	-24	0.02	0.4"
02/06	11	1	0.13	4.2"	02/06	11	2	0.25	4.1"	02/06	8	-4	0.32	5.5"	02/06	12	7	0.00		02/06	8	1	0.30	4.2"
YTD Total			0.70	54.5"	YTD Total			0.73	34.0"	YTD Total			1.14	59.4"	YTD Total			NA	NA	YTD Total			0.97	42.0"



# Check Out These... Snowmobile HOT Spots



## Area Trail Conditions

### Taconite Trail

Very Good Condition, Groomed  
1-6" base, 7-21" snow on ground

### Arrowhead Trail

Very Good Condition, Groomed  
1-7" base, 8-23" snow on ground

**1**

**FREE**  
Market Analysis

**Barb Hegg**  
Associate Broker, GRI  
[barb@vermilionland.com](mailto:barb@vermilionland.com)

Office: 218-666-6183  
Home Office: 218-666-0144  
Mobile: 218-742-2369

PO Box 518, 210 S. Highway 53, Cook

**2**

**SLED RENTALS**

**DELIVERY AVAILABLE**  
[www.vermilionhouseboats.com](http://www.vermilionhouseboats.com)

**218-753-3548**  
9482 Angus Rd, Tower  
[info@vermilionhouseboats.com](mailto:info@vermilionhouseboats.com)

**3**

✓ FOOD  
✓ LODGING  
✓ NORTH STAR BAR  
✓ PREMIUM GAS

**Fortune Bay**  
RESORT CASINO

800.555.1714  
[FORTUNEBAY.COM](http://FORTUNEBAY.COM)

**4**

**OPEN Year-Round!**

Right off the Taconite Trail  
between Tower & Ely...  
next to Soudan's Only Store!

- Comfy, cozy rooms
- Great rates • Wifi
- Continental breakfast

**PROJECT/CLASSROOM PARTY ROOM**

**BOOK THE ENTIRE INN!**

**218-753-2333**  
30 Center Street, Soudan

**5**

**GOOD OL' DAYS**

**OPEN DAILY**  
Mon-Sat 6 a.m.  
Sun 8 a.m.

*Featuring Minnesota's Best Bloody Mary!*

- 6 am breakfast Mon.-Sat. and 8 am breakfast on Sun.
- 5-7 pm happy hour Mon.-Fri.
- Daily meal specials
- Home made soups & chill
- Friday fish fry

316 Main St, Tower  
218-753-6097  
[www.goodolddaystower.com](http://www.goodolddaystower.com)

**6**

**The Vermilion Hotel**

SNOWMOBILES WELCOME  
COMFORTABLE ROOMS  
AFFORDABLE RATES

Cable & WiFi

320 S Hwy 53  
Cook • MN  
(218) 666-2272  
[vermilionhotel.com](http://vermilionhotel.com)

**7**

**COOK VFW**

**Great Food!**

THURS: NOON-7 PM  
Burgers & Fried Food

FRI: NOON-7 PM  
Burgers, Chili,  
Bacon Cheeseburger Soup

SAT/SUN: NOON-6 PM  
Burgers, Chili,  
Bacon Cheeseburger Soup

**Take-Out 666-0500**  
206 1st St SW, Cook, MN

**8**

**Don't Let Winter Pass You By!**

Get Outside & Exploring  
with Your Boat Club x  
Polaris Adventures!

Downtown Ely & Tower, MN

612-208-1800 | [WWW.YOURBOATCLUB.COM](http://WWW.YOURBOATCLUB.COM)  
"Minnesota's Outdoor Lifestyle"

**9**

**MELGEORGE'S**  
ELEPHANT LAKE LODGE AND RESORT

Centrally located on Arrowhead Trail

**RESTAURANT & BAR**

Cabins & Lodge Rooms  
Satellite TV  
Plenty of trailer parking!

**FOOD • LIQUOR • GAS • OIL**

[www.melgeorges.com](http://www.melgeorges.com)  
Box 185, Orr, MN 55771  
800-205-9001 • 218-374-3621

**10**

**INSULA**  
RESTAURANT

**Serving**  
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Beer & Wine  
(sled parking out back)

**HOURS:**  
Tues thru Thurs: 8 to 8  
Fri & Sat: 8 to 9  
Closed Sun/Mon  
**NOW SERVING BREAKFAST**

145 E Sheridan St, Ely, MN  
[www.insularestaurant.com](http://www.insularestaurant.com)  
218-365-4855

**11**

**ZUP'S**  
FOOD MARKETS

**ZUP'S WAREHOUSE LIQUOR**

Hours: Mon-Sat: 8-8  
Sun: 11-6

**Huge selection of Beer, Wine & Liquor**  
Conveniently located next to Zup's Grocery

1500 E. Sheridan St, Ely  
218-365-3188

**12**

**Oveson's**  
PELICAN LAKE RESORT & INN

**Snowmobiles Welcome!**

Fireside Lobby  
Bar & Restaurant  
FREE Wi-Fi  
Swimming Pool & Hot Tub

4675 Hwy. 53, Orr MN  
[www.ovesonpelicanovepelicanlakeresortandinn.com](http://www.ovesonpelicanovepelicanlakeresortandinn.com)  
1-800-860-3613 • 218-757-3613

**13**

**the STORE**

Gas, Groceries, Pizza,  
Convenience Foods, Gifts,  
The Ledge Liquor Store

**24-Hour Pay At The Pump**

SUN - THU: 5AM - 10PM  
FRI & SAT: 5AM - 12AM

6368 Highway 169  
Tower, MN 55790  
**218.753.3868**

**14**

**MARJO MOTEL**

**Direct Access to Lake Vermilion and Local Trails**

**Cable TV • Internet**  
Microwaves • Coffee  
Refrigerators  
Single & Double Rooms

Tower, MN  
Hwy. 169 on the left as you enter Tower from the west.  
**218-753-4851**  
[www.marjomoteltowermn.com](http://www.marjomoteltowermn.com)

**15**

**JANISCH REALTY**

See Virtual Tours & Every Property On The Market On Our Easy Map Search!

(218) 780-6644  
[JanischRealty.com](http://JanischRealty.com)



PUBLIC NOTICES

STATE OF MINNESOTA  
COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS  
DISTRICT COURT  
SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
Case Type: 14 Other Civil  
(Quiet Title)  
Court File No.  
69DU-CV-21-1472

SECOND  
AMENDED SUMMONS

Darren K. Lilja, Plaintiff,  
vs.  
Lorraine B. Hanela f/k/a  
Lorraine B. Meden; the  
unknown heirs of Leonard F.  
Meden; the unknown heirs of  
Janet M. Meden; Susan M.  
Maki; Cynthia L. Pylka a/k/a  
Cindi Pylka; the unknown  
heirs of Keith Pylka; Eric  
Pylka; the unknown heirs of  
Nancy J. Klein; Tania Meden;  
Melissa Smith; Justin Klein; the  
unknown heirs of Chester J.  
Bogucki; the unknown heirs  
of Illa Mae Bogucki; Chester  
M. Bogucki; William R.  
Bogucki; Laurie Powell; Gerald  
Severson; the unknown heirs  
of Sandra Dearey; John P.  
Dearey; John M. Dearey;  
Suzanne Knight; the unknown  
heirs of Julia Schoenecker;  
Jerome T. Schoenecker; the  
unknown heirs of Ann Krall;  
John J. Krall; Dolores A.  
Butzke f/k/a Dolores A. Krall;  
Mark Lorenzo; the unknown  
heirs of Emma Scoffidi a/k/a  
Emma Scaffidi; the unknown  
heirs of Liborio Scaffidi a/k/a  
Liborio Scoffidi a/k/a Lobario  
Scaffidi; the unknown heirs  
of Josephine Capretti; the  
unknown heirs of Peter R.  
Spacagna; Peter A. Spacagna;  
Adam H. Spacagna; Jonathan  
D. Hannah a/k/a Jonathan D.  
Hannah-Spacagna; Daniel L.  
Spacagna; the unknown heirs  
of Raymond O. Spacagna;  
Katherine L. Spacagna;  
Raymond O. Spacagna, Jr.;  
Joseph F. Spacagna; Daniel  
J. Spacagna; Katherine E.  
Woods; the unknown heirs  
of Ronald J. Spacagna;  
Christopher A. Young;  
Randolph M. Young; Roberta  
L. Brofman; all other persons  
who are deceased; John Doe;  
Mary Roe; ABC Corporation;  
and all other persons  
unknown claiming any right,  
title, estate interest, or lien  
in the real estate described  
in the complaint herein.  
Defendants.

THIS SECOND AMENDED  
SUMMONS IS DIRECTED  
TO THE ABOVE-NAMED  
DEFENDANTS.

You are hereby summoned  
and required to serve  
upon Plaintiff's attorneys  
an Answer to the Second  
Amended Complaint which is  
on file in the office of the  
Court Administrator of the  
above-named Court, within 21  
days of the date on which you

received this Second Amended  
Summons. If you fail to do so,  
judgment by default will be  
taken against you for the relief  
demanded in the Second  
Amended Complaint. You  
must mail or deliver a  
copy of your Answer to  
the person who signed  
this Second Amended  
Summons located at Olson,  
Redford & Wahlberg,  
P.A., One Corporate Center  
I, 7401 Metro Blvd., Suite  
575, Edina, MN 55439.

THIS ACTION AFFECTS  
REAL PROPERTY located in  
St. Louis County, Minnesota,  
legally described as follows:  
South one-half of the  
Southeast Quarter (S ½ of SE  
¼), Section Two (2), Township  
Sixty-two (62), Range  
Thirteen (13). EXCEPT:  
the South one-half (S ½).  
EXCEPT: the West half (W  
½) thereof. Subject to the  
mineral rights and other  
rights, reservations, restric-  
tions and easements of record.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN  
that the object of said action  
is to obtain a judgment  
declaring the Plaintiff is the  
owner in fee of the property  
described above, and that the  
defendants, and each of them,  
have no right, title, estate,  
interest, or lien in or upon  
said real estate except as stat-  
ed in the Second Amended  
Complaint in said action.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN  
that no personal claim is made  
by Plaintiff against any of the  
Defendants.

Civil cases are subject to  
Alternative Dispute Resolution  
processes as provided in  
Rule 114 of the General  
Rules of Practice for the  
District Courts. Alternative  
Dispute Resolution includes  
mediation, arbitration, and  
other processes set forth in  
the rules. You may contact the  
Court Administrator for infor-  
mation about these processes  
and about resources available  
in your area.

DATED: November 8, 2021

OLSON, REDFORD &  
WAHLBERG, P.A.  
/s/ Monica D. Pelkey  
Katherine L. Wahlberg,  
#387001  
Monica D. Pelkey, #401892  
One Corporate Center I  
7401 Metro Blvd, Suite 575  
Edina, MN 55439  
(952) 224-3644  
katiew@olson-law.com  
monicap@olson-law.com  
Attorneys for Plaintiff

Published in the Timberjay,  
Feb. 4, 11 & 18, 2022

STATE OF MINNESOTA  
COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS  
DISTRICT COURT  
PROBATE DIVISION  
SIXTH JUDICIAL  
DISTRICT  
Court File  
No. 69VI-PR-22-15

NOTICE AND ORDER FOR  
HEARING ON PETITION FOR  
FORMAL ADJUDICATION  
OF INTESTACY,  
DETERMINATION OF  
HEIRSHIP, APPOINTMENT  
OF PERSONAL  
REPRESENTATIVE AND  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Mark Edward Miklaucic, aka  
Mark E. Miklaucic, aka "Mico"  
Miklaucic, aka M.E. Miklaucic,  
Decedent

It is Ordered and Notice is  
given that on March 9, 2022,  
at 9:00 a.m., a hearing will  
be held in this Court at 300  
5th Ave. South, Virginia,  
Minnesota, for the adjudication  
of intestacy and determination  
of heirship of the Decedent,  
and for the appointment of  
James A. Miklaucic, whose  
address is 6907 14th Ave. S,  
Richfield, Minnesota, 55423,  
as Personal Representative of  
the Estate of the Decedent in  
an UNSUPERVISED admin-  
istration.

Any objections to the Petition  
must be filed with the Court  
prior to or raised at the hear-  
ing. If proper, and no objec-  
tions are filed or raised, the  
Personal Representative will  
be appointed with full power to

administer the Estate, includ-  
ing the power to collect all  
assets, to pay all legal debts,  
claims, taxes, and expenses,  
to sell real and personal prop-  
erty, and to do all necessary  
acts for the Estate.

Notice is also given that (sub-  
ject to Minnesota Statutes  
section 524.3-801) all credi-  
tors having claims against the  
Estate are required to pres-  
ent the claims to the Personal  
Representative or to the Court  
Administrator within four  
months after the date of this  
Notice or the claims will be  
barred.

Dated: January 26, 2022

BY THE COURT  
Robert Friday  
Judge of District Court  
Amy Turnquist  
Court Administrator  
Chelsea Opdahl, Deputy

Attorney for Petitioner  
Angela E. Sipila  
Sipila Law Office LLC  
412 1st Street S, Suite 1  
Virginia, MN, 55792  
Attorney License No: 024501X  
Telephone: 218-741-5000  
Fax: 218-741-5000  
Email: ange@sipilaw.com

Published in the Timberjay,  
Feb. 11 & 18, 2022

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital is seek-  
ing proposals for lawn mowing services for the  
2022 season. The proposal should include  
mowing, edging, trimming, and cleaning all  
campus lawns as needed throughout the  
summer. Efforts should be made to provide  
services before and after business hours to  
ensure customers, staff, and property safety.  
A Certificate of Liability insurance will be  
required. If you have any questions or would  
like to review the areas to include with the pro-  
posal, please contact EBCH Facilities Team  
Leader George Rajkovich at 218-365-8731.  
Proposals must be postmarked by April 1,  
2022.

Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital  
Attention: George Rajkovich  
Lawn Care Proposals  
328 W Conan St, Ely, MN 55731

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 11, 2022

Advertise Here!

Ads go in all  
3 editions  
218-753-2950

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 11, 2022

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. ttn

NETT LAKE SCHOOL • ISD 707  
Superintendent/Principal

**Certifications:** Must hold a valid MN  
Superintendent and Elementary Principal  
Licensure or be in the process of obtaining  
licensure/s.

**Application Process:**  
Candidates should submit -  
1. Letter of Interest  
2. Resume  
3. District Application and three current  
signed letters of reference.  
The application can be found at  
https://www.nettlakeschool.org/Job-Postings

**Please mail to:**  
Peter Hardy, Superintendent  
13090 Westley Drive  
Nett Lake, MN 55772

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 4, 11, 18 & 25, 2022



HELP WANTED. Would you like to work  
outside? Would you like to work on the lake?  
Docks on Wheels in Ely is looking to fill  
a variety of positions. All positions require  
the ability to lift 50 lbs. continually. Starting  
pay is \$15 per/hr. Stop in and apply or call  
218-365-6210 to schedule an interview. 2/25

Donald G.  
Gardner  
Humanities  
Trust

Is seeking a dynamic and experienced leader to  
serve as its **Executive Director** to advance  
the mission of the organization as it enriches life  
and the arts in the Ely community.

The Trust is seeking an Executive Director who will be responsible for  
managing and growing the grants program and endowment. The  
Executive Director will be the face of the organization, building on  
established relationships with artists, arts organizations, arts  
supporters, City of Ely, and Ely Chamber of Commerce. The  
Executive Director reports to the Trust's Board of Directors.

**Minimum Qualifications:** College graduate with experience in nonprofit  
organizations or the arts. Experience building and managing budgets or working  
with an endowment. Outstanding written, oral and interpersonal skills. Strong  
planning, organizational and analytical skills.

Position is 20-22 hours/week. First year may require ½ time. Great opportunity  
with job flexibility in an arts-rich, beautiful northern Minnesota community.

The full job description is posted on the Trust's website  
at [www.gardnertrust.org](http://www.gardnertrust.org).

Application Deadline: Friday, April 1, 2022  
Position begins June 1, 2022.

Super Crossword

Answers

A	M	O	E	B	A		P	L	E	A	T		A	N	G	E	L	I	N	A
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FUNERAL SERVICES

Range Funeral Home



Virginia  
741-1481

Hibbing  
263-3276

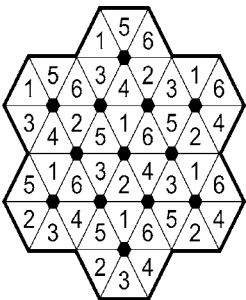
"Friends Helping Friends"

Get  
Results!



Advertise  
in the  
Timberjay!

SNOWFLAKES  
solution



EMPLOYMENT



OPEN POSITIONS

10 Fifth Street SE Cook, MN 55723

Hospital/ER

PT Registered Nurse (\$4,000 Sign-On  
Bonus/\$35.17 starting wage)

Central Supply

FT Central Supply Assistant

Nursing

FT RN House Supervisor

Radiology

FT Radiologic Technologist

Care Center

FT & PT Nursing Assistant (Wage starting  
at \$16.36/hr - \$1,500 Sign-On Bonus)  
PT RN/LPN (\$4,000 Sign-On Bonus)

Activities

PT & Casual Activities Assistant

Environmental Services

Casual Laundry Aide  
Casual Housekeeping & Laundry

Dietary

FT Dietary Aide/Cook

TO APPLY:

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

More Info? Contact Human Resources

218-666-6220

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



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

The Cook Hospital is an equal opportunity provider and employer

PUBLIC NOTICES

KUGLER TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF AUDIT NOTICE  
REGULAR MEETING NOTICE

The Kugler Town Board will hold their annual  
Board of Audit Meeting, followed by the regular  
Board Meeting on Wednesday, February 23,  
2022, at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall.

Christopher Suihkonen, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 11, 2022

Get  
Results!



Advertise  
in the  
Timberjay!

NOTICE OF VACANCY

Board of Commissioners Opioid Remediation  
Subcommittee

The St. Louis County Board of Commissioners will be making appoint-  
ments to the Opioid Remediation subcommittee. As a result of the  
national settlement of a class action lawsuit involving several prescription  
opioid manufacturers and distributors, the state of Minnesota is estimat-  
ed to receive \$300 million over the next 18 years, and of that, St. Louis  
County will be receiving the fifth largest local share. To determine how  
to prioritize use of these funds for the most meaningful long-term impact,  
the County is establishing an advisory committee and is seeking commu-  
nity expert involvement.

The Committee will meet virtually and jointly determine the day and time  
to meet. Particularly welcome are representatives from diverse back-  
grounds including people with knowledge of prevention, treatment and  
recovery, harm reduction, and criminal justice.

Persons interested in serving on this committee should submit an applica-  
tion by February 25, 2022 to: Phil Chapman, Clerk of County Board,  
St. Louis County Courthouse, 100 North 5th Avenue West, Room 214,  
Duluth, MN 55802 or by email at [chapmanp@stlouiscountymn.gov](mailto:chapmanp@stlouiscountymn.gov).

To apply online, go to [www.stlouiscountymn.gov/clerk](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/clerk) and click  
"Application for Citizen Advisory Committee." Paper applications are also  
available in the County Auditor's Office in the Duluth Courthouse and the  
Government Services Center in Virginia, and in the Ely Government  
Services Building, or by emailing [chapmanp@stlouiscountymn.gov](mailto:chapmanp@stlouiscountymn.gov) or  
calling 218-726-2385.

NANCY NILSEN, COUNTY AUDITOR-TREASURER  
BY: Phil Chapman, Clerk of the County Board

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 11 & 18, 2022

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

		2		4		9	8	
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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way  
that each row across, each column down and  
each small 9-box square contains all of the  
numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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

AUTOMOTIVE

**Langevin Auto & Truck Repair**  
Full Service  
Auto Repair & Garage  
Hours: 8 AM-5 PM M-F  
2 Miles South of Tower  
**218-749-0751**

HAIR CARE

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

HOSPICE

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Find It Here  
753-2950



Sell It HERE

Find It HERE  
Great Coverage Affordable Rates  
218-753-2950

BUILDING SERVICES

EAST DHU RIVER SAWMILL INC  
"Put A Piece Of Northern Minnesota In Your Home"  
Superior Quality  
• Plank Paneling  
• Trim  
• One-Of-A-Kind Moldings  
• Industrial Lumber  
**218-744-1788**  
8825 Hwy 101, Iron, MN 55751

WANTED

SELIGA CANOES WANTED: We'll buy old Seligas in Good Shape. Turn your classic canoe into cash. Call Steve at 365-6745. tfn

HELP WANTED

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

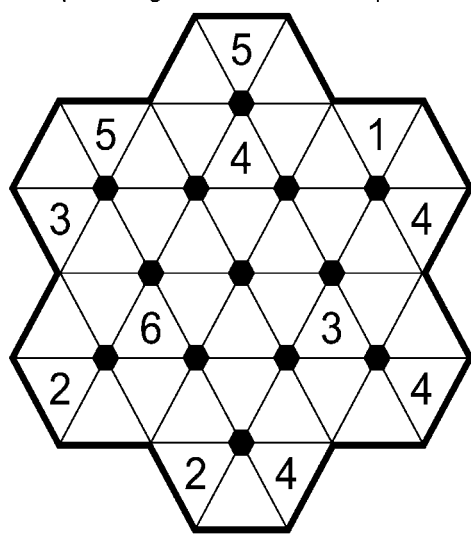
SHOVELING

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**SNOWFLAKES**  
by Japheth Light

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



**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ♦♦♦♦  
♦ Easy ♦♦ Medium ♦♦♦♦ Difficult

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Weekly SUDOKU  
Answer

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

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

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

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

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

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Super Crossword

- ACROSS**

1 Unicellular swimmer  
7 Fold in a skirt  
12 Jolie of film  
20 The "R" of 33-Down  
21 Actor Cox  
22 Prepared for storage, as a hose  
23 Endlessly repeating programming problem  
25 Fashion designer in "The Incredibles"  
26 Hwy. felony  
27 Man-mouse middle  
28 What iPads run on  
30 "Boston Legal" actor James  
31 Higher, spiritual level of awareness  
38 Get a whiff of  
40 Lift to check the weight of  
41 Gig hookup  
42 PC key abbr.  
43 Elicitor of a major "Whew!"  
46 Zodiac ram  
48 Truckload  
51 Basso solo, e.g.
- 52 Eligible for Soc. Sec.  
53 Head honcho  
57 Some hole menders  
59 Force unit  
60 Bouffant, e.g.  
61 Pipe joint  
62 — Yello (Coca-Cola brand)  
64 China's Zhou —  
68 Sharon of "Cagney & Lacey"  
69 M114 howitzer, e.g.  
72 Prickly shrub  
75 Occurrence  
76 — d'Or (Cannes award)  
77 G-man, e.g.  
80 Cousin's mommy  
82 Actresses Carrere and Mowry  
84 "Look here as well," in a reference book  
86 1931 crime film starring Edward G. Robinson  
90 — Juan  
91 Late hours, in ads
- 92 Minneapolis-Montreal dir.  
93 King of CNN  
94 1971 Elton John song  
97 CD- — drive  
100 Comical Costello  
101 Just OK  
102 Microwaves  
103 Bacterium, e.g.  
109 Blissful  
110 "General" of Chinese cuisine  
111 Miracle- — (plant food)  
112 Vocalist Sumac  
115 Not together  
118 2, for helium  
123 Like rags  
124 Follow, as a pointer  
125 Join a force  
126 Evaluates  
127 Partner of Cheech  
128 Chinese system of calisthenics
- DOWN**

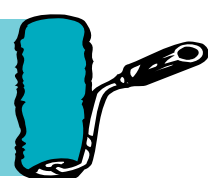
1 Quite dry  
2 Bill of fare  
3 She may be a gofer  
4 Wallach of "Lord Jim"  
5 Actor Affleck
- 6 Universal truth  
7 "Amen, pastor!"  
8 Online chuckle  
9 Roxy Music's Brian  
10 Put holy oil on  
11 Manuscript mistakes  
12 King beater  
13 Nonverbal "yes"  
14 Knife of old infomercials  
15 Pass, as time  
16 French racing city  
17 "Upon my word!"  
18 "David" and "The Thinker"  
19 Imitating sorts  
24 Prefix with state  
29 Make afraid  
32 Fake fat in some chips  
33 Kind of camera, in brief  
34 Just-OK grade  
35 — a mile (not even close)  
36 "Yes, sign me up"  
37 14-member oil gp.
- 38 Color  
39 Wall painting  
44 Did it wrong  
45 "Gigi" star Caron  
46 G-man, e.g.  
47 "Quiet down"  
49 Chances  
50 New Mexico skiing spot  
54 Lethargy  
55 "You got that right!"  
56 Floral symbol of purity  
58 Former "Top Chef" judge  
59 Rounded roof  
63 "P.S. I — U" (old TV show)  
65 They may be glossed over  
66 Carte lead-in  
67 "You got that right!"  
69 "Joey" star LeBlanc  
70 Anxious  
71 Make revisions to  
72 Farm bundle  
73 Lay waste to  
74 Picks off, as a pass  
77 Lighter catchphrase in old ads  
78 Lauder of fragrances
- 79 Active types  
81 Sometimes-jellied fish  
83 — -Detoo (sci-fi droid)  
85 Latin for "year"  
87 Trig is a prereq for it  
88 Ending for buck or stink  
89 Spew lava  
90 Being amorous, to Brits  
95 Jerusalem's nation: Abbr.  
96 Darth Vader, as a kid  
98 Rococo  
99 Watery silks  
101 Whiskey type  
103 Political hostess  
104 Thoughts  
105 Injury marks  
106 Singer Hayes  
107 Bow's shape  
108 Tune for nine  
113 Fit together  
114 Beginner's painting class  
116 Pipe joint  
117 Mag staff  
119 Western tribe  
120 Sun.-Tue. link  
121 Article in Argentina  
122 1,051, in old Rome

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123										124						125				
126																128				





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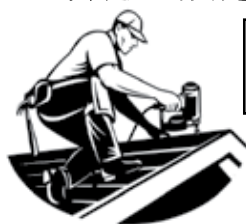
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