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# the TIMBERJAY



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989 VOL. 33, ISSUE 11 March 25, 2022 \$1<sup>00</sup>

## ELECTION 2022

# State Senate 3 seat will be hotly contested

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Last week’s announcement that Sen. Tom Bakk won’t seek re-election has all but guaranteed a hotly-contested campaign for the largest geographical senate district in the state. The Third District, which now stretches from near Baudette in the far west all the way to Grand Portage in the east and Duluth in



**Andrea Zupancich**



**Grant Hauschild**

the south, has long been a DFL stronghold. But that has changed remarkably in the past few years,

all but ensuring that both parties will pour considerable resources into the contest.

Sen. Bakk said he plans to stay out of the contest and has made no endorsements of any candidates to date. “I am staying out of the race until after the primary and may not pick a horse even after that,” he said.

On the Republican side, Babbitt Mayor Andrea Zupancich announced her candidacy on

### More election news

- Sen. Tom Bakk to retire from State Senate **Page 3**
- Roger Skraba to run for State House seat. **Page 10**

Monday. Zupancich was one of seven Iron Range mayors who publicly endorsed Donald Trump for president in 2012, mostly over his stated support for cop-

per-nickel mining in the region. “I know that we have an abundance of natural and human resources, including our hard-working families, that need a strong voice to advocate for them at the Capitol,” stated Zupancich in a statement.

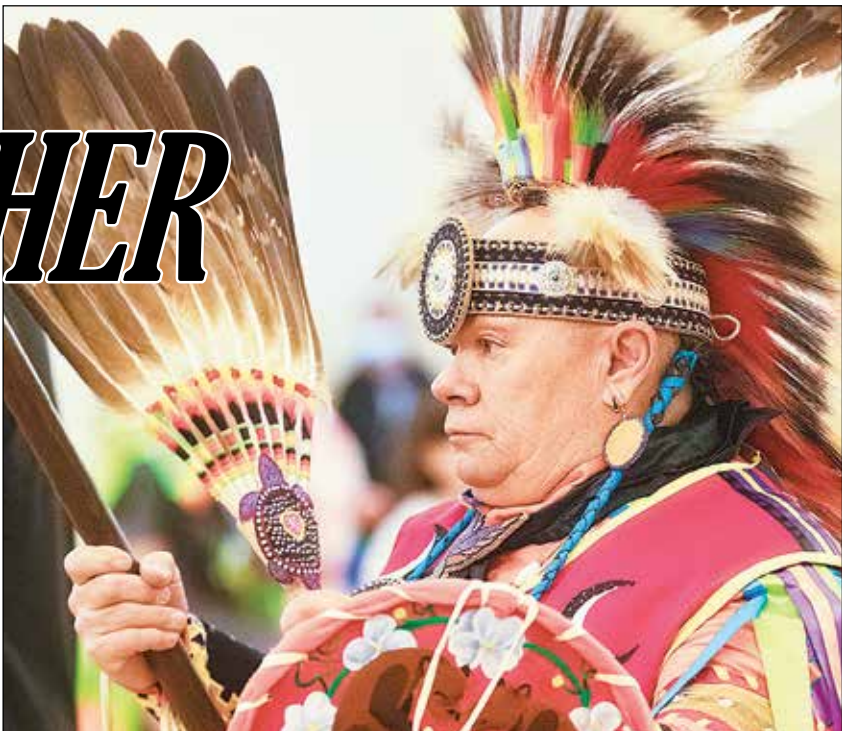
Zupancich, a first-generation immigrant from Germany, has served as Babbitt’s mayor since 2014 and she’s operated z’UP

See...ELECTION pg. 10

## WINTER GATHERING

# COMING TOGETHER

Midwinter  
powwow  
celebrated  
at Nett Lake



**Members of the Bois Forte Band gathered at Nett Lake last weekend for their mid-winter powwow.**  
photos by D. Colburn



a time when people stay close to home and relate centuries-old wisdom to educate children about tribal traditions and the

See...POWWOW pg. 11

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

# Sentencing often difficult to understand

Local case of probation  
instead of prison reveals  
many mitigating factors

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook/Orr Editor

COOK— A St. Louis County judge recently sentenced two men— both with lengthy criminal histories— following their convictions for a March 2020 burglary in rural Cook.

One was sentenced to 44 months in prison. The other may not serve a day in prison, depending on the successful completion of five years of supervised probation.

In granting probation, and no prison time, for Luke Lee Dustin Prescott, District Court Judge Rachel C. Sullivan exercised her legal authority to implement what is called a “downward departure” from sentencing guidelines based on the offense and Prescott’s criminal history. The judge did impose a 71-month prison sentence on Prescott, but stayed that penalty in favor of probation.

The St. Louis County Attorney’s office opposed the decision, arguing for imposition of the sentence recommended in the guidelines.

The official sentencing document for Prescott has been “held off the record” according to information on Minnesota Court

See..SENTENCING pg. 9



**Luke Prescott**

## ISD 696

# Will Ely school project be done by Labor Day?

Construction timeline, budget shortfall to be discussed Monday

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – ISD 696 officials will receive a major update Monday on the building and facility renovation project that is headed toward a completion dead-

line this fall.

School board members will meet with the general contractor and architects on March 28 to review the construction timeline that calls for the project to be completed by the day after Labor Day, the first day of

the 2022-23 school year. Additional funding options required to meet a budget shortfall on the \$20 million project are expected to be discussed.

Interim Superintendent John Klarich told board members last Monday that

all the concrete is poured for the project, and the roof should have been finished last week.

“They are getting set up to start putting up the walls,” he said. Brick layers

See..ELY pg. 10



**School board members will discuss the Ely school renovation project timeline next week.**  
photo by K. Vandervort



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Community notices

Vermilion Dream Quilters resume Thursday evening meetings

TOWER- The Vermilion Dream Quilters resume their traditional Thursday evening meeting time in April. Join us at St. Martin Catholic Church in Tower, on April 7th at 6:30 p.m. Kathy Lovgren will lead the program by showing/discussing her first and recent quilts. Members are asked to also bring their first and last quilt, if possible. For Show and Tell, in addition to any newly completed projects, bring an Easter theme or pastel creation. Visitors are welcome.

Finnish Marketplace on Tuesday, April 5 in Hibbing

HIBBING- Are you ready to part with a Finnish-related item? Or maybe find new ones to enjoy? A Tori, a Finnish marketplace, will be held by the Finnish Americans and Friends at Grace Lutheran Church, 4010 9th Ave., in Hibbing on Tuesday, April 5. Donations should be brought in 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., and the sale will begin at 2 p.m. After this fun event, we will have our usual coffee social time.

Folk-rock songwriter Courtney Yasmineh in Ely for two live performances

ELY- Folk-rock songwriter Courtney Yasmineh returns to the Northern Grounds Great Hall in Ely on Friday, March 25 from 6-8 p.m. and Sunday, March 27 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. with a brand new album “Red Roses And Cowgirl Dreams”. Rob Genadek, music producer and longtime touring-band drummer, will be performing with her. The pair sing great harmonies as they highlight the Country Western flair of this new album, Courtney’s eighth release.

MPR News launches North Star Journey exploring Minnesota culture and history

ST. PAUL- MPR News launched a new reporting series that aims to tell authentic narratives of diverse communities throughout Minnesota.

Stories from “North Star Journey: A journal exploring the history and culture of Minnesota communities” can be heard on MPR News Morning Edition, All Things Considered with Tom Crann and Minnesota Now with Cathy Wurzer, and on www.mprnews.org/north-star-journey.

The series kicked off this week with editor Brandt Williams exploring the power of names, from the Dakota origins of Minnesota to the power of George Floyd’s name. Reporter Nina Moini visited the historic Rondo neighborhood, the heart of the largest Black community in St. Paul that was split by the construction of I-94. Minoi reported about ongoing efforts to reclaim what was stolen. The series will continue throughout the spring and summer, with new radio segments, web stories and multimedia components released weekly.

“North Star Journey is an inclusive storytelling effort by MPR News that sheds light on the people that make up unique places and spaces across Minnesota,” said Sarah Glover, MPR News Managing Editor. “By going deeper with our reporting, by nature, we will tell the trials and the triumphs of diverse communities and the stalwarts working to preserve their history and culture.”

MPR News listeners can submit North Star Journey story ideas at www.mprnews.org.

County sheriff office seeking information on Elias murder

REGIONAL - On the morning of March 24, 1977, 45 years ago, Cindy Joy Elias was found murdered off a logging road approximately eight miles north of Aurora. Elias’s body was found buried under a pile of brush at the location. Investigations revealed she died due to traumatic injuries to the head. She was 19 years old at the time of her death and was last seen in Virginia at a local bar at approximately 12:30 a.m. A witness said Elias was looking for a ride home and had mentioned she was going to hitchhike.

The St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office is asking anyone who may have information pertaining to this case to contact St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office Investigations at 218-749-7134 or the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension’s Cold Case Homicide unit.

Please bring closure to the family and friends of Cindy Joy Elias and bring those responsible for this crime to justice.

KELLY KLUN Attorney At Law

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NORTHERN LAKES ARTS ASSOCIATION



From left: Jim and Ruth Lah, Crystal Poppler and Ian Lah, Gerald Olarinde and Justine Carlson, and Matthew Janeksela and Alison Poppler. photos by K. Vandervort

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY - After a two-year hiatus, Northern Lakes Arts Association and Vermilion Community College are bringing back the Ely Community Spring Musical next month. This spring’s production is a Rodgers and Hammerstein revue entitled “A Grand Night for Singing” featuring many of their most popular tunes from their many successful musicals, including The Sound of Music, Oklahoma!, Cinderella, South Pacific, and more.

“As usual, this will be a collaboration between the community arts organization and the community college, and will include high school and college students as well as community members,” said Director Sara Skelton. “The cast combines Ely Community Musical theater veterans with several new faces, featuring accomplished singers in every voice part.”

The cast features a mix of Ely Public School students, Matthew Janeksela, Gabe Mann, and Alison Poppler, VCC student Gerald Olarinde, Ely, Tower, Babbitt and Nett Lake teachers, Jim and Ruth Lah, Sarah Mason, Karin Schmidt, Crystal Poppler, and Ryan Bajan, and multiple community members, Linda Bajan, Crystal Chopp, Justine Carlson, Anne Folz, Laurie Kess, Susan Laine, Emily Weise, Todd Crego, Ian Lah, and Peter Kess.

Under the direction of Skelton, Marcia Homer is music director, Peter Kess is designing the

Ely Spring Musical returns after COVID hiatus



From left: Crystal and Alison Poppler, Justine Carlson, Ruth Lah.

sets, Greg Mann is in charge of lighting, and Laurie Kess will be costuming the cast.

The orchestra members include Mike Rouse and Barb Litchfield on keyboards, Nina Vangelder, flute, Sarah Mason, clarinet and saxophone, Lynn Evensen, bass, Margie Miller, harp, and Rich Dunstan on drums.

Performances in the VCC Fine Arts Theater are set for Friday, April 1 and Saturday, April 2 at 7 p.m., Sunday, April 3 at 2 p.m., and the next weekend, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, April 8-10 at 7

p.m.

Advance tickets are available online through Northern Lakes Arts Association’s website at northernlakesarts.org and will also be available at the door. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for NLAA members and \$8 for students.

“We are thrilled to be able to join you back doing live theater,” Skelton said, “Please join us for a night of singing.”

CALLING AREA COOKS

Casting call for new cooking series

DULUTH - WDSE-WRPT is currently seeking participants for their new PBS cooking series, “The Great Minnesota Recipe”. The casting call is open to individuals 18 years of age or older who reside in Minnesota. Entrants can be at-home cooks, amateur cooks, or professional cooks. To enter, please visit www.wdse.org/greatmnrecipe and provide a two to four minute video with a summary of your cultural background and your family’s history settling in the United States; why you love to cook; what your favorite cultural dish is; what makes Minnesota a unique place for culinary creations; and why you want to be a part of “The Great Minnesota Recipe”. Entries must be submitted by Tuesday, April 5 at 11:59 p.m. Film-

ing of the show begins this spring.

In this first season, the series is a multi-platform project that explores diverse culinary experiences of immigrant families or those with immigrant family backgrounds in Minnesota. The project includes a broadcast series with three, 30-minute documentary-style programs. Each explores a cook, a family of cooks, or chefs who have a family history of immigrating to and settling in Minnesota. Viewers will learn how recipes had to adapt over time to match Minnesota’s resources, climate, and population. In a fourth, hour-long competition-style episode, viewers see these cooks go head-to-head to create their unique version of the typical Minnesota meal, the hot dish. Local chefs and

community leaders will serve as the judging panel to pick one winner for this season. Prior to the broadcast of this fourth episode, WDSE-WRPT will host a screening event to promote the new PBS series and allow guests a first look at the final episode. All guests will then be served the winning dish. Beyond broadcasting on television, this project will also feature digital-exclusive content to encourage conversation around the topics covered and to promote the similar experience that can be gained through connecting over food and connecting through public media.

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ELECTIONS

# Bakk retirement could remake Iron Range politics

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— State Sen. Tom Bakk’s decision to retire from the Legislature at the end of the year has the potential to dramatically reshape the politics of the region. His departure, along with that of state Sen. David Tomassoni, DFL-Chisholm, will leave two wide-open Senate seats in a region long held by the DFL that has been increasingly tilting toward the GOP.

Bakk, who represents the Third Senate District, has been a fixture in St. Paul for nearly three decades. He first entered elected office in 1994, when he ran for the seat vacated by Rep. David Battaglia. He served four terms in the House before moving to the state Senate upon the retirement of longtime Sen. Doug Johnson. He has since served six terms in the Senate, holding the positions of both majority and minority leader for the DFL caucus. He also served as Senate Tax Chair from 2007-2010. He ran unsuccessfully for governor in 2010.

As a longtime DFLer, Bakk was widely respected



Sen. Tom Bakk

as a thoughtful lawmaker who hewed closely to the center and wielded significant influence over both fellow legislators and governors from both parties. Bakk left the DFL in the wake of the 2020 election, assumed the label of Independent, and agreed to caucus with the GOP’s Senate majority, although he insists he’s not a Republican. Since then, he has served as chair of the Senate Capital Investment Committee. Tomassoni said the decision to caucus as Independents in the closely-split Senate gave both him and Bakk the kind of influence they wouldn’t

have had if they had stayed within the DFL caucus. “I think it was a very good move not only for us but for our representation of our area of the state,” said Tomassoni.

Bakk’s first entry to the world of politics came as a business agent for the local carpenters’ union and he has long favored public investment as a way to make life better in the state and create jobs for workers in the trades. While he spent years as a DFL leader, he was willing to reach across the aisle when necessary to achieve his goals. He did that most notably in 2010, when he teamed up with then-Republican Gov. Tim Pawlenty to push through a measure creating the new Lake Vermilion State Park and, later, funding for its development.

Bakk’s decision to leave the DFL reflected the changing political times in northeastern Minnesota. Bakk faced one of his toughest campaigns in decades in 2020 as the political winds shifted in favor of Republicans in the region. Bakk lost

in places like the city of Babbitt and in Koochiching County, where he had previously won by two-to-one margins. Bakk says he hasn’t changed politically, but the way many of the region’s voters view the DFL has changed.

While the prospect of a hard-fought re-election effort in a Senate district altered by redistricting may have been part of Bakk’s calculation, it appears that more personal considerations dominated his decision. His wife, Laura Bakk, served as long-time legislative aide to Sen. David Tomassoni, who is now suffering from ALS. She plans to retire along with Tomassoni this year.

“Laura and I are looking forward to the next chapter of our lives,” said Bakk in his statement. “It’s with excitement that we journey into the future of more soccer, basketball, baseball, volleyball, football, and hockey, enjoying more time to help and watch our grandchildren learn and grow.”

In an interview last month, Bakk had indi-

cated he was reluctant to leave at the same time as Tomassoni, noting that the loss of two senior senators would be a political body blow to the region. But Bakk said he’s confident that new leaders will pick up the mantle. “There is still a lot more to be done but it is time for me to pass the torch,” he stated. “I’m certain there are new inspiring leaders waiting in the wings. For 28 years it has been my time to serve but now it is finally my time to retire.”

He said he expects several candidates will now throw their hats in the ring for the seat, on both the GOP and DFL sides (see accompanying story, page 1).

Reaction to Bakk’s announcement was swift. “The Arrowhead has unique challenges due to our geography and economic landscape, but no matter what, Sen. Bakk has been steadfast in his commitment to the region,” said state Rep. Rob Ecklund, DFL-International Falls, in a statement. “He’s also been an unwavering cham-

pion for labor, recognizing the value that every single person should have the opportunity for a good job with fair pay, safety at the workplace, and benefits to support a family.”

Tomassoni called Bakk “an incredible legislator” and a close friend. “He’s been the driving force through all kinds of legislation,” he said.

The departure of both Tomassoni and Bakk has been called the end of an era by some and it is bound to influence, and possibly remake, the political landscape of the Iron Range for a generation. While the political changes in the region, which have upset the DFL’s longtime dominance in the region, are one factor, the loss of the two lawmakers’ experience will likely have the most immediate impact. “We have 58 years of combined experience and much of what we learned over the years is only because of the amount of time that we were there,” said Tomassoni. “As my college coach used to say all the time, ‘You can’t substitute experience.’”

FEDERAL OVERSIGHT

# EPA nixes legislative efforts to halt sulfate enforcement

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

Letter says state laws passed in 2015 and 2016 violate Clean Water Act

REGIONAL— The federal Environmental Protection Agency has informed Minnesota pollution regulators that they are required to enforce sulfate limits designed to protect wild rice, despite a series of legislative efforts to prohibit enforcement of the pollution standard. The letter could have significant repercussions for Minnesota’s taconite industry, which has been discharging high levels of sulfate for decades.

The Minnesota Legislature, in an effort led by Iron Range lawmakers, passed laws in 2015 and 2016, both signed by then-Gov. Mark Dayton, that effectively prohibited the Minnesota

Pollution Control Agency from enforcing the state’s strict sulfate limit of 10 milligrams per liter for wild rice waters. The laws prompted the MPCA to leave sulfate limits out of a new permit, still in litigation, that it issued for U.S. Steel’s Minntac tailings basin north of Virginia. It also suspended enforcement of a schedule of compliance contained in the permit for U.S. Steel’s Keetac plant near Keewatin, which was supposed to bring that facility into compliance with the wild rice sulfate limit as of 2019.

Minnesota Indian tribes and environmental groups have been pushing for more than a decade to get the MPCA to enforce the

1970s-era sulfate standard for wild rice waters. Those efforts have had limited success, at least until now.

In a Feb. 16 letter, the EPA’s regional administrator and Great Lakes national program coordinator, Debra Shore, states that the 2015 and 2016 laws suspending enforcement of the wild rice standard “are inconsistent with the Clean Water Act.” The EPA letter states that the agency is disallowing the MPCA’s efforts to comply with the state laws enacted in 2015 and 2016 as “an improper modification” to its water discharge, or NPDES, permitting program.

According to the EPA letter,

the federal agency has authority under federal law to review statutory or regulatory changes made by states if they impact permitting under the Clean Water Act.

“Our review found that the 2015 Sulfate Law and 2016 Sulfate Law: 1) limited MPCA’s ability to include sulfate water quality-based effluent limits in NPDES permits that are required to comply with Minnesota’s federally-approved sulfate water quality standard, and 2) invalidated sulfate effluent limits in any existing state permits.”

The EPA’s position puts the MPCA on notice that it is expected to abide by the federal laws pertaining to industrial per-

mitting, rather than state laws, if the state laws contradict federal regulations.

MPCA spokesperson Darin Broten said the state agency is abiding with the federal law. “The agency will continue to follow the EPA’s guidance as long as the Clean Water Act requires us to act or as the result of future litigation,” he said.

## Impact on mining industry

U.S. Steel’s Keetac plant is the facility most immediately affected by the EPA’s letter. The MPCA had issued a new Keetac permit in 2011 that required the company to meet the wild rice

See SULFATE...pg. 5

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# OPINION

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## Editorial

### Misleading at the pump

Right-wing disinformation is as close at your local gas station

Oil companies are not in the business of producing oil. They’re in the business of making money and, as we’re learning these days, that sometimes means producing less oil rather than more. Major U.S. oil companies have learned this lesson in spades, having posted combined profits in 2021 of \$205 billion. You read that right.

The U.S. oil sector found that limiting new production is actually better for the bottom line. Why chase new supply to meet higher demand, after all, if those additional barrels only increase your costs and trim the price of a barrel, reducing profits in the process? Rather than sinking profits into expansion of production, companies have dramatically increased dividends to shareholders and bought back stock. You can’t blame them for it. In America, that’s called good business, even if it comes at the expense of consumers.

You can, however, blame the liars out there putting stickers on gas pumps across the country blaming President Biden for the increasing cost of gasoline. Never mind that these dishonest individuals are vandalizing private property, they’re flat out lying to the customers who show up at the pump.

As any economist will tell you, presidents have virtually no influence on the price of gas, and that’s especially the case in the wake of the dramatic supply and demand gyrations stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The worldwide lockdowns that took effect in early 2020 sent the oil market into a historic tailspin. For at least a brief period, oil prices actually went negative as the industry ran out of places to store all their oil at a time when consumers quit driving or flying. The whole industry darn near shut down for a time.

Then, as the lockdowns eased, consumer demand skyrocketed, but the oil industry didn’t ramp up production to correspond. Instead, they’ve been happy to keep supply restricted and rake in the cash as oil prices surged in response. And it isn’t just U.S. oil companies. OPEC has gotten in on the action as well.

If you asked one of the Biden sticker people how it is that Biden is responsible for higher gas prices, they would no doubt resort to their usual talking point... i.e., that the cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline is behind it all. Fortunately, we can calculate to the tenth of a percentage point just how much that decision is impacting the price at the pump today. And it’s exactly 0.0 percent, since the pipeline wouldn’t have been

transporting oil any sooner than 2023 in either case, even if it had been built. Keep in mind, President Obama canceled the same pipeline back in 2015, and the price of oil dropped nearly 20 percent the following year. The cancellation of the pipeline was symbolic, to be sure, but hardly significant and it has absolutely nothing to do with the price of oil.

While the administration promised to halt oil and gas leasing on federal lands and take action on climate change, its actual policies have understandably frustrated climate activists. While the administration instituted a temporary pause on oil and gas leasing on federal lands in its early days, a court quickly tossed that decision. Meanwhile, the administration decided to go ahead later last year with the largest offshore oil lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico in U.S. history.

And, as the White House noted last week, the industry has thousands of federal leases affecting millions of acres that continue to sit unused. There is no shortage of opportunity for the “drill, baby, drill” crowd, just a lack of incentive to truly ramp up production to meet demand.

Finally, in fairness to the oil and gas industry, there are legitimate reasons to question major new investment in exploration and expanded production. We know that we can’t burn the existing reserves without cooking the planet (sorry, that’s science, not spin), so if policymakers in the U.S. ever get their act together on climate change, investments in new production may never pay off.

At the same time, there is a growing movement among investors to avoid the oil and gas sector, in part due to the growing risks associated with such investments. And we can’t dismiss the moral taint increasingly associated with an industry that spent billions of dollars over the past couple decades lying to the public and lawmakers about the link between the burning of fossil fuels and catastrophic climate change, lies that could have the industry eventually facing the same kind of legal judgments as the tobacco industry. Most investors tend to shy away from that kind of stink.

In the meantime, the price of oil has dipped from its previous highs in the immediate aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The earlier run-up prompted an immediate spike in prices at the pump, yet the falling price of oil hasn’t led to a similar decline in pump prices. Gouging consumers, after all, is practically a sport in the U.S. It’s a sport that our big corporations play to win.



## Letters from Readers

### Noise comparisons not quite the same

Several good folks took the time to respond to my letter of concern over the proposed ATV trail through the Eagles Nest Community. I’d like to offer some points to consider:

A) Eagles Nest is a small community, on a small chain of lakes. We are happy living on ‘the end of a road’. Most of us chose that, or, our forefathers did. Unlike the larger lakes, we have been a place of general quiet and peace. It has been that way without any conscious effort. It’s the way the community has lived since its roots in the Finnish influence.

B) We do have noise; noise of neighbors, of their visitors and of the traffic to and from the state park. This is the level of noise we have accepted. If a neighbor has a friend with a jet ski for the weekend, we are all acceptable to the degree they operate respectfully.

C) To have the ATV trail come through is more than just our neighbors. If such a trail was used exclusively by our friends and neighbors, it would be welcome, not an issue. Such was the assumed understanding in the early years of ATV trail development. But in reality, the millions of dollars and the insistence for corridor trails and direct routes talks more of commercialization.

D) To have a main corridor trail developed from Tower to Ely via our community could be like encouraging a commercial float plane operator to come and fly 20 plus times a day off our lakes, not just to take off and go to work elsewhere as we did in our years of service.

E) There are other possibilities; preferred routes that service Ely, Babbitt, and Tower. These should be the primary trails, the corridor routes.

F) As of now, I am thankful to the Eagles Nest Township board and the Prospectors Trail committee for the opportunity to engage in a better long-term solution. If a trail is developed, it is permanent. We are learning

from other communities in the country that did what Ely is doing. Five years after opening their communities and trail system, they have issues with the volume of tourist ATV traffic. Now they are trying to ‘put the horse back in the barn’.

If we, as Percy White encourages, all work together, it might take a little longer but we will hammer out a plan that will best serve all, not just the commercialization of ATV trails. I, for one, believe it can be done, in honesty, with sincere hope for the best of all.

**Bud Van Deusen**  
Eagles Nest Township

### How about more openness in Morse?

I read with chagrin the March 11 article about “few Morse residents attend annual meeting”. As a resident within Morse Township, I personally have no idea when their meetings are or what they’re doing. Perhaps I am not alone; thus low attendance at meetings.

I was hoping to attend the March meeting but there were conflicting notices in the paper about the meeting of 7 March rescheduled to 1 March.

It would also be helpful if there was contact information provided in future articles so that one could get a hold of whoever is running the office or the manned hours of the office and if there is a website or some other platform where one can read about what is going on in the township. Google and Facebook searches reveal little.

I have seen notices occasionally in the paper but usually when someone is running for an office. It’d be especially helpful to read articles posting what occurs at any meetings.

Hopefully someone that is attached to the administration of this township will read this letter and work to improve the visibility of the township’s activities. Thank you.

**Stephanie Hibdon**  
Morse Township

### A woman who fought for the general welfare

Someone recently introduced me to the subject of how business and labor laws and Social Security came about. Frances Perkins, a woman, was one of the cornerstone thinkers about making things more equitable for workers as they slaved in factories and slaughter houses of early America. She was initially influenced by witnessing the tragic results of a fire in a garment factory that killed many migrant workers. Fair and safe labor standards along with decent living conditions became Number One on her list of priorities, first in New York, then the nation.

She was the first woman to occupy a presidential cabinet position as Secretary of Labor. She got experience prior to that in a similar position in the state of New York under Franklin Delano Roosevelt as governor. Then, under FDR as President during the Depression, she instituted “works programs” like the CCC, WPA and similar efforts. Ultimately, a limited work week, allowance for workers to unionize, workers’ compensation, unemployment insurance, and the crown jewel, Social Security, were the results.

She was rabidly accused of being a “socialist”, that catch-all term still used to denigrate anyone who has the “general welfare” of the public in mind. What her accusers fail to realize is that furthering the General Welfare is specifically stated in the Constitution as a responsibility of the federal government.

Perkins wisely sought counsel from the chief Supreme Court justice at the time and he told her Social Security would hold up in court because the federal government had the constitutional power to tax.

March is Women’s History month and hats off to Frances Perkins and all those like her who lived to bless and serve others, whether famous or not.

**Mark Roalson**  
Hoyt Lakes

# The questions at the heart of us

I have been hearing stories personally and through the media of the anxiety that many people are experiencing with all the unrest and uncertainty in the world following two years of dealing with a worldwide pandemic. As quickly as we humans get bored with too much routine, we also tend to feel



BETTY FIRTH

more secure when we have some sense of what’s coming and at least a small dose of control, even if it is an illusion. A fundamental question of philosophy is, “Why are we here?” To one degree or another, depending on our propensity for questioning and soul searching, I think we all wonder at times what it’s all about, and we often

seek out individuals or groups whom we can huddle with to help figure it out or at least give us a sense of connectedness with people that make sense to us.

I have attended church at different times and places in my life, and when I land on one that’s a fit for me, which can take some searching, I show up every week. The community and the ritual become a part of my life, and I am faithful to it. It provides an anchor in my week, not in the sense of something heavy holding me down, but more like what a

sailboat anchor provides.

I’ve sailed quite a bit on Lake Superior and on other bodies of water, so I have spent many nights moored out, sleeping on board, swinging on an anchor. I learned from a patient, safety-conscious skipper how to choose the right anchor and set it correctly so it wouldn’t release and set the boat adrift while the crew was sleeping. The crew works together to scout the area where you’re going to moor, taking depth soundings and looking for underground boulders or other impediments.

You figure out the arc of the boat’s swing so it won’t run aground or hit anything, including other boats. Then drop the anchor and back off, playing out the anchor rope to the correct distance for arc, setting and testing to make sure it is biting into the bottom. It can be done with one or two people but is a whole lot easier with the whole crew working together. Everyone sleeps better if they know the anchor is well-placed and secure.

See **HEART...pg 5**



# Letters from Readers

## Stauber fails to support labor time after time

Hang on, it’s almost campaign season again. And that means lots of those shiny mailers from Pete Stauber-replete with pictures of him wearing a hard hat and safety glasses. Pete certainly seems to enjoy talking about how much he “loves” and “fights for” the working folks in his district. It seems that Pete spends almost as much time talking about his support for labor,

as he does actively undermining its interests in Washington, D.C. In fact, Pete has failed to support the most important piece of labor legislation that has come before Congress in 40 years-the PRO (Protecting the Right to Organize) Act. This legislation would amend the National Labor Relations Act, for the purpose of expanding protections related to employees’ rights to organize and collectively bargain in the workplace. What of labor-loving Pete? He voted against it twice. Featuring most prominently

in his supposed concern for the interests of the laboring classes is his unequivocal backing of the mining industry. Mining is part of “our way of life” after all! In his capacity as a member of the House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, Pete never fails to carry water for the international conglomerates which control the extractive mining and petroleum industries. But what about those times when the interests of corporate profits, and the welfare of the working people of his district are in con-

flict? What on Earth is Pete to do then? When Cliffs Northshore Mining announced the shuttering of its Babbitt and Silver Bay operations, we found out that in 2021, Cliffs netted a record profit of \$1.3 billion. The closing of the Peter Mitchell mine in Babbitt, and the associated taconite processing operation in Silver Bay will put 500 people out of work. The company announced that the idling will begin this spring and will last at least into the fall. Cliffs has made no pledge that

the shutdowns won’t be extended or become permanent. So how has Pete, our valiant defender of labor, reacted? With complete and utter silence! On his active twitter feed? Nope. In a statement on his website? Nothing. In announcements or press releases to local media? Nada. With friends like Pete Stauber “fighting” for you, who needs enemies?

**Todd Redmann  
Two Harbors**

## PUBLIC HEALTH

# As Omicron fades, health department refocuses

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Although the Omicron surge of the COVID pandemic is well behind us, St. Louis County Public Health Division Director Amy Westbrook has scant time for a sigh of relief. Case levels are far below the Omicron peak but cases still remain, new surges could lie ahead, and a department that’s been at the fore of the regional COVID battle has to remain at the ready while transitioning its focus to other health matters.

“Our numbers are looking much better,” Westbrook said on Tuesday. “They’re getting to be where they were last summer when we saw a really low number of cases reported. We’ve seen it level off over the last week or so, but we’ve come down dramatically since our peak in January.”

Monday marked the second anniversary of the first COVID case documented in the county.

“I remember when we got the call about that first case, at least a couple of weeks after the first case in Minnesota. We were kind of surprised that it took that long for us to get our first case. It was probably just three weeks where we saw our first assisted living outbreak and that was what really hit us hard.”

It’s something that remains fresh in Westbrook’s mind because two years later such outbreaks haven’t gone away.

“Last week we saw five congregate care facilities experiencing outbreaks, so it’s still a very real pandemic for a lot of our vulnerable populations, especially the aging adult population,” she said.

While most of the general public is settling into more normal routines that no longer include masking or close attention to social distancing, there are still those for whom the coronavirus poses a serious threat.

“There are still vulnerable populations outside of the aging population, such as people with compromised immune systems, especially younger children who may not be eligible for vaccines yet,” Westbrook said. “We don’t want to forget that there are populations that this is still a real threat and concern for them. That’s something that we can’t lose sight of.”

COVID also remains a threat for those who haven’t been vaccinated or who haven’t received all of their recommended doses, Westbrook said. Sixty-six percent of Minnesotans have completed their one- or two-dose vaccine regimens, but less than half, 45.8 percent, are completely up to date with the recommended boosters.

“Vaccine immunity does wear off,” Westbrook said. “Not completely, so if you’re unvaccinated you’re still much more likely to be hospitalized. But the numbers show that if you have a booster, you’re even less likely to be hospitalized or have severe illness.”

And the end of the Omicron surge doesn’t signal the end of the pandemic, Westbrook said. “I don’t anticipate that the World Health Organization will declare it anything else besides a pandemic anytime soon because there are still many countries that are really seeing spikes and increases and low vaccination rates,” she said. “There’s always a chance that new mutations could happen and variants could develop. We’re in a good place here in our country, in Minnesota, and in St. Louis County right now, but making sure we remember that it is still a pandemic is pretty important.”

### Shifting resources

At the outset of the pandemic and throughout its first year, county health departments served as the boots on the ground as state and federal governments geared up to bring the many facets of the health care system into a coordinated and widespread approach to combat the virus.

The health department in St. Louis County stepped up to fill

the gaps where health services needed some support, Westbrook said, by setting up community-based testing and vaccination sites to supplement state-operated clinics in the county. As community health centers, pharmacies, and hospitals stepped up in those arenas, the department continued to target areas such as the Iron Range where certain services, particularly testing, were deemed to be inadequate to meet the growing demand.

County health department workers also took on the added demands of providing technical assistance to health care providers, congregate care facilities, and schools both public and private. A data-informed response to the pandemic required data, so the department also increased its monitoring, data collection, and data processing activities. Ongoing public education efforts related to mitigation practices, testing, and vaccinations also had to ramp up.

All those efforts required a shift in responsibilities for department staff, often requiring reassignment of staff to new positions to support all of the department’s pandemic activities.

As the pandemic has progressed through multiple waves, health care systems have developed to the point where they have been able to largely handle

the demand for vaccinations and testing, demand that has been shrinking as the percentage of vaccinated people has grown and at-home testing was introduced.

One person whose new pandemic role will continue is Aubree Hoover, the department’s specialist working with schools on COVID issues. Westbrook said that Hoover proved to be a valuable asset to school districts, and rather than cut back her role, the diminished need for COVID-related guidance will give Hoover the opportunity to work with schools on other health issues, including mental health and substance abuse.

The department is also shifting its focus to what Westbrook called “secondary impacts” from the pandemic.

“Public health impacts (from the pandemic) are mental health and substance abuse,” she said. “Our overdose rates are increasing. There are a lot of impacts we’re going to find, including food access. The public health issues that were priorities before the pandemic have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Unfortunately, during the pandemic we’ve had to pull some resources away from those priority areas, so I want to make sure that we’re realigning our resources to focus on those COVID recovery aspects and secondary impacts.”

## HEART...Continued from page 4

Communities of faith can provide that kind of anchoring, giving us some boundaries with room to maneuver and explore our beliefs with a crew of folks who are interested in exploring and practicing in similar ways. If we do bang into things, and we all will, we have a network of people around us to help us rebound.

For some people, a religious setting is not a good fit for them. They may not have been “churched” as a child, so the whole thing just seems strange. They may have been disillusioned by what they experienced as hypocrisy in a religious setting, as humans inevitably fall short of perfection, or they might even have been hurt emotionally or physically by adults who were controlling, manipulative, or physically abusive. For young people seeking spiritual guidance and community in a space that should have been a safe haven, such experiences would be devastating and could have lifelong consequences. Whatever

the circumstances, many people question whatever beliefs they were brought up with as they determine their own path in life.

But the seeking persists: What am I supposed to do with my life? Am I doing the best thing for myself? For my family? For the world? Why me? Why not me? Does God exist? Are angels and spirits of the dead hovering around us?

Many find peace in their hearts and perhaps some answers to life’s persistent questions in nature, finding solace in the quiet of lakes, woods, oceans, deserts, and mountains, away from the noise of modern life always clamoring for attention. Many find purpose and satisfaction in helping other people through paid work or volunteering and others through creative expression in multiple ways: through visual and performing arts, gardening, carpentry, cooking and a host of other activities that provide outlets for learning, creating, and giving.

They say we are tribal

beings, and I see this showing up in our inclination to join groups of others to pursue interests, accomplish goals, and just be with other people who are interesting to us. Perhaps there is a lot of that in America, known for its high level of volunteerism, because families are often scattered across this huge country, and we crave a consistent connection with others of our species, (even though we’re very good at aggravating each other at the same time.)

Most of my adult life I have not had family around, so I have sought out friends and organizations to create my own tribe. I don’t tend to just be a joiner. If I’m interested enough in a group—or a friendship—I’m going to invest my energy in them, building connections, sometimes providing leadership, always caring, at times overcommitting. Why bother if you’re not going to invest yourself? I have had difficulty understanding people who just show up occasionally without contributing much,

whether it’s to church, synagogue, mosque, a secular organization, or personal relationships, expecting that others will do the work to keep it going.

It has occurred to me that the same is true of the political scene in America. I think most of us think we’re good Americans, valuing the core principles of democracy, but are we willing to participate to keep the democratic structure healthy and intact? Are we willing to do more than occasionally show up to vote or write a passionate letter to the editor, while going back to life as usual, letting others do the work, hoping they’ll be successful in keeping it all together or creatively figure out a new direction? Democracy is about “us” as in “we, the people.” If you’re concerned, where could you step up and jump in? You might just find that getting involved with others to take action is a great antidote for that underlying anxiety and depression!

## SULFATE...Continued from page 3

standard for the first time and established a schedule of compliance that gave the company until 2019 to do so. That requirement was quickly suspended by legislative action. However, the EPA letter states that the schedule of compliance is now enforceable, either by the MPCA, the EPA, or a citizens lawsuit.

The effect on Minntac is less clear given court rulings last year under which that operation will

likely need to begin a clean-up of its tailings basin water, which discharges high sulfate wastewater into both ground and surface water through seepage under its tailings basin dike.

A new NPDES permit for the tailings basin, issued in 2018 by the MPCA, has been in litigation for the past four years.

The Minnesota Supreme Court, last year, had sided with the MPCA

in its decision to enforce a federal sulfate standard of 250 mg/l on contaminated groundwater under the Minntac operation. The high court also remanded the question of whether the contaminated seepage under the tailings basin dike constitutes a discharge to surface water under the Clean Water Act. The MPCA had originally determined that it did not, but a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the case of County

of Maui v. Hawaii Wildlife Fund, found that contaminated discharge through groundwater is regulated under the Clean Water Act if it is the “functional equivalent” of a direct discharge. The Minnesota Supreme Court subsequently concluded that the Maui case was applicable to Minntac’s seepage and that the MPCA must reevaluate its decision based on the standards applied in the Maui case.



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**TIMBERJAY**

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OUR COMMUNITY

Pasties for a good cause

Fundraiser held by St. Anthony Knights of Columbus

ELY – Members of St. Anthony Catholic Church here gathered last weekend to make more than 500 pasties to sell for their major spring fundraising event. The “pasty factory” opened last Friday morning when a dozen or so kitchen helpers gathered to chop and dice potatoes, onions, carrots and rutabagas, as well as mix and prepare pie dough. “We are making pasties again this year in place of our annual Lenten Fish Fry because there are still concerns about COVID-19 and gathering of so many

people,” said St. Anthony Deacon Greg Hutar as he mixed pasty dough. Volunteers, including several pasty dough “holy rollers” who put their extensive pie-making skills to work, gathered in the church kitchen early Saturday morning to begin assembling the traditional meat, veggie and potato pies. The smell of baking pasties filled the church hall by 11 a.m. when purchasers began to line up to take home their perfect pasties. All proceeds go to Knights of Columbus charities.



Members of St. Anthony Catholic Church in Ely gathered in the church kitchen last weekend to make more than 500 pasties for a Knights of Columbus fundraiser. Organizers hope to bring back the Lenten Fish Frys next year. photos by K. Vandervort



In Brief

Pray for Ukraine

ELY – This community is coming together to pray for the country, people and churches of Ukraine and surrounding countries. Ledgerrock Community Church, 1515 E. Camp St., will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 26.

Dental hygiene services offered

ELY – The Ely Community Health Center in the ECR building (formerly AFU) is providing free dental hygiene services to anyone in need. Call 218-365-5678 or email DentalECHS@gmail.com.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2021



the sun, longer days  
coming out of the darkness

made it through winter

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

AROUND TOWN

Tuesday Group

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 speaker suggestion, contact Lacey Squier by email at ElyTuesdayGroup@gmail.com or call her at 218-216-9141. Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers: ➤ March 29 - Camp Atsokan: A Writer's Retreat for Teen Girls. In June, 2020, ten Ely public school students attended a writers' retreat, facilitated by author Mary Cassanova, at Camp Atsokan on Rainy

Lake. The retreat was such a success that those girls and more returned to Camp Atsokan for another writer's retreat with Mary in 2021, and planning for a 2022 retreat is underway. This Tuesday Group session will feature several of the young writers presenting about their retreat experience. ➤ April 5 - Emily Ford's 1,200 Mile Winter Trek. Emily Ford trekked 1,200 miles of Wisconsin's snowy Ice Age Trail in winter 2020, accompanied by her sled dog Diggins. Ford completed the trek in 69 days. She is only the second documented person to complete the trail in winter, and the first woman and first person of color to do so. Emily

and Diggins also recently completed a winter trek across the Boundary Water Canoe Area Wilderness. Emily will be presenting remotely via Zoom. Local audiences are invited to view her presentation and enjoy lunch in community with one another at the Grand Ely Lodge. ➤ April 12- Exploring some effects of the Pagami Creek Fire on a fire-dependent ecosystem. Presenters Lane Johnson and Mike Schrage will discuss what we know about the ecological impacts of the 2011 Pagami Creek fire on forest conditions in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Lane Johnson is a research forester with the University of Minnesota Cloquet

Forestry Center, a tree-ring fire history enthusiast, and ardent supporter of prescribed fire. He is a graduate of the University of Minnesota-Duluth and University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and is certified fire ecologist through the Association for Fire Ecology (fireecology.org). Mike Schrage has been the wildlife biologist for the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa since 1995 where he is expected to be the expert on everything from moose biology to tribal treaty rights to the proper care and handling of baby robins that have fallen out of the nest. He is a graduate of the University of Idaho and Virginia Tech and a resi-

Folk School classes geared for kids

ELY - The Ely Folk School is gearing up to host a week of youth classes in April. Registration available at www.elyfolkschool.org, or by calling 218-235-0138. ➤ Banana Bread! – Sunday, April 3, 2 p.m., \$10 ➤ Playing to Create Story – Tuesday, April 5, 9:30 a.m., \$25 ➤ Kids Makers Morning – Wednesday, April 6, 9:30 a.m., free ➤ Spring Haiku Cards – Wednesday, April 6, 2 p.m., \$30 ➤ Mini Card Weaving – Thursday, April 7, 1 p.m., \$30 ➤ Learn Through Coloring: Boiling Maple Sap – Thursday, April 7, 4 p.m., \$10

Ely Police Department Activity Report March 1-15, 2022

Arrests/Citations:

Traffic Stop- Individual issued a citation for No Insurance.

Complaints:

Mental health- Officers contacted an individual that was having a mental health issue. Officers determined the person was not a harm to themselves or others. Medical- Officers assisted the Ely Ambulance with a medical. Property Damage- Officers were contacted about a residence that

had damage from a plow truck. Animal Disturbance- Officers were contacted about a dog that chased after a person and ripped their shirt. Officers located the owner and advised the owner of the situation. Vehicle Crash- Officers responded to a vehicle crash with minor vehicle damage and no injuries. Check Welfare- Officers checked on an individual that had not shown up for work. The person was located safe. Suspicious Activity-

Officers were called about two people entering a residence through a window. Officers arrived and the two people were outside as they locked their keys inside the residence. Vehicle Crash- Officers responded to a vehicle crash with minor vehicle damage and no injuries. Animal Disturbance- Officers were called about a dog that was outside that looked cold. Officers arrived and located the dog with his human. Officers verified the dog was happy to be going for a walk.

Medical- Officers assisted the Ely Ambulance with a medical. Unwanted Person- Officers were contacted about an unwanted person at a local business. Officers brought the individual back to their residence. Open Door- Officers located an open door while on patrol. Officers cleared the residence and nobody was inside. Disturbance- Officers were contacted about a group of people arguing. Officers arrived and mediated the situation.

Assist Other Agency- Officers assisted a neighboring agency with a Domestic Assault. Public Assist- Officers assisted an individual to get fingerprints for employment. Motor Vehicle Crash- Officers responded to a two-vehicle crash. There was minor damage to the vehicles and no injuries. Public Assist- Officers stood by as a group of people moved items into a residence. Public Assist- Individual let back into their residence.



COOK CITY COUNCIL

# Council defers questions about ambulance leadership

## Qualifications, length of temporary appointment listed as citizen concerns

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- A concerned citizen appeared at last week's regular Cook City Council meeting to get some answers to questions she had about the director position for Cook Ambulance Service, but walked away empty handed when councilors chose to defer the matter to a future closed session for personnel matters.

When former ambulance director Tina Rothleutner left the service in early 2021, longtime crew member Karen Schultz was appointed as interim director at the April 22, 2021, council meeting for 90 days, with the opportunity for an increase in pay after three months of successful service and obtaining EMT certification. Her interim position was renewed by the council

at the July 2021 council meeting.

Ivette Reing appeared at the March 17 meeting with questions for the council about their decision-making process regarding the continuance of Shultz as interim director.

"I have questions about how the city council decided to extend her directorship," Reing began. "That's basically the gist of it, how that was decided and how the community hasn't been informed that she's been in this position for about a year."

Reing turned to a job posting she said was on the city's website that stated qualifications for the permanent position and contrasted that with the council's decision to continue with Shultz as interim director. The first was a requirement that the director be EMT-certified.

"She (Shultz) doesn't

hold her EMT license, but she's serving in the director's position," Reing said. "I'm aware that she has been granted extension to try to take the test, but I'm here to find out why that happens. Is that something that has been changed, or is that to be granted to everybody in the community? If you're a first responder can you apply and can you be given extensions to obtain your EMT licensure and still run the department?"

The *Timberjay* verified through the Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board's Online eLicense Portal that Shultz is currently certified as an EMR and not as an EMT.

Mayor Harold Johnston then suggested that the council meeting wasn't the place to be having this discussion.

"I'm thinking this

should be discussed in a closed meeting," he said, noting that Reing would be invited to attend as spokesperson of a group sharing her questions and concerns.

City Administrator Theresa Martinson said that the city would need to consult its legal counsel about the appropriate notification procedures, but indicated that a meeting could be possible by the first week in April.

Reing had a written list of questions and concerns that she gave to Martinson, stating, "It's just plain concerns, and I want to speak up."

### CHRA phone call

At the council's February meeting, CHRA Executive Director Reed Erickson presented documentation from the agency's attorney that Mayor Johnston had called them about pending resident

evictions, an act that Erickson said ran counter to prior statements by Johnston that the mayor and council were not to get involved in CHRA operations. Johnston said he did not recall making such a call, but said that he would look into it.

At last week's council meeting, Johnston took the opportunity to comment on the matter.

"I didn't have any recollection of the call," Johnston said. "Unfortunately, I can't prove that I didn't."

However, as stated at the February meeting, the call was placed after Johnston appointed himself to the CHRA board, an important aspect related to his next statement, as he was acting in his role as a board member.

"In any case, it's a perfectly legal call," he said. "A board member

has the right to call the attorney for information."

"And if I did make it," Johnston continued, "it was entirely motivated by concern for people, vulnerable people, who might be put out on the street. I have to own it. It's a call I wanted to discuss, and that's all I have to say. Thank you."

### Other business

In other business, the council:

- Authorized the maintenance department to purchase a street sweeper to replace the current one, which is beyond repair.
- Received monthly reports from the ambulance service and liquor store.
- Scheduled a special meeting for Thursday, April 7 at 10 a.m. to open bids for work at the airport.

# Forget the corned beef and pass the pickled herring

## St. Urho's Day celebration is festive first for Cook Carefree Living

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- As a 91-year-old Cook Carefree Living resident was looking around the workout room there one day recently, she was disturbed not by what she saw, but what she didn't see.

"They have piles of boxes and stuff in there, and I said, 'I see St. Patrick's there, but how come no St. Urho?'" she said.

For Becky Lehto Werner, a longtime Kabetogama resident and honorary Finn by marriage, who had been celebrating St. Urho's Day for nigh onto 50 years, that just wouldn't do. So, she talked with Life Enrichment Coordinator Debbie Lenzen about it.

"She said, 'I don't think we've ever had it before,' and I said, 'Well, that's not fair, because there are a lot of Finns who live here,'" Werner said.

Regional natives embrace the tale of the legend of the fictional St. Urho, named after President Urho Kekkonen of Finland, as being created by an employee of Ketola's Department Store in Virginia as a Finnish counter to Ireland's St. Patrick. St.

Urho was originally said to have driven frogs out of Finland, but the story was later recast to target grasshoppers for said banishment. Originally celebrated on May 24, the date was changed to March 16, perhaps to give Finns an excuse to start drinking green beer a day before the Irish, as the story goes.

Lenzen couldn't have had a better partner to create the first St. Urho Day celebration at Cook Carefree Living, as it appears Werner was an instigator of the initial observances all those years ago in Kabetogama.

"They were all Finns there," she said. "We had a minister from the Methodist church come and ask why we didn't celebrate St. Urho's Day. We said OK, we'll do that. So, some of my friends and I started having St. Urho's at the Methodist church in Kabetogama, and that gradually changed into a parade and a celebration at the community hall with a program and fun things to do making fun of the Finns. That went on for 50 years until all the Finns moved out of the community, or died, I should say."

Werner said she moved into the living center about two years ago,



**Cook Carefree Living resident Becky Lehto Werner, the primary mover and shaker behind the first-ever St. Urho's Day celebration at the center, displays a certificate she received for her prowess playing king's corners.** submitted photo

at a time when the state's assisted living centers were under strict COVID restrictions to protect residents. Group activities weren't an option for a good long while, but now that those restrictions aren't in effect anymore, Lenzen decided her busy schedule of activities for residents could accommodate another event, so Werner set about putting together a festive St. Urho's Day celebration.

Lenzen worked on the decorations, creating table centerpieces with the traditional purple and green motif featuring grapes and little grasshoppers on top, and accompanied by little Finnish flags. But the centerpieces sparked an unexpected controversy, ignited by a resident who recalled the origins of the legend.

"She said, 'Where's the frogs?'" Lenzen laughed.

Werner chimed in.

"She was a Finlander and said she had a copy of the paper that tells about having a frog and that it's not right to have grasshoppers," Werner said.

"I had to go buy a frog and put it on the table to make her happy," Lenzen said.

They put together a fine little feast of snacks that included grapes, pickled herring, and Finnish cookies baked by one of Werner's friends in Kabetogama, all to fete the distinctive tastes of St. Urho and the assembled guests.

There was a program, too. Marlene Tomczak, Werner's niece, is a full-blooded Finn, and she tutored the group on some Finnish words and phrases and read some works about Finland and saunas.

Werner presented a humorous cryptic story about a "certain body part" she couldn't keep clean in spite of using a sauna and a number of other recommended solutions. She eventually revealed that body part to be her belly button and produced the solution to the problem – tiny little purple and green brushes just the right size to fit where they were needed.

And apparently St.

Urho doesn't mind a little humor at his expense, as Lenzen pulled out a list of jokes tailored for the day and written in a fashion to give her a shot at delivering them with a proper Finnish accent.

"Why did St. Urho walk wit a limp? It hurt tuu mutts to run viht a limp."

Various residents received certificates for one thing or another during the event, which was also attended by about 10 friends and friends of friends of Werner and her relatives from Kabetogama.

"They just kept visiting and visiting until it was time to go, and we didn't get a chance to play our games," Lenzen said. "We played our games the next day on St. Patrick's Day."

The celebration was a big hit with all who attended, including Werner, who declared it should be an annual event.

"Hopefully they'll continue, even if I'm not around, because I'm 91 and I expect not to be around too long," she laughed. "I'm sure glad that I saw that box of St. Patrick's decorations. It was a lot of fun to get together and enjoy each other."

# It's time to start snapping happy pics

COOK- Northwoods Friends of the Arts is once again staging its popular annual photography contest, with the theme for this year's edition being "Happiness is ...."

Photographers are encouraged to focus on "What makes you happy?" Tell a story with a dog, your children, a place, the sun, a walk in the moonlight, whatever happiness may be to you.

Photos can be printed in any of three sizes: 5x7, 8x10 or 8x12.

As this is a fundraiser, a \$10 entry fee is charged per photo. The entry fee includes mats and sleeves for each entry to provide for uniformity in displaying the photographs for voters.

Photos from students 18 and younger are free.

Entrants have the opportunity to win \$100 or \$50, so snap your pictures and submit your entries from now through Saturday, April 30.



Entrants may mail their photos with the registration form to NWFA, P.O. Box 44, Cook MN 55723, or drop them off at the NWFA Gallery at 210 S River St. in Cook during gallery hours, Thursdays and Fridays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. During

April the gallery will be open on Wednesdays as well 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Entry forms are available at the gallery or can be downloaded for printing at nwfamn.org.

An exhibit for the public to vote on entries will run from May 4 to May 27.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Novel discussion to be hosted at Cook City Library

COOK - Come to the Cook Public Library at 5 p.m. on Thursday, March 31 to discuss the 2022 One Book, One Community book selection, "The Boy in the Striped Pajamas" by John Boyne. The historical novel takes place during World War II and focuses on the experiences of two nine-year-old boys at Auschwitz.

Community members chose the book from a list of 96 titles compiled by library staff.

The One Book, One Community program is supported by the Friends of the Cook Public Library.

### Cook woodcarvers meet weekly at NWFA gallery

COOK- An enthusiastic group of carvers meet and share the joy of

carving wood each week on Thursdays, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook. Located next to Dream Weaver Salon, the gallery address is 210 S River St., near Hwy 53. Beginners are welcome. Call Howard for information at 218-290-1391.

### Winter reading programs will end on March 31

COOK- Adults and teens participating in the Winter Reading Scratch-Off Challenge can turn

in completed challenge cards by March 31 to receive a prize.

Preschool and elementary-aged kids who completed a BINGO in their activity books can bring them to the Cook Public Library by March 31 to receive a prize.

The Winter Reading programs are sponsored by the Friends of the Cook Public Library with thanks to the Arrowhead Library System for print materials.

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HIGHER EDUCATION

# Vermilion Community College to join Minnesota North College

## Colleges of the Northeast Higher Education District receive final approval to merge

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY - Five northern Minnesota colleges, including Vermilion Community College here, will open next fall under one new name: Minnesota North College.

The merger of the five schools that make up the NHED, Hibbing, Itasca, VCC, and Rainy River community colleges, along with Mesabi Range College, was approved last week by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities’ board of trustees.

The six campuses that serve the five schools will remain open under the consolidation plan, and are considered a single accredited institution.

The merged institution will operate under the name “Minnesota North College” starting May 23. The merger was also recently approved by the Higher Learning Commission, Minnesota North College’s regional accrediting body.

“Operationally merging our institutions leverages the resources, talents, and marketability that come with a larger, regional college yet maintains the long-cherished individual campus identities and community connections,” said Michael Raich, president of Minnesota North College.

“Students will benefit from a seamless educational experience along with expanded access to

courses, programs, support services, and the team of experts that serve our six campuses,” he continued. “Working regionally, Minnesota North College will be able to provide a comprehensive response to our business and industry partners, which aligns with our new vision of being a catalyst for regional prosperity. The credit for our progress in this merger goes to the faculty, staff, students, and community members that have been engaged in our planning process. I can’t thank them enough for their commitment and guidance.”

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has been working toward the merger for two years.

The schools saw enrollment fall 35 percent in the past decade and have some of the smallest student populations among the three dozen Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Enrollment at the five schools last fall was about 3,500.

The merger provides several key benefits, the most important of which is improving services to students and stakeholders. Under a one-college model, students will have access to a larger selection of courses and career programs, which will be accessible across six campuses with a single application and one transcript.

Essential student services, such as registration

and financial aid, will be simplified while still providing local, on-campus support. A single college will lead to more consistent collaborative efforts with regional K-12 and industry partners as well. The single-college model will lead to improved operational efficiency allowing resources to be better focused on mission-centric functions and improving long-term financial sustainability.

Prospective students can apply with a single transcript and application, simplifying the process for those who take classes at more than one institution, officials say.

“This has been an extraordinary lift for the

entire Minnesota North College community,” said Devinder Malhotra, chancellor of Minnesota State, “and I commend President Raich and his team for all the hard work that was put into making this vision a reality. Visiting the six campuses of Minnesota North College is a wonderful experience because while each one of them has a distinct personality and is unique geographically and programmatically, they all share a passionate commitment to students and their success.”

The state Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation (IRRR) offered an \$820,000 grant to make the consolidation happen.

## SENTENCING...Continued from page 1

Records Online. However, an examination of electronic case documents by the *Timberjay* for both men that are publicly available suggests that the widely divergent sentences for this singular burglary reflect very different circumstances for each offender.

All information in this report was taken from official court documents, unless otherwise noted.

### Burglary

Two juveniles, ages 16 and 11, were home alone at their residence about four miles north of Cook at about 7:30 a.m. on March 26, 2020, when a barking dog caused one of them to look out a window. The juvenile observed two unfamiliar men, later determined to be Clifton Lea Garcia and Prescott, who were driving a gray pickup truck with a topper and pulling a snowmobile trailer. The men went into the entryway of the home and took eight outdoor clothing items valued at \$2,150. Then the men cut down a maple tree in the front yard that had an old Navy ship’s bell that had grown into the wood, loaded it, and left. The juvenile took a picture of the truck before it left, then called his father, who reported the burglary to the St. Louis County Sheriff’s Dispatcher.

A deputy forwarded the photo to members of Orr’s neighborhood watch group, and two people identified the truck in the photo as being driven by Prescott.

By mid-morning, officers arrived at a Nett Lake Rd. residence where Prescott was known to stay. They found the truck and trailer, encountered and detained Garcia and Prescott, and executed a search warrant, discovering the stolen items.

### Clifton Garcia

Prior to the March 2020 burglary, Garcia had been convicted of four felonies, three involving possession of marijuana, and possession of a weapon by an ineligible person. He also had a misdemeanor conviction for giving officers false identification information.

Garcia was cited for

a gross misdemeanor of operating a vehicle under the influence of a controlled substance and sentenced to probation in September 2020, with the provision that he continue in a treatment program he was attending.

Garcia was later booked into the Stillwater state correctional facility in June 2021 on a weapons possession charge. Just a month prior to his conviction in the Cook burglary case, Garcia was sentenced to 60 months in prison on the weapons charge, and 97 months on a second-degree felony methamphetamine charge.

Given his incarceration and the length of the sentences, probation would not have been an option in addressing his conviction for the Cook burglary, hence the imposition of the recommended sentence of 44 months.

### Luke Prescott

Prescott committed his first burglaries as a juvenile, and prior to the March 2020 Cook burglary Prescott had been convicted of two felonies and one misdemeanor for theft, three felony charges for receiving stolen property, and one felony count of possession of a weapon by an ineligible person. Between September 2020 and July 2021, Prescott had felony convictions for two burglary and two theft charges.

But Prescott’s path after his arrest for the Cook burglary was markedly different from that of Garcia. He received supervised probation for the September 2020 conviction and was ordered to undergo chemical dependency evaluation and treatment.

On Oct. 16, 2020, Prescott, a self-admitted methamphetamine abuser for more than two decades, became a client of Christian-based Minnesota

Adult and Teen Challenge (MATC) in Duluth, and his life hasn’t been the same since.

Prescott started in a state-licensed 90-day residential chemical dependency program at MATC, one just like similar programs operated by other agencies, according to Admissions Case Coordinator Kristin Birman.

“All of our clients start out in that program. It’s kind of their base, their grounding,” Birman said.

Faith activities are not part of the 90-day program, and participation can be court-ordered or voluntary. Prescott appears to have chosen MATC’s program after being urged to do so by family members.

However, in addition to standard individual counseling and group participation, clients can choose to incorporate elements of faith if they so desire, Birman said.

Following that, enrollment in other MATC options is voluntary, and all are based solidly on Christian principles and teachings, Birman said.

Prescott moved on into MATC’s 13-month residential program, earning three months credit for his initial participation. This program is not licensed by the state.

“Because it is faith-based, clients are required to go to church once a week,” Birman said. “They are required to sing in the choir. Their classes revolve around learning about Jesus and the Bible and how we’re going to walk out our life now sober. Without that drug or alcohol, what are we going to do to fill that void? They’re taught how to lean on Jesus and prayer.”

“We” is a word that comes naturally to Birman because she’s a successful former MATC client herself. The long-term treatment program has four levels, and Birman had a

unique description of it.

“I had a teacher who referred to it as surgery,” she said. “The first basic level is preparing you for surgery, just opening up the Bible. A lot of these clients that come to this program are not familiar with the Bible. Level two is going into open heart surgery, where you’re tearing it open, and you are digging deep down into your addiction and what caused it. Level three is closing up that surgery, learning to walk with Jesus by our side now that you’ve dealt with all this stuff. Level four is getting ready for the outside world so that they can find and get jobs, and they’re looking for housing, they’re looking for churches, they’re getting their feet on the ground to get ready to be thrown to the wolves, as they say.”

Clients also participate in community service activities and have the option to have a job during their final two months in the program.

One bit of evidence attesting to a positive change in Prescott is to be found in a pre-sentence investigation filed in July 2021. Earlier that year, Prescott was interviewed by Itasca County law enforcement officials and confessed to a string of burglaries and thefts in the county committed in late 2019 and early 2020. The report quoted a statement written by Prescott that said, “I was on drugs and lost my way from the Lord. When I came into Teen Challenge, God told me to tell everything I’ve ever done, so I came clean about all of my indiscretions because it was holding me down and I needed a clean slate. Also, I want to make amends to the people I hurt and violated. I’m making an attempt to do this.” In a plea bargain acknowledging Prescott’s acceptance of responsibility

for the crimes, all but one of the charges was dismissed, and Prescott received probation for the final charge, with a condition that he complete the MATC program.

Prescott went beyond that directive. In September 2021, he was accepted into MATC’s Challenge Leadership Institute. The focus of the 12-month institute is twofold, Birman said. It helps participants to strengthen their walk with Christ, and it prepares them to minister to others. Applicants are evaluated on their performance in prior MATC experiences, evidence of their commitment to a Christ-centered lifestyle, and potential for effectively ministering to others. Acceptance is selective, rather than automatic, Birman said.

“Leadership Institute is more of a college type experience,” she said. “It’s dorm-style living, you go to classes during the day, ministry classes. If you finish, you can take some extra classes to become an ordained minister.”

Prescott’s request for probation in the Cook burglary case was supported by glowing letters from MATC staff, family members, his pastor, and a former employer, all attesting to the changes they have observed in him during his engagement with MATC.

Prescott’s attorney, James Perunovich, wrote about Prescott’s suitability for probation in his petition.

“Although there are no assurances to this court that anyone will be successful on probation, especially someone who has a history of criminal behavior, there are those persons that appear before the court from time to time that have had an epiphany in their life that provides them with a perspective of life without addiction,” Perunovich said. “Mr. Prescott certainly appears to be that person as sup-

ported by his counselors, his pastor, probation and the court in Itasca County, and most importantly, his own family. The facts and the law merit a dispositional departure for Mr. Prescott.”

The letters and accompanying petition appear to have been a major deciding factor in Prescott receiving probation, and yet many will remain skeptical of the court’s decision. There are those who will point to Prescott’s long documented history of criminal offenses and habitual drug use in support of their belief and label his claimed conversion as a ploy to escape the punishment for his crimes they believe he deserves.

That’s something Birman acknowledged as reality, something MATC prepares their clients to deal with as best they can.

“We let them know that it doesn’t matter what anybody else thinks or says, the real judgment comes from Jesus, and he doesn’t judge any of that. He loves us the way we are,” Birman said.

*Editor’s note: The Timberjay has no direct knowledge of Mr. Prescott beyond what is recorded in publicly available court records reviewed for this article. Due to confidentiality issues, Kristin Birman was asked to speak only to the nature of MATC’s programs, and not to discuss Mr. Prescott’s participation in them. The article is intended to illustrate an example of how sentencing in the judicial system can be influenced by factors outside the courtroom and state sentencing guidelines, and the Timberjay has no position regarding the determination made in Mr. Prescott’s case.*

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It's Time For.....

# COOK YOUTH BASEBALL

Registration for the upcoming 2022 youth baseball season is open! Girls and boys ages 5-12 on or before May 1 are welcome to join! Register your child/children by April 15 by entering the registration link below into your web browser or by using the QR code below. You can also go to our Facebook Page, "Cook Youth Baseball" to register.

Enter this link into your web browser:  
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Coaches and umpires are also needed for the season. If you are interested, please email us at [cookyouthbaseball@gmail.com](mailto:cookyouthbaseball@gmail.com).



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ELECTION 2022

Ely’s mayor Skraba running for State House 3A seat

ELY – Ely Mayor Roger J. Skraba threw his hat in the ring for the State House District 3A seat this week when he announced his candidacy as a Republican.

In a press release, Skraba, born and raised in Ely, said, “It’s time that an elected conservative voice is heard from northeastern Minnesota at the State Capitol. The DFL of my parents’ and grandparents’ generations has left us and has been replaced by far-left extremists. I want to bring representation to those they left.”

The seat is currently held by Rep. Rob Ecklund.

Skraba said he is running “to support the growth of our diverse economies” in northeastern

Minnesota. “Currently the metro-controlled DFL controls what economies we have, which in turn affects our way of life. I want to represent our way of life to grow our economies so our school children can stay in the Northland to raise families and prosper as strong communities. We all owe it to them to fight for our way of life.”

Skraba, 60, is a U.S. Army veteran, North Dakota State University graduate, a Blandin Leadership graduate, and has been involved in elected politics for over 15 years.

“I’m well versed in how the political wheels work in Minnesota. I will use those years of experience to keep mining and timber production at the

forefront and will always be on the search for new opportunities to grow the Northland,” he said.

Skraba is also the chairman of the St. Louis County Planning Commission, president of Club Mesabi, and trail administrator for the Ely Igloo Snowmobile Clubs Grant-in-Aid trails. He works as a fishing guide and carpenter.



Roger Skraba

ELECTION...Continued from page 1

North Realty, for more than a decade. She’s married to Jim Zupancich, a member of the family best known for owning and operating a series of grocery stores in the region, and has four children.

On the DFL side, Bakk’s announcement has already created a shake-up in the contest. Keith Steva, of Lake Vermilion, was set to officially announce his candidacy on March 20, but suspended his campaign the day before in favor of

Hermantown city council member Grant Hauschild, who confirmed he’ll be entering the race.

“I always maintained and told my close advisors that if a DFL candidate came forward who could bring together the many interests of the party and the people of the district, I would step aside,” noted Steva.

Steva said he expects Hauschild will receive the DFL endorsement and the support needed to win the

Senate seat in November.

Hauschild is a relatively new resident of the district, having moved to the Hermantown area from North Dakota in 2018. But he brings with him more than a decade of political experience, beginning in his college days at the University of North Dakota, where he served as student body vice president while earning a political science degree. He went on to work first as an aide, and later as political

director, to North Dakota Sen. Heidi Heitkamp.

While living in Washington, D.C., he earned a master’s degree in public policy from George Washington University and also worked in rural development for the Obama administration, serving in the Department of Agriculture. Since moving to Hermantown, he has served as executive director of the Essentia Health Foundation, which provides a wide range of

funding to Essentia facilities all across the region.

He describes himself as a “pretty grounded, no nonsense moderate Democrat, who looks out for working people.”

Hauschild says he’s a product of the Midwest and has always enjoyed the region’s willingness to help neighbors. “Life is that much easier when we have each other’s back,” he said. “I chose the party that exemplifies that view.”

He said he’s also a

believer in science and believes action on climate change is important. At the same time, he said he trusts the process when it comes to mine permitting. “I don’t claim to be an expert on it,” he acknowledged, “but I know I want to live in a country and a state where we can rely on the process in place. If we let politics bleed into this, we’re living in the wild west.”

CITY OF COOK

New Habitat home could be the start of something big

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

Four lots await qualified Cook area applicants

COOK- Tara Cotten hadn’t signed the final paperwork for her new house at 419 4th St. NW in Cook as of Sunday, but that didn’t keep about 20 family members, friends, volunteers and dignitaries from crowding into the living room and kitchen with her and daughters Natalia and Brooklyn to dedicate North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity’s newest completed build.

Executive Director Nathan Thompson was the master of ceremonies for the event, describing the process of how the ecumenical Christian organization partners with qualifying singles, couples, and families to build affordable new homes that participants buy using zero-percent mortgages provided through Habitat.

“I have the privilege of helping to leverage all of the volunteers who make Habitat for Humanity happen,” Thompson said. “Our volunteers and our communities are the lifeblood of Habitat, as well as key volunteers in our organization.”

After being accepted



Tara Cotten, and daughters, Natalia, 8, and Brooklyn, 6, and almost two dozen family members, friends and volunteers dedicated their new Habitat for Humanity home in Cook last Sunday. photo by D. Colburn

by the program, Cotten joined Habitat volunteers from around the country to break ground for the house last summer, and since then she’s put in over 200 hours of her own sweat equity to help build the house. And once she and the girls move in and begin mortgage payments, those funds will go back into Habitat’s coffers to help finance more new

homes.

“From our mortgage payments right now we have about 65 people paying on homes,” Thompson said. “That’s enough to build two homes just from our homeowners making their mortgage payments.”

He turned momentarily toward Tara and said, “Did you ever think that you’re going to be helping

someone else?”

The organization has a mix of funders from corporate foundations and high-profile philanthropists to individual donors, but the biggest contribution comes from all of the labor and hours donated by local volunteers. Gary Whitenack, of Cook, was one of them, volunteering alongside his brother-in-law from Tower, Dick Larmouth, to do the interior finish work across the course of about three months.

“He and I would meet every morning here for the past several months – we’re just a good team to work together,” Whitenack said. “Some of my friends came over and helped before hanging doors, and helping with the trim. And it’s a beautiful home, as you can see, and it’s incredibly energy efficient.”

Cotten took the opportunity to express her gratitude to all of the volunteers, noting that through their work together she made many new friendships that she expects to last.

“Every volunteer I’ve worked with, they’ve all been great and so kind-hearted,” she said. “I’m just really looking forward to making new memories in our new home.”

The lot Cotten’s home is built on isn’t the only one donated to Habitat for Humanity by Kirk and Angela Weidner of Britt. There are four more lots ready to welcome new Habitat partners and new

homes, Thompson said.

“We’re looking for potential homebuyers,” he said. “They have to have a need for housing and they have to have sufficient income to pay our affordable mortgage. There’s an application and a process of vetting that we go through for that, but basically a family with a minimum annual income of about \$24,000, a stable income, and what I would say is responsible credit, it doesn’t have to be perfect, should apply. It could be an individual, or it could be a family. You don’t know if you don’t try.”

Some applicants may fall short of qualifying the first time, but Habitat can steer them toward community resources to can help them shore up shortcomings so that they can re-apply.

“If a person really, really wanted to work at it, I think they can make it into the program and be a homeowner,” Thompson said.

Contact information for Thompson and other program staff is available on the organization’s website at <http://www.nslchfh.org/contact-us>.

ELY...Continued from page 1

and wall stud builders were on site Monday morning as work continued.

District facilities manager Tim Leeson said the music room and practice

walls are done and some of the connecting walls between the new construction and the Memorial and Washington buildings are almost ready for sheetrock.

Klarich said that he wants any construction change orders for the rest of the project to be in front of school board members.

“I would like you to see them first to give me some direction,” he said. “I don’t want to approve anything without approval, unless it is an emergency-type thing and then I will be consulting with Tim and the facilities committee. I want to get more information in your hands to keep you more updated,” he told the board.

Officials from Kraus-Anderson and Architectural Resources Inc. are scheduled to attend the meeting Monday night. “They will speak to any issues and answer any questions about change orders and how the building is coming,”

Klarich said. “We will have some financial updates as well.”

Klarich updated the board on state legislative efforts for additional funding for the project which has experienced numerous cost overruns.

“We are working with (Ely Clerk-Treasurer) Harold Langowski and the Costin Group (the school district’s lobbying firm) and something is being heard about sales tax.”

Elementary principal Anne Oelke was scheduled to testify last week before state lawmakers on financial relief for the district.

“We have our fingers on several bills in the legislature that are under discussion,” Klarich said. “We are also moving forward on some federal bills, with help from Harold and also the Costin Group, to get some help for our water lines and fire hydrants, and to get some help for some of

these additional costs that are coming.”

Klarich caught some people off guard when he said, “The goal is to get the entire project done within a couple of years. That means the remodeling of the Washington and Memorial buildings is now on hold because of the cost overruns with inflation.”

He noted that the state legislative bill that Oelke was going to testify for dealt with the increased construction costs due to recent inflation spikes.

In most funding lobbying efforts, Ely is linked with other regional school districts that have experienced similar construction project challenges, Klarich added.

“The new elephant in the room is going to be surcharges on fuel and what additional costs that will bring to us, too. They (Costin Group) have had some time to get some

things squared away and hopefully we will have plenty of tough questions about where we are going (moving) forward, and where we are at financially.”

The renovation was about \$4 million over budget last year following initial project bidding, and construction and school officials continue to work to reduce the overall cost with project design savings and to look for additional funding. The project is partially funded by a \$10 million bond referendum approved by district voters two years ago.

The project includes a new facility that will include a second gymnasium, cafeteria and commons, industrial arts and music education classrooms, new media center and district offices that link the 100-year-old Washington and Memorial buildings.



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PUBLIC SERVICE

# ALS takes a back seat to the people’s work for Tomassoni

## Veteran legislator intent on making his final session as productive as the rest

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- You’ve either made “the call” yourself or likely know someone who has. That early morning call to your workplace, claiming you’re too sick to come in that day, even though there have been times you’ve dragged yourself in feeling much, much worse.

If there’s anyone who could legitimately make that call these days, it would be state Sen. David Tomassoni, of Chisholm. Diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, ALS, last summer, the neuromuscular disease has been predictably relentless in its attack on Tomassoni’s ability to perform even the simplest of tasks.

When the *Timberjay* caught up with Tomassoni by phone last week, he described how things have changed with his physical abilities in the months since his diagnosis.

“As we went through the summer, I was able to use my computer, I could still type, and I could still drive,” Tomassoni said. “I could feed myself and dress myself. Little by little, as time went on, I began to lose the use of my arms and my hands, and eventually I had to live with my sister so I could have caregiver support.”

“That was last November,” said his sister Mary Jo Newbauer, also of Chisholm, who was present with Tomassoni to help facilitate the interview. “He could talk way better and walk way better when he moved in with me.”

In late February, after the start of the legislative session, Tomassoni moved again, this time to a room in a care facility in Duluth that could better accommodate his greatly increased need for assistance to perform physical tasks he once did without a thought, that are now beyond him.

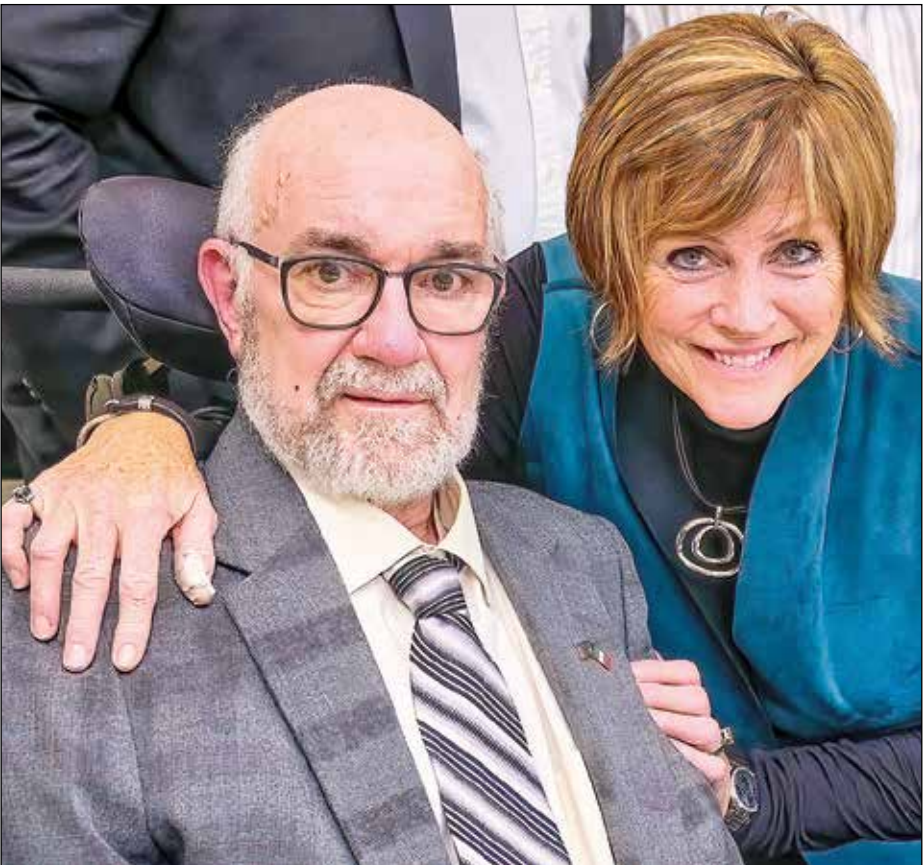
“I can’t pick up the phone to even answer a call or respond to a text,” Tomassoni said.

In his current state, anyone would give Tomassoni the grace to make “the call” now and then and take a day off from his legislative duties.

Anyone except, of course, David Tomassoni. That’s just not how he’s wired. He made a promise to his constituents in Senate District 6 in Itasca and St. Louis counties that he would continue to be a strong voice for them in the Legislature, and that’s exactly what he’s doing. It’s not business as normal, but it’s business as usual this term for Sen. Tomassoni, with help from his family and friends, colleagues, legislative staff, and innovative technologies.

### The work goes on

The day that the *Timberjay* connected with him, Tomassoni had already



**Sen. David Tomassoni poses recently with his legislative assistant of 22 years, Laura Bakk. Both plan to retire at the end of the current legislative session.** photo courtesy of Jim Robins

put in a full day fulfilling his legislative duties.

“We had a general session, and we had a higher education committee meeting,” Newbauer said. “We write emails, we respond to emails, and we respond to text messages, and that’s kind of an all-day thing. And now we’re having an interview.”

Tomassoni chairs the Senate’s Higher Education Finance and Policy Committee, and while he’s turned to St. Paul Republican and vice-chair Jason Rarick to facilitate the committee’s in-person meetings, Tomassoni is still firmly in charge.

“I’m having the vice-chair run the meetings, but I’m hands-on in directing the committee,” he said.

He also serves on committees for mining and forestry policy and environment and natural resources finance.

Tomassoni’s most visible piece of legislation this session has been his bill to provide \$20 million for ALS research and an additional \$5 million for caregiver support, a bill that was passed unanimously in the Senate on March 10 and is currently under consideration in the House. But Tomassoni is the chief author of more than 40 bills this session at various levels of consideration. While some are statewide in focus, like a relief grant program to aid businesses still suffering from the effects of the COVID pandemic that was introduced just this week, a great number of those bills are for capital improvement projects in his own district. He hopes they will be incorporated in the major bonding bill expected to be enacted toward the end of the session.

### How he does it

One big assist for Tomassoni in maintaining his active role in the Senate from afar came from an

unlikely source, the coronavirus pandemic. Forced to do its work from a distance for a time, the Senate installed all the necessary technology for members to meet virtually in both committees and general sessions.

“If it hadn’t been for COVID I might not be able to do what I’m doing,” Tomassoni said. “Because we put in the Zoom system that allowed us to work remotely, it’s turned out that I’m using everything every day.”

Attending meetings virtually is one thing, but actively participating is another. While Tomassoni’s ability to speak has declined to a point where it’s often necessary to have someone like Newbauer translate for people unfamiliar with his speech patterns, he’s not wholly dependent on others to speak for him. For speaking up in committee, in floor debates, or for conversations with colleagues and others, Tomassoni has an augmentative communication device so that he can talk for himself.

Like many others in the state suffering from ALS, Tomassoni obtained the device through the ALS Association Minnesota/North Dakota/South Dakota chapter. Vice-president of care services Marianne Keuhn described how the computer-based system works.

“These devices are just incredible,” Keuhn said. “You literally use your eyes, and a camera picks up the movement of your eyes and helps you to focus on letters or words or phrases that you want the device to speak for you. It can predict the words you’re trying to type out, and there are ways you can use commonly-used words and phrases. We provide all the equipment, and there’s never a charge to anybody

who’s diagnosed with ALS for any of our equipment.”

Given that the device Tomassoni has costs in the neighborhood of \$30,000, being able to get it on loan for free from the association is a huge help, Keuhn said. The ALS Association has an extensive inventory of communications devices to meet the various and changing needs of patients over time, and also has a wide array of other assistive devices they loan out to help with every aspect of functioning affected by ALS.

“When people are diagnosed it’s an average of \$250,000 they would have to pay out of pocket if they were to have to get all this equipment on their own,” she said.

Insurance may cover some of the costs but getting a piece of equipment approved may take weeks or months, and by the time an insurance company gives its OK, that equipment could end up being unusable because of a patient’s advancing condition, Keuhn said. Having equipment ready to loan helps the ALS Association to address patient needs as they arise.

Right now, the device uses a standard computer-generated voice to speak what Tomassoni inputs, but the sound coming from the device could soon sound a bit more familiar.

“People have the opportunity to do voice banking, where you read around 200 to 300 sentences and it creates a computer-generated version of your own voice,” Keuhn said. “It sounds very similar to your own voice, so when you use your eyes to spell out a phrase like ‘I love you’ it will speak it to whoever you want in your own voice. It’s not perfect, but it’s pretty close.”

However, Newbauer explained that there’s one

adaptation for Tomassoni that the device just can’t master.

“He said that he wants you to know that he can’t speak very well because he’s Italian, and Italians have to use their hands when they talk and he can’t use his hands,” she said, with Tomassoni audibly chuckling in the background. That prompted a question about how Tomassoni is adapting the pace and tone of his well-known humor for delivery by computer.

“You always have to be careful what you put down,” he joked.

### A little help from his friends

Tomassoni’s long-standing positive attitude and gregarious demeanor has most people he works with calling him not only a colleague but a friend, and that begins with his legislative assistant of 22 years, Laura Bakk, wife of another close personal friend, Sen. Tom Bakk, of Cook.

However, Tomassoni was quick to put his relationship with Laura Bakk in the proper perspective.

“Now you’re talking about MY boss,” he said. “People don’t know this, but Laura has been with me longer than she’s been with Tom. She’s a wonderful assistant, marvelously efficient, and sometimes gets things done before I even want them to be done. I have to say that we get along really well, and she’s the kind of person I would do anything for.”

Bakk said that her work really hasn’t changed much at all this session. She still communicates with Tomassoni multiple times a day, and she continues to handle the same office duties as always, including responding to inquiries and comments from constituents and passing those along to Tomassoni.

“He doesn’t always get back to me right away, but I know he will, and he does,” Bakk said. “So, I just do my usual job and I don’t run everything by him. I never have. It’s just been working like it usually has. At the beginning of the session, we just had to get used to navigating who was going to be with him today, who was going to be with him tomorrow and the next day.”

As is Tomassoni, Bakk is retiring at the end of the legislative session, and the biggest adjustment she’s had to make is not having him in the office every day.

“Because of his disposition, he’s always delightful to have in the office, and this being my last session, it’s bittersweet because he’s not here,” she said.

His colleague/friends have also stepped in to help move Tomassoni’s legislative agenda forward, particularly Tom Bakk, with whom Tomassoni formed an independent

caucus of two last year. While Tomassoni gave a brief statement when his ALS research bill was introduced in committee, it was Bakk who gave the lengthy detailed introduction to advocate for the bill, and he did so again when the bill was taken up by the full Senate. It’s not the only time Bakk has stepped up to help in that way. Unsurprisingly, Bakk is also a co-author of many of Tomassoni’s bills. Other colleagues in both the Senate and the House have pitched in in similar ways.

It’s no surprise to Laura Bakk that Tomassoni hasn’t skipped a beat in service to his constituents.

“When he got the diagnosis back in June and he told my husband, Tom told him to ‘tell Laura’ and he said, ‘I can’t,’” Bakk said. “So, my husband told me that night, and I said, ‘You know what, if anybody can handle this horrible disease it’s David. I knew he would have a positive outlook and deal with it the best he could, and he’s proven that.’”

And throughout it all, there’s been family. Although Tomassoni has moved to Duluth, Newbauer continues to visit frequently and remains in the rotation of helpers. Tomassoni’s sons, Dante and Dan, have been particularly visible, assisting their father to attend the opening day of the legislative session and other functions. Along with other extended family they provide ongoing support both practical and emotional to help him keep on being the same committed legislator he’s been since he was first elected to the House in 1992.

“It’s amazing,” his sister said. “He’s always been just the same guy that he is now. But to watch him and how he has handled all of this, with such dignity and grace, and he never complains. He’s just so strong. I love him.”

And Tomassoni expressed his deep gratefulness to all who have pitched in to help with his own characteristic dose of optimism.

“There’s been an overwhelming outpouring of love and support,” he said. “I couldn’t be happier with all the people who have reached out and offered us a helping hand. It just makes me so happy now that there is so much good in the world, when we see all that’s happening out there. I have my own physical challenges, and we’re just going to take it a day at a time.”

Those interested in learning more about the assistance available through the ALS Association Minnesota/North Dakota/South Dakota chapter can contact the organization by calling 888-672-0484, or by emailing at info@alsmn.org.

## POWWOW...Continued from page 1

world around them.

With the passing last month of spiritual advisor Gene Goodsky, another Nett Lake tribal elder, Karen Drift, stepped into the role. Another longtime spiritual advisor, Vern Adams, of the Vermilion sector, served as spiritual leader for the event.

After a meal and the early afternoon grand entry, led by service veteran flag-bearers, Adams honored a request

from the Goodsky family by giving a special prayer that led into a dance honoring Gene Goodsky. The seats around the perimeter of the large hall were nearly vacant as more than 50 people joined the dance. Five drum circles sat in the center of the arena with singers moving among them and changing groupings from time to time as the afternoon progressed.

The entry hall to

the center had numerous vendors set up to provide a variety of things from

foodstuffs to clothing to Ojibwe language games. People came and went

throughout the day, with a late-afternoon break followed by the evening

grand entry and various giveaways and payouts.



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## SECTION 7A BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS

# Grizzlies fall short against Warriors

## End their season in semi-final round

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

DULUTH- Anyone who thought the North Woods boys were going to have an easy time of it when they went up by 15 in the first half against Deer River in last week’s 7A sectional tourney semifinal game in Duluth had a very short memory.

When these two teams squared off at North Woods in the final game of the regular season on March 4, it was the Grizzlies who clawed their way back from a first-half deficit and then battled the Warriors to the wire to win 78-75. With teams as evenly matched as the Grizzlies and Warriors, no early lead was safe, and the result on March 16 was the reverse – Deer River pulled the come-from-behind 66-62 win to knock North Woods out of the tourney and end their season.

Brenden Chiabotti nailed a 15-foot jumper on the Grizzlies’ first possession and Sean Morrison hit from under the bucket on the next to get the team off to a good start. Three-balls by T.J. Chiabotti and Jared Chiabotti put North Woods ahead 14-4 with just over five minutes elapsed in the game.

Shots weren’t dropping for the Warriors, but they were for the Grizzlies, as North Woods used all the tools in its arsenal and scores from Morrison, T.J. Chiabotti, and Davis Kleppe to forge an improbable 23-8 lead with seven minutes remaining in the half.

“Everything was going our way,”

See **GRIZZLIES...**pg. 4B



**Above:**  
The Grizzlies’ Jonah Burnett struggles to shoot over the outstretched arms of a Deer River defender.



**Right:**  
The Grizzlies’ T.J. Chiabotti tries to work his way around a persistent Deer River guard.

photos by D. Colburn

## BOYS BASKETBALL

# North Woods nabs sectional academic title

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- The North Woods boys basketball team fell short of their goal to win the Section 7A tourney and return to state, but they did capture a sectional championship that bodes well for their individual futures.

The Minnesota Boys Basketball Coaches Association last week recognized the Grizzlies as the section’s academic champion, computed using the grade point averages of the North Woods varsity roster.

“Being a member of that organization, I have a lot of pride nominating my athletes for that award,” Grizzlies Head Coach Will Kleppe said. “We put in for it every year, and it just averaged out at the top this year over the 17 players that were on the tournament roster. It’s great to see the kids acknowledged for their hard work in the classroom as well as their performance on the court.”

Kleppe noted that the award recognizes the talent and commitment of all those at North Woods who contributed to the team’s academic efforts.

“I sent the notice out to all the teachers here at North Woods as a thank-you on behalf of the team for all the work they do,” Kleppe said. “This is certainly a team effort here when it comes to academics. I think it’s a great acknowledgement of what they do in the classroom.”

That recognition will also be on display for future generations of Grizzlies to see.

“We’ll hang that banner up with all the others,” Kleppe said. “We’re proud of that.”

## MELGEORGE’S ANTIQUE SNOWMOBILE RACE



# Oldies but goodies

Annual event called “one of the best ever”

ELEPHANT LAKE- Had the annual Melgeorge’s Antique and Classic Snowmobile race been scheduled a week later on the calendar, resort owners Steve and Carla Koch might have been hosting a classic slushfest instead.

But the March 12 event

had decidedly wintry conditions for the circuit and dragstrip races, and the Kochs reported that not only was it well attended, it was “one of the best ever.”

Numerous participants brought more than one snowmobile and garnered first or second-place awards in their classifications. Results for each classification, as well as additional awards, are listed

below.

**Antique Division**

Rear engine, 8 hp and under: 1. Terry Smith, Mora, 1964 Polaris Sno Traveler; 2. Vaughn Smith, Elk River, 1962 Trailmaker.

Rear engine, 9 hp and over: Casey Fenske, Ely, 1965 Arctic Cat 500.

Two-cycle, 10 hp and

See **SLEDS...**pg. 4B

**Above:** Dozens of antique and classic snowmobiles sit parked on the ice at Elephant Lake.

**Top right:** One of the odder contraptions to make a showing at this year’s event.

**Right:** Costumes were in this year, with Gummy and a couple of... bigfoots?

submitted







# Outdoors

Our lives in the  
Northwoods

## HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

# New surface tours to be offered at Soudan mine

Underground tours won't be held this year as park staff evaluate shaft renovation needs

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

Soudan—Interpretive staff at the Lake Vermilion Soudan Underground Mine State Park will be offering a guided surface tour of the former mining operation here beginning Memorial Day weekend and running through the summer. The surface tour will highlight the above-ground facilities at the

former iron mine and the role those buildings played in the operations there.

The above-ground tour is an alternative to the underground mine tours, which are being suspended this year to allow for restoration work on the mine's main shaft, which is used to transport visitors to the mine's 27th level. It's also an option for those who have been reluctant to take the journey underground, but

still want to learn more about the operations at the mine, which is Minnesota's oldest and deepest underground iron mine.

"The Soudan Underground Mine tours attract an average of 35,000 visitors a year," park manager Jim Essig said. "While we'll miss being able to offer the underground tours this year, we're also thrilled to interpret another perspective with the

new surface tours."

Surface tours will begin every half hour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tours cost \$5 per person for ages five and older, while visitors ages four and under are free. Tour groups are limited to ten people. Reservations are encouraged via the online reservation system ([mndnr.gov/Reservations](http://mndnr.gov/Reservations)), which opens

See TOURS, pg. 3B



State park staff at the Soudan Mine will be leading tours of the surface buildings this year, while planning repairs to the mine's main shaft. file photo



## PHENOLOGY

# Watching for spring

As the season changes, it's a busy time for North Country phenologists

For the would-be phenologists among us, it's peak season here in the North Country. If you're unfamiliar with the term, "phenology" is the study of cyclical and seasonal natural phenomena, most often associated with climate.

In late March, our region is in a period of transition from winter to early spring and there is no other point in the year where the approach of the new season brings so many changes to our area. That's not really a surprise. As most year-round residents of our area know, winter occupies nearly half the year up here, which leaves only so much time for the other seasons, which

we somehow pack into the remaining six months of the year. So as winter relents (typically in fits and starts as we saw this week), the signs of spring are popping up all over.

Here are just some of the signs that winter is, finally, on the way out.

➤ The disappearance of the pine grosbeaks. Like clockwork, the pine grosbeaks have disappeared from area feeders. By March 15, in most years, the last of the stragglers have left our area, headed north to their breeding territory, which begins about 150 miles north of here.

I saw my last pine grosbeak this year on March 14. Now, our feeders are overflowing with redpolls.

➤ We're in the final days of the Onaabani-giizis to the

**Clockwise from top: Everybody loves maple sap, even this friendly pine marten; a colorful bunch of hepatica in bloom; the steady drip of maple sap from a tap installed this past weekend; pussy willows backlit by sunlight; skiing the crust out in the Lost Lake Swamp; an immature pine grosbeak munches on frozen crab apples. The pine grosbeaks have all headed to Canada now for the breeding season. But don't worry... they'll be back in the fall.**

photos by M. HelMBERger

Ojibwe, otherwise known as the Snowcrust Moon. It's the easiest time of year for traveling in the woods and swamps. If you haven't explored the woods on a hard morning crust, you don't know what you're missing.

➤ The sap is starting to

See SIGNS, pg. 3B



## Outdoors briefly

# CWD detected in whitetail deer in Grand Rapids

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL—Chronic Wasting Disease, or CWD, continues its slow march across Minnesota, and it moved ever closer to the North Country with the latest discovery this week.

The DNR reported that they've confirmed the first documented case of CWD in a wild deer within the city limits of Grand Rapids, on the southwest tip of the Iron Range.

A homeowner in Grand Rapids had reported the deer, which had died in his yard after being struck by a vehicle back in February. DNR staff recovered the carcass and testing confirmed the presence of CWD.

The DNR is taking immediate steps to understand the prevalence of the disease in wild deer in the Grand Rapids area, according to a statement issued by the agency on Tuesday. The agency will work with local road authorities to collect samples from road-killed deer and is exploring opportunities for targeted culling where it can be performed safely.

The DNR is also updating its chronic wasting disease response plan to better reflect a statewide approach to disease surveillance, management, control and education.

"We've always looked at CWD as a disease that could impact the entire state, yet implemented disease management actions as needed in each area where CWD was found," said Kelly Straka, the DNR's wildlife section manager. "This new discovery doesn't make CWD a statewide problem, but it does mean we need to take more of a statewide approach."

While the surveillance outlined in the DNR's current response plan made this detection possible, the finding of CWD in Grand Rapids highlights the need for an enhanced statewide sampling approach.

The enhanced statewide surveillance will include:

➤ Updating the DNR's CWD response plan this spring.

➤ Investigating options for hunters to use a self-mailing kit for free testing statewide.

➤ Expanding the taxidermist network statewide.

➤ Upgrading and improving the current design for self-service stations.

The DNR will seek

See CWD, pg. 3B



SPRING STORM



Freezing rain that fell early on Tuesday left tree branches encased in ice. Freezing rain later changed over to snow. photo by M. Helmberger

TOURS...Continued from page 2B

for reservations April 1. While the underground tours used to be a focal point of the park’s operations, the focus has increasingly shifted to Lake Vermilion since the 2010 addition of the Lake Vermilion portion of the park. The state park now has a state-of-the-art campground, modern camper cabins, remote camping on Lake Vermilion and an increasing network of hiking and biking trails. For more information, including surface tour changes or cancellations due to weather, check the visitor alert on the park page of the DNR website or email [info.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:info.dnr@state.mn.us). You can also call the DNR Information Center at 888-646-6367.

CWD...Continued from page 2B

public input as it explores and implements the ideas above and other options for enhanced statewide surveillance. “The DNR has taken an aggressive approach to managing CWD in Minnesota,” said DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen. “We will continue this strong approach as we address this latest finding and as we update our statewide CWD response plan. The health of Minnesota’s wild deer herd remains a top priority for the DNR.” There now are eight areas spread across Minnesota, from north to south, where CWD has been found in wild or farmed deer. Despite these detections, the disease remains rare in Minnesota. Fewer than one percent of deer have tested positive for CWD in areas where the disease has consistently been detected during the past five years.

Since 2002, the DNR has tested 106,000 deer statewide and 153 have tested positive. Most of those cases occurred in southeastern Minnesota. The DNR received confirmation of the Grand Rapids CWD infection on March 15. Results of a full necropsy showed the deer died from a collision with a vehicle, not CWD. The deer showed no clinical signs of the disease but final test results confirmed the infection. Active surveillance for CWD has not occurred in the location where the infected deer was found (deer permit area 179) since 2004. The DNR conducted CWD surveillance to the west and north of Grand Rapids in fall 2021 in response to captive deer infected with CWD on a Beltrami County farm. More than 1,800 samples were tested and CWD was not detected.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST from NOAA weather

| Friday               |    |    |       |     | Saturday             |    |    |       |     | Sunday               |    |    |       |     | Monday |    |    |       |     | Tuesday              |    |    |       |     |
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| 34 10                |    |    |       |     | 28 4                 |    |    |       |     | 25 3                 |    |    |       |     | 31 13  |    |    |       |     | 31 15                |    |    |       |     |
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| 03/14                | 30 | 1  | 0.02  |     | 03/14                | 30 | -1 | 0.00  |     | 03/14                | 28 | 4  | 0.00  |     | 03/14  | 34 | -2 | 0.02  |     | 03/14                | 29 | -3 | 0.00  |     |
| 03/15                | 36 | 5  | 0.00  |     | 03/15                | 37 | 4  | 0.00  |     | 03/15                | 34 | 4  | 0.00  |     | 03/15  | 52 | 23 | 0.00  |     | 03/15                | 36 | 1  | 0.00  |     |
| 03/16                | 50 | 28 | 0.03  |     | 03/16                | 50 | 27 | 0.03  |     | 03/16                | 50 | 31 | 0.01  |     | 03/16  | 57 | 37 | 0.00  |     | 03/16                | 50 | 29 | 0.02  |     |
| 03/17                | 51 | 33 | 0.00  |     | 03/17                | 52 | 32 | 0.00  |     | 03/17                | 54 | 32 | 0.02  |     | 03/17  | 39 | 32 | 0.00  |     | 03/17                | 54 | 32 | 0.00  |     |
| 03/18                | 40 | 32 | 0.00  |     | 03/18                | 41 | 32 | 0.00  |     | 03/18                | 39 | 32 | 0.00  |     | 03/18  | 45 | 27 | 0.00  |     | 03/18                | 39 | 31 | 0.00  |     |
| 03/19                | 48 | 17 | 0.00  |     | 03/19                | 47 | 12 | 0.00  |     | 03/19                | 43 | 20 | 0.00  |     | 03/19  | 50 | 23 | 0.00  |     | 03/19                | 47 | 13 | 0.00  |     |
| 03/20                | 51 | 16 | 0.00  |     | 03/20                | 49 | 14 | 0.00  |     | 03/20                | 51 | 18 | 0.00  |     | 03/20  | 54 | 19 | 0.00  |     | 03/20                | 50 | 13 | 0.00  |     |
| YTD Total 1.29 70.5" |    |    |       |     | YTD Total 1.77 46.0" |    |    |       |     | YTD Total 1.98 75.8" |    |    |       |     | NA NA  |    |    |       |     | YTD Total 1.92 55.7" |    |    |       |     |

SIGNS...Continued from page 2B

flow. While April is the season of the sugarbush in our area, last week’s warm spell got the maple juices flowing, at least a bit, which was enough to prompt most local syrup makers to start tapping. But people aren’t the only ones looking forward to the flowing sap. Watch for red squirrels chewing on maple branches for the sweet sap. The yellow-bellied sapsuckers will be showing up in the next couple weeks to take advantage of that flowing goodness as well. It’s an amazing natural resource. ➤ The influx of early spring migrants. It’s the time of year when the Ely Field Naturalists’ list serve tends to flood most members’ emails with the latest new sightings. Over the coming week, we could expect to see returning robins, purple finches, red-winged blackbirds, and trumpeter swans. The herring gulls have been back for at least ten days on their rock at Lost Lake. They like to start jockeying for the best nest crevices in late March, but they won’t actually nest until the ice has melted, giving them more protection from predators. ➤ The snow fleas are showing up in large numbers right now on sunny days. These tiny creatures aren’t an old wives’ tale as some folks believe. They’re real and they’re known as springtails because of their flea-like ability to leap many times their body length. They spend the winter in the leaf litter but work their way to the surface of the snow on mild, late winter days, to feed on bacteria

and algae, which grow on top of the snow. When out in large numbers, they are very noticeable as tiny dark gray specks on the snow, particularly on sunny slopes. ➤ The earliest wildflowers will soon be in bloom. Even as the snow is still melting, watch for hepatica, our earliest blooming wildflower. They can bloom so early because their three-lobed leaves stay green under the snow all winter, so they’re ready to photosynthesize as soon as they’re exposed to sunlight in the early spring. They’re attractive to many early season bees, which are eager for the fresh pollen the hepatica produce. ➤ The red squirrels are especially wild right now. It’s the start of their breeding season so the males are either fighting with each other or trying to entice females to mate. No matter which it is, their approach seems to be the same— high speed chases interspersed with wrestling matches. I pity the female red squirrels this time of year. ➤ The emergence of the pussy willows. Last week’s warm temperatures didn’t go unnoticed by our willows, several species of which produce the fuzzy male catkins this time of year that we commonly know as pussy willows because of their resemblance to a cat’s paw. Willows are known dioecious, which means a willow shrub or tree is either male or female and it’s only the male willows that produce the fuzzy catkins. The coating of hairs actually provides

some thermal protection to the flower, which is a good thing since they can emerge, at times, as early as February, when there can still be plenty of cold weather remaining. As the days grow warmer, the catkins will fully develop and produce copious amounts of pollen, since they rely on the wind to pollinate the flowers on nearby female willows. ➤ The re-emergence of chipmunks. These friendly ground squirrels spend the winter months in hibernation in underground dens, which they have generally packed full of seeds, nuts, fungi, and other foods in preparation. As all that storage might suggest, chipmunks don’t hibernate the entire winter. They wake up periodically to feed and take care of their other bodily functions for a day or two, before going back into hibernation. In our area, they typically emerge in late winter, often when there’s still some snow on the ground. Look for them to emerge around your house in the next week or two. There, of course, are many other phenological events of note this time of year, many more than I could possibly list here. That’s why it is always worthwhile paying attention to the natural world as winter gradually gives way. There’s a lot to pack into the next several months after a winter when most of the natural world is in slumber. And that means there’s no time to waste.



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!!ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS 17 AND UNDER!!

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We’re looking forward to helping you become financially strong for your future!



Scenic Rivers  
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COVID-19 Vaccine  
Appointments Available

Scenic Rivers is now scheduling appointments for individuals to receive COVID-19 vaccinations at our medical locations following state eligibility guidelines. Supply is limited and call volumes are high, so we appreciate your patience. If you believe you meet the MN state vaccine eligibility requirements, please call the number below to schedule an appointment.

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20 5th St SE  
(218) 361-3297



Tower Medical  
Vaccine Scheduling  
415 N 2nd St, Suite 2  
(218) 753-2405



1-877-541-2817  
[www.ScenicRiversHealth.org](http://www.ScenicRiversHealth.org)

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PHONE: 218-481-7603  
WEBSITE: [living-well-therapy.com](http://living-well-therapy.com)

**FALL PREVENTION**

**Celebrate Ely  
Networking Dinner**

Join us on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 for a survivor-themed evening of networking, tropical adventure, and keynote speaker, Holly Hoffman, finalist from Survivor Nicaragua.

- Social hour starts 4:30 p.m. (cash bar)
- Dinner buffet 6 p.m.
- Holly Hoffman 7 p.m.

Location: Grand Ely Lodge  
Tickets: \$30.00/person

Contact the Ely Chamber of Commerce at 218-365-6123 or [fun@ely.org](mailto:fun@ely.org) to reserve tickets, or visit [Ely.org](http://Ely.org) for the event flyer.







Obituaries and Death Notices



**Agnes Mesojedec**  
Agnes “Ag” Mesojedec, 98, a lifelong resident of Soudan, died on Sunday, March 13, 2022, with family by her side, at Edgewood in Hermantown where she had lived since June 2021. A special thank you to the dedicated caregivers at Edgewood-Hermantown. We are so grateful for them. Also, thank you to “Ag’s Girls” Judy and Danielle for all the love, visits, calls and support – you meant so much to her. At Agnes’ request, a small family memorial service will be held at a later date. Family services are provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower.

Ag was born on Dec. 11, 1923, to Helen (Verbou) and Victor Chiabotti. She attended the Tower-Soudan schools and married the love of her life, Herman Mesojedec, on April 20, 1939. They had two sons, Paul and Mitch. She was a forever member of St. Martin’s Catholic Church where she was active in the Ladies Guild and the Catholic Women’s Association and helped with many, many needs in the kitchen over the years. She was also a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and The Red Hats. Ag worked for the Township of Breitung as a clerk for the water department in her younger years.

Ag was a remarkable historian of the Tower-Soudan area, recalling minor and major milestones not many even knew of or recalled. She was a dedicated homemaker who took great pride in her family and her home. All who knew this strong, independent woman would describe her as feisty, but indeed incredibly caring and loving all the same. Her faith, incredible strength, and grace were unwavering right until the end as she

was grateful for each day as it came.

Ag is survived by her son, Paul (Darlene) Mesojedec of Virginia and Mitch (Ginger) Mesojedec of Duluth; sister-in-law, Mary Lorraine Chiabotti of Dallas, Texas; grandchildren, Chad (Jen) Mesojedec of Moose Lake, Dave (Melanie) Mesojedec of Hermantown, Jodi (Todd) Molitor of Hugo and Jennifer (Jon) Esterbrooks of Hermantown; great-grandchildren, Marlen, JP, Kaela, Dylan, Faith and Blake Mesojedec, Jacob, Ashley and Grace Molitor, and Andrew and Will Esterbrooks; and numerous nieces, nephews and friends. All will miss this special lady dearly.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Herman; sister, Mary-Ann Hill; brother, Paul Chiabotti; and nephew, Steve Chiabotti.

**Phyllis F. Burgess**  
Phyllis Ferne Driscoll Burgess, 96, of Tower, passed away on Tuesday, March 15, 2022, leaving family and friends to mourn. Visitation will be

held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 2 at St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower, preceding the funeral service at 2 p.m. Phyllis was a dedicated member of St. James, where she accompanied the choir and congregational singing for over 50 years until the pandemic hit. Arrangements are with Anderson-Daniels Funeral Home of Tower.

Phyllis is survived by her daughter, Patricia “Pat” Krieg (Paul) of Duluth; brothers, Del Driscoll of Roy, Utah, and Terry Driscoll (Jeanne) of Tower; brother-in-law, Mike Michael of Soudan; grandchildren, Brian Krieg of Duluth and Stephanie Krieg of St. Paul; great-grandchild, Gabriel Krieg; cousin, MaryBeth Reller (Al); numerous nieces, nephews and cousins, and her pet, Jasmine.

She was predeceased by her parents, Michael Driscoll and Ferne Driscoll (Williams); husband, Franklin James “Jim” Burgess; mother-in-law, Enice Burgess; siblings, Dean Clayton Driscoll, Michael Freder-

ick Driscoll, Dennis “Kelly” Driscoll and Priscilla Joan Mickle; siblings-in-law, Georgianna Driscoll, Cheryl Driscoll, Eileen “Polly” Larson and Robert “Bob” Larson; nieces and nephews, Michael Frederick Driscoll Jr., Dean Driscoll, Shannon Lee Williams (Driscoll) and Judy Sterland; son-in-law Arthur Lamken; and Priscilla (Pam).

**Peggy L. Salo**  
Peggy Lynn Pernu Salo, 67, of Eveleth, formerly of Lake Vermilion and Tower, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, March 15, 2022, at Waterview Woods in Eveleth. Peggy’s family would like to express their gratitude and thanks to the special friends she made at Waterview Woods, Essentia Health Duluth and Virginia, Miller-Dwan Medical Center, and the Eveleth Police and Ambulance. A celebration of life was held on Saturday, March 19. Arrangements were with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by her children, Jodi (Mike)

Scheffers, Michelle (Jared) Wagoner and Travis (Kaylyn) Salo; grandchildren, Madelyn, Davin, Cash, Eliana, Theodore, Hudson and Matthew; sister, Juanita Richard; special friend, Tony Sikora; and numerous nieces and nephews.

**Tom Julian**  
Tom Julian, 83, of Babbitt, passed away peacefully at home with loved ones by his side after a long and valiant fight with cancer. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. Pius X Catholic Church in Babbitt at 11 a.m. on Friday, March 25, with visitation one-half hour prior to the service at the church. Inurnment and a celebration of life will be held in the early summer. Family arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Kathy Constant; sons, Tommy (Vali) and Danny (Jennifer); brother, Mike (Susan); sisters, Mary-Ann (Tom) Foley, Barb (Gerry) Liebmann and Linda (Paul) Mataya; sister-in-law, Chris (Donny)

Olson; brothers-in-law, Denny (Phyllis) Constant and Paul Constant; sister-in-law, Becky Constant; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

**Rexton R. Pineo**  
Rexton Reign Pineo, infant son of John and Carly (Stephens) Pineo, was born on Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022, and died on Thursday, March 3, 2022, at Children’s Hospital in Minneapolis. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Family services are provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his parents; siblings, Blake, Kason and twin sister Renley Pineo; grandparents, Gordon Pineo of Tower, Sonya Pineo of Virginia and Theron (Kelli) Stephens of Onida, S.D.; and great-grandparents, Rita Pineo of Virginia and Carol Stephens of Onida, S.D.

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# 17th Annual Sweet Spring Auction

## ONLINE!

Bidding Begins 6:00 pm Sunday, March 27  
Ends 6:00 pm Sunday, April 3

**Go to [ely.younglife.org](http://ely.younglife.org)**

Click on Auction Items to view donations; Click on Sign Up in order to bid.  
Items will end at various times from 2:30 - 6:00 on April 3.

All  
proceeds  
benefit Ely  
area youth!

Anderson, Dawn - Beaded gnome & dream catcher  
Arrowhead Outdoors - Bait each month & hat  
Arrowhead Outdoors - Humminbird Helix 5 depth finder  
Bader's Pheasant Run - Pheasant hunt for 10 birds  
Bina, Cindy - Fine silver jewelry  
Bloomers - Gift card  
Boat Club Restaurant - Gift cards  
Boathouse Brewpub - Appetizers and microbrew tasting  
Boes, Lori - Buckets of cleaning products  
Boundary Waters Septic - Residential septic pumping  
Breuhl, Tim & Judy - Burntside Lake wine & apps cruise  
Britton's - Gift cards  
Cache Lake - Camping food  
Campbell, Deb - 4-Course dinner for 2  
Canoe Country Outfitters - Kevlar canoe rental for 1 week  
Chernak, Sue - Pottery bowl  
Cole, Autumn - Children’s quilt  
Crapola - Variety pack of Crapola and swag  
D & D Accounting - \$100 in services  
Dirty Dog Manufacturing - YL logo down blankets  
Dock on Wheels - Dock benches  
Domino’s Pizza - Gift card  
Dorothy Molter Museum - Root beer, hat & family membership  
Dunnom, Janet - Charcuterie Board  
Ely Bike and Kicksled - Toboggan  
Ely Chiropractic - Tri-Core pillow  
Ely Fire Department - Private ride  
Ely Flower and Seed - Moss hanging basket  
Ely Golf Club - Round of golf for 2  
Ely Memorial Senior High - Athletic passes  
Ely Vet Clinic - Dog Food  
Ely Vision - Nonprescription sunglasses  
Ely's Historic State Theater - Family packages  
Erzar, Debbie - Quilt table runners and toppers  
Evergreen Spa & Wellness - 60 min massage  
Faltesek, Evan - Cutting board  
Fisher Maps - Maps covering the Ely area  
Forest Concrete - Class 5 gravel  
Fortune Bay Resort - 1 night stay  
Front Porch - Gift card  
Gator’s Emporium - Pizza party  
Gene Hicks Gourmet Coffee - Coffee baskets  
Gracie's Plant Works - Gift card  
Grand Ely Lodge - Grand Fishing Package  
Great Lakes Aquarium - 4 Admission passes  
Gunflint Lodge - Zipline passes, trail rides and dinner gift cards  
Hamilton, Leslie and Bob - T-shirts  
Hearthside Corner - Primo ceramic grill w/ cedar cart  
Hunter, Anne - Cabi gift card  
Insula - Gift cards and bottles of wine  
International Wolf Center - 8 admission tickets  
Joe's Marine - Bucket of boat cleaning supplies  
Kahle, Sarah - Dog sitting

Kawishiwi Lodge and Outfitters - Canoe outfitting package  
Keller, Mike - North Dakota bird hunt for 2  
Kidd, Kris - Metal print & greeting cards  
Sundog Sport - All-Terrain dog booties  
Portage North - Map Case  
Kottke, Carrie - Carrie-Mels & gift card  
L & M - 2 person tent  
Laine, Susan - Cake decorating lessons  
LaTourell's - Bent shaft paddles  
Legacy Toys - Gift card  
Lepisto, Andrea - jewelry, camp chairs & hammocks  
Levar, Sarah - Greeting Cards  
Log Cabin Coffee - Gift card  
Low Impact Excavating - Class 5 gravel  
Mealey's - Gift card  
Merhar Ace Hardware - 22 piece mechanics tool set  
MN Twins - Brian Dozier autographed ball  
North American Bear Center - Admission passes, photo prints  
North Shore Railroad - Admission for Duluth Zephyr  
Northern Expressions - Ice cream cones & dog gift basket  
Northern Grounds - Wine Society tastings  
Olson, Brenda - Hand-made soap  
Orcutt Guide Service - Guided fishing trip for 2  
Passananti, Stan & Joyce - Italian dinner for 6  
Pebble Spa - 30 minute classic massage & “Box of Goodness”  
Piragis - watercraft rental, gift card, & Kleen Kanteen  
POTLUCK - Cupcake decorating package & gift card  
Range Cenex - Propane tank refills  
Razor Edge - Knife sharpening gift certificates  
Rock Country Masonry - \$1000 worth of work  
Root River Photography - Matted prints  
Roots Salon - Pedicure & manicure, Haircut & Foil  
Semenick, Gary - Custom made coffee table & cedar chest  
Sir G’s - Twelve large pizzas  
Soderberg, Barb & Kurt - Books (youth) by Erin Soderberg  
St. Paul Saints - Tickets  
Stony Ridge - Gift cards  
Subway - Subs & sandwich platter  
Swanson Excavating - Class 5 gravel  
Tara Kay Photography - Gift card for photo shoot  
Today, Dave - ½ day guided fishing trip  
VanDusen, Bud - Airplane ride  
Vermilion Vet Clinic - Dog check up and puppy shots  
Vosburgh, Willy - Tow for 4 on Moose Lake chain  
Voyageur Brewing Company - Gift card  
Wetzel, Tom & Mischke, Larry - Walleye fry for 8  
White Iron Beach Resort - 1 Day pontoon rental  
Wick, Chuck - Handcrafted wood trays  
Wintergreen Northern Wear - Canoe shorts  
Zup’s Ely - Gift cards  
Zup’s Babbitt - Brat package

**Anonymous donations:** Beats Studio earbuds, Amazon gift card, TJMaxx/Marshall’s/Homegoods gift card, Organic Roots gift card, Wheeled duffle bag, Seaquist wooden gift boxes

**AND MANY MORE!**

Gourmet desserts created by Joe Bianco, Brianna Crawford, Janet Dunnom, Marie Hren, Susan Laine, Erin Moravitz, JoEllen Murphy, Justin Olson, JoAnn Rhoades, Jan Rue, Carol Stouffer, Sharon Svatos, Anna Thompson, and Peggy York-Jesme.

Financial and other support from the Ely Echo and Frandsen Bank.

Email [elymnyounglife@gmail.com](mailto:elymnyounglife@gmail.com) if you have questions.



EMPLOYMENT



### Steger Mukluks is Hiring!

- Full-Time Sewer
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Join the team at Steger Mukluks! Call (218) 365-6553 or stop by the factory at 100 Miners Dr. in Ely, MN and fill out an application. Equal Opportunity Employer    tfn

### Head Start Teacher- Vermillion

**Closes: 3/29/22**

**Position Purpose:** The Head Start Teacher will provide educational services to pre-school-aged children in an assigned classroom setting. Provide educational and support services to families of enrolled children, while assuring that confidentiality is maintained in a professional manner. Incumbent will implement the Head Start Early Childhood Education Plan and provide the full range of early childhood services through the curriculum, meet the Performance Standards, including mental and physical health and safety, culture, and nutrition activities.

Website Address: <https://boisforte.com/jobs/>

Published in the Timberjay, March 11, 18, 25, 2022

### GILBERT PUBLIC LIBRARY

### PART-TIME LIBRARY CLERK

20 hours/week

Please pick up the job description and application at the library. 218-748-2230.    3/25



## FULL-TIME SALES & TECH HELP WANTED

Looking to hire someone full-time for our Ely retail store. Attention to detail along with great customer service and some technical experience necessary. Send resume to: [Jim@voltz.com](mailto:Jim@voltz.com) or apply at 410 E. Sheridan St.

4/1



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 ¾ 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.

2/11, 18, 25, 3/11, 25



### HELP WANTED:

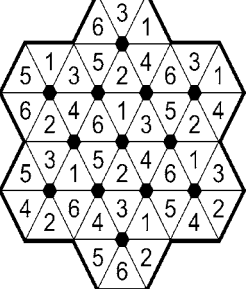
Would you like to work outside? Would you like to work on the lake? Docks on Wheels, in Ely, is looking to fill a variety of positions. All positions require the ability to lift 50 lbs continually. Starting pay is \$15.00 per/hr. Stop in and apply or call 218-365-6210 to schedule an interview.    4/15

## HOUSING NEEDED

### LOCALS- PLEASE HELP!

**Staff at the Vince Shute Wildlife Sanctuary are looking for housing starting from May 1 – Dec. 31, but could be needed longer. Looking for housing within a 30-45 minute drive of the sanctuary.**

**Please contact Bill at 828-508-1751**    3/25



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## CAMP VOYAGEUR

### NOW HIRING FOR THE SUMMER

Work on beautiful Farm Lake. These positions are ideal for those who enjoy the outdoors and working with youth.

- Cooks/bakers: quantity cooking preferred, though we will train
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### Public Health Educator I

### Community (Virginia)

**\$25.78 - \$31.32 Hourly**  
**Apply by 04/01/2022**

### Heavy Equipment Mechanic

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

Equal Opportunity and Veteran-Friendly Employer    3/25

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### NOTICE OF LAND FOR SALE IN THE CITY OF TOWER

The Tower Economic Development Authority has authorized the sale of the following residential lot and existing two-car garage in the city of Tower, located at 510 S Second Street and legally described as follows: Lot 5, Block 22, Plat of Tower.

TEDA will be accepting sealed bids for the identified property through 4 p.m. on April 14, 2022, with a minimum-accepted price of \$20,000. The former residence was demolished and removed from the site, which is now ready for new construction. The garage remains on the site and is in reasonably good repair.

TEDA has authorized the sale of the property with the requirement that the lot be redeveloped for residential purposes. The sale of the property will be contingent upon the buyer agreeing to begin construction of a zoning-compliant residence within one year, with substantial completion within two years of purchase.

Interested parties should submit a sealed bid clearly marked: "Sealed Bid: 510 S Second St."

Address to: Tower Economic Development Authority, PO Box 576, Tower, MN 55790

The bids will be opened at 4:15 p.m. on Thursday, April 14, 2022 at Tower City Hall and read aloud. TEDA reserves the right to reject any and all bids or waive informalities.

Published in the Timberjay, March 18, March 25, and April 1, 2022

### KABETOGRAMA TOWNSHIP

#### Important Information Regarding Assessments and Classification of Property

**This may affect your 2023 property tax payments.**

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Appeal and Equalization of the Township of Kabetogama shall meet on April 14, 2022 from 10:00 a.m to 11:00 a.m. at the Kabetogama Town Hall, 9707 Gamma Rd., Kabetogama, MN, 56669. The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether taxable property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor, and also to determine whether corrections need to be made.

If you believe the value or classification of your property is incorrect, please contact your assessor's office to discuss your concern. If you are still not satisfied with the valuation or classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may appear before the local board of appeal and equalization. The board shall review the valuation, classification, or both if necessary, and shall correct it as needed. Generally, an appearance before your local board of appeal and equalization is required by law before an appeal can be taken to your county board of appeal and equalization.

Published in the Timberjay, March 25 & April 8, 2022

## FUNERAL SERVICES

### Range Funeral Home



Virginia 741-1481    Hibbing 263-3276  
"Friends Helping Friends"

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### OPEN POSITIONS

10 Fifth Street SE Cook, MN 55723

#### Nursing

FT RN House Supervisor

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FT Medical Lab Tech

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FT Radiologic Technologist

#### Care Center

FT & PT Nursing Assistant (Wage starting at \$17.36/hr - \$1,500 Sign-On Bonus)  
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#### Activities

PT & Casual Activities Assistant

#### Environmental Services

Casual Laundry Aide  
Casual Housekeeping & Laundry

**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 is an equal opportunity provider and employer    The Cook Hospital & Care Center offers competitive pay and benefits including PBA retirement, Health and Dental coverage, Life and LTD.

## King Crossword

### ACROSS

1 Slander in print

6 L-P link

9 Old map letters

12 Fred's dancing partner

13 Goal

14 Salt Lake athlete

15 Lightweight wood

16 "Lust for Life" punk rocker

18 Duration

20 Sea predator

21 "I'm not im-pressed"

23 Poseidon's home

24 Serpentine

25 "— a roll!"

27 Lent a hand

29 Live-in nanny

31 Mine vehicle

35 Call on

37 Activist Parks

38 Island porch

41 Stitch

43 Resistance unit

44 "Oops!"

45 Proverbial burg

47 1987 Peter Weller film

49 Hotel posting

52 CBS logo

53 Group of two

54 Said something

55 ISP alternative

56 Norm (Abbr.)

57 Plains shelter

### DOWN

1 Science room

2 Writer Tarbell

3 Hotel staffer

4 Otherwise

5 Inclines

6 Rum cocktail

7 At hand

8 Texter's

"Wow!"

9 Toyota model

10 Inventory

11 Settle a debt

17 There

19 Bike components

21 Ms. Farrow

22 Ostrich's kin

24 Sun. talk

26 Arizona tribe

28 Fawned (on)

30 Jr.'s son

32 Stove work-space

33 Fireplace residue

34 Zodiac animal

36 14-legged crustacean

38 Enticed

39 Greetings at sea

40 Prestigious prize

42 German sausage

45 Sulk

46 Scruff

48 LPs' successors

50 Scrape (out)

51 Observe

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## Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

### DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate    ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

Ely AA OPEN GROUP MEETINGS- in person meetings, Wednesdays & Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Babbitt Municipal 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

King Crossword  
Answers

Solution time: 26 mins.

|         |        |       |
|---------|--------|-------|
| LIBEL   | MNO    | SSR   |
| ADELE   | AIM    | UTE   |
| BALSA   | IGGY   | POP   |
| MEH     | SEA    | SNAKY |
| IMON    | AIDED  |       |
| AUPAIR  | ORECAR |       |
| VISIT   | ROSA   |       |
| LANAI   | SEW    | OHM   |
| UHOH    | PODUNK |       |
| ROBOCOP | RATES  |       |
| EYE     | DUO    | SPOKE |
| DSL     | STD    | TEPEE |

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HELP WANTED

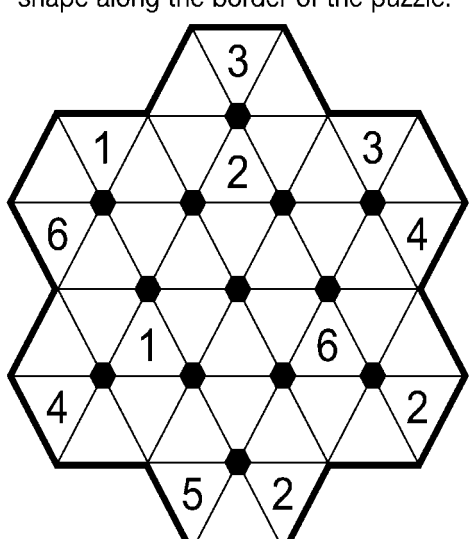
HELP WANTED- COOK NEEDED- full-time or part-time at Melgeorge's on Elephant Lake. WEEKEND CABIN CLEANERS also needed. Call 218-374-3621. tfn

AGE 55+ WORKERS needed for PT light custodial/groundskeeping at the Lake Vermilion State Park. Contact Green View at 651-639-1913. 4/1p

Call 753-2950 to subscribe to the Timberjay!

**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

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

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SUPPORT GROUPS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Super Crossword

**ACROSS**

1 "Rabbit food"  
6 Back-and-forth talk  
12 Cold case solvers, often  
20 Oven maker  
21 Source of weather upheaval  
22 This instant  
23 MTV's first Latina video jockey  
25 "Don't go anywhere"  
26 Dresses up  
27 Cubs' and Eagles' gp.  
29 Mazda two-seater  
30 Common conjunction  
31 Social-climbing snob on "Keeping Up Appear-ances"  
37 Gp. in the Arab League  
40 Funny Conan  
42 Blends to mush  
43 35th president's mother  
46 Banjoist Fleck  
47 Inking  
51 Carve — career  
52 Post-Q string

**DOWN**

1 "Smooth Operator" singer  
2 "Walk Like —"  
3 Woodsy den  
4 Actor Williams  
5 Diary  
6 God, in Latin  
7 — -de-France  
8 Actress Sheridan

9 Ignited  
10 Last year before the first century  
11 Busybody  
12 HMO VIPs  
13 Petty peeve  
14 — Khan  
15 Lymphoid organ in the neck  
16 Moral code  
17 Sort not to be trusted  
18 Egggy cake  
19 Elbow grease  
24 "Giant" novelist Edna  
28 Wolf-headed Egyptian god  
31 Inking  
32 "— -haw!"  
33 Common conjunction  
34 Uno plus dos  
35 Ship's wheel  
36 Romeo  
49 Friendly introduction?  
50 Sushi tuna  
54 Keanu of the screen  
55 Driving paths  
57 Check-giving time at work  
58 Fri. follows it  
59 Arrid target  
63 Film dancer Charisse  
64 Wee kid  
65 Ring victory, for short  
66 Cooking vessels  
67 Muhammad —  
68 Guitar piece  
70 Overly sweet  
72 Suffix with journal  
73 Celebrity tributes  
74 Fighting forces  
75 1983 Lionel Richie hit  
78 Film holder  
80 Health club  
81 Blue Jays, on sports tickers  
82 Decide  
83 Triumph in the end  
85 Keeps  
87 Tube-shaped pasta  
88 La — Tar Pits

89 Senator Paul  
90 Big Apple's city and state: Abbr.  
91 "I'd say," in a text message  
92 Coarse sack material  
97 Unwell  
98 Spike of films  
99 They may cry "Uncle!"  
100 One napping noisily  
101 Inserted plant shoots  
104 Main course of action  
105 Nobody — (mine alone)  
106 Spanish bar appetizers  
107 Link up  
108 Messy impact sound  
110 MIT business school name  
113 Historical slave Scott  
114 — facto  
115 Countertenor  
116 Filter slowly  
118 Strep doc  
119 Golf prop  
120 Singular  
122 Ending for Motor  
123 Soggy  
124 Suffix with journal

|     |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |    |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   |    | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9  | 10  | 11 |     | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  |
| 20  |     |     |     |     |    | 21  |     |     |    |     |    |     | 22  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 23  |     |     |     |     | 24 |     |     |     |    |     |    |     | 25  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 26  |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |    | 27  |    | 28  |     |     |     | 29  |     |     |     |     |
|     |     |     |     | 30  |    |     |     | 31  | 32 | 33  |    |     | 34  | 35  | 36  |     |     |     |     |     |
| 37  | 38  | 39  |     | 40  |    | 41  |     |     |    |     | 42 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 43  |     |     | 44  |     |    |     |     |     |    | 45  |    | 46  |     |     |     |     | 47  | 48  | 49  | 50  |
| 51  |     |     |     |     |    | 52  |     |     |    |     | 53 | 54  |     |     |     | 55  |     |     |     |     |
| 56  |     |     |     | 57  |    |     |     |     | 58 | 59  |    |     |     |     |     | 60  |     |     |     |     |
| 61  |     |     |     | 62  | 63 | 64  | 65  |     |    |     |    |     | 66  | 67  | 68  |     |     |     |     |     |
| 69  |     |     |     | 70  |    |     |     |     |    |     |    | 71  | 72  |     |     |     |     | 73  | 74  | 75  |
|     |     |     |     | 76  |    |     |     |     |    | 77  | 78 |     |     |     |     |     |     | 79  |     |     |
| 80  | 81  | 82  |     |     |    |     |     | 83  |    |     |    |     |     |     |     | 84  | 85  |     |     |     |
| 86  |     |     |     |     |    | 87  | 88  | 89  |    |     |    |     | 90  | 91  | 92  |     | 93  |     |     |     |
| 94  |     |     |     |     | 95 |     |     |     |    | 96  | 97 | 98  |     |     |     | 99  |     |     |     |     |
|     |     |     |     | 100 |    |     |     |     |    | 101 |    | 102 |     |     |     |     |     | 103 |     |     |
| 104 | 105 | 106 | 107 |     |    |     |     |     |    | 108 |    |     |     |     | 109 |     | 110 |     |     |     |
| 111 |     |     |     |     |    |     |     | 112 |    |     |    |     |     | 113 |     |     |     | 114 | 115 | 116 |
| 117 |     |     |     |     |    | 118 | 119 | 120 |    |     |    |     | 121 | 122 | 123 | 124 |     |     |     |     |
| 125 |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |    |     |    |     | 126 |     |     |     | 127 |     |     |     |
| 128 |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |    |     |    |     |     |     |     |     | 130 |     |     |     |



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

Making STEM learning fun for girls

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – Ely-area girls in grades five through eight participated in the popular STEM (science, technology engineering, math) workshop day at Vermilion Community College last Saturday.

The workshop, sponsored by the Ely branch of the American Association of University Women, was postponed for the past two years because of COVID-19 public health precautions.

About a dozen students from Ely, Babbitt and Tower, including Jorden Borchert, Molly Brophy, Marie Eng, Ashlynn Gerlovich, Coco Gillson, Natalie Johnson, Bela Moskowitz, June Nelson, Ivy Ohlhauser, Lilly Pulkinen, Bridgett Stern, and Addy Warren spent the day in interactive and hands-on activities learning about drinking water safety, how electrical circuits work, and the process of converting iron ore to taconite pellets.

Barbara Luikkonen, a retired water resources specialist for the University of Minnesota Extension, guided the students through various experiments in the VCC biology lab exploring water quality and helped them to use their senses to determine what water they might drink based on sight, smell and taste.

Jennifer Danyanovich and Paula Lillesve, from Hibbing Taconite Co. of Cleveland Cliffs, conducted a brief class in the VCC chemistry lab exploring how iron ore is transformed into taconite for the steel-making industry.

After lunch in the VCC cafeteria, the students returned to the classroom and worked with instructor Crystal Smith and engineering students from Itasca Community College in the VCC



Top: Barbara Luikkonen demonstrates water quality testing with Bridgett, Ashlynn, and Addy. Above: Molly and June get their hands dirty. Right: Jorden experiments with water adhesion. photos by K. Vandervort



physics lab making “squishy circuits” and conducted other experiments exploring the principles of electricity.

The day ended with the students completing evaluation forms on the education they received. Many girls went home with science-related door prizes.

FOREST FIRE PREVENTION

Prescribed fires focus of USFS open house at VCC

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – A series of free events marking the tenth anniversary of the Pagami Creek Fire are being held here in the coming weeks.

This Saturday, March 26, an open house is scheduled at Vermilion Community College from 8:30 a.m. to noon, where fire professionals will discuss what prescribed fire is, how the U.S. Forest Service plans for it, weather and smoke management, communication strategies, tools and techniques used in prescribed fire operations, and more. The event will be held in VCC CL104.

Ely events mark tenth anniversary of Pagami Creek Fire

Open house agenda

8:45 – 9 a.m. Welcome. Introduction of prescribed fire. Why we burn.

9 – 10:30 a.m. The process of prescribed fire-parameters and challenges.

10:45 – 11:15 a.m. Getting operational – Boots on the ground show and tell.

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. USFS 2022 prescribed burn presentation and projects, along with forest health benefits and wildland fire resiliency.

A question-and-answer session will follow the presentations, followed by an overview of proposed USFS land management projects. Presentations will be done by the USFS. For more information, see USFS Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SuperiorNF>.

Later that day, also at VCC, the Shapiro and Smith Dance Company will present “Burning Air” about the Great Hinckley Fire of 1894, from 3-4:30 p.m. in the Fine Arts Theater. This informal performance will be followed by a discussion about the fire then and now and how this dance was created out of historical records and survivors’ stories. More details can be found online at [shapiroandsmithdance.org](http://shapiroandsmithdance.org).



A prescribed burn done by the Forest Service last year. submitted

Other wildfire-related informational events scheduled in Ely include:

- Beneficial Effects of Fire Post Pagami Creek Fire – Tuesday, April 12, noon-1 p.m. at the Grand Ely Lodge. It is hosted by the Ely Tuesday Group and presented by USFS personnel. Attend in person or tune in from home. For more details email [elytuesdaygroup@gmail.com](mailto:elytuesdaygroup@gmail.com).
- Pagami Creek Fire Ten Years On: What we’ve learned on April 20-21 at Ely’s Historic State Theater. A two-day symposium on lessons learned from the Pagami Creek Fire includes visits to the 2021 Greenwood Lake fire site. This event is open to all, but may be of greatest interest to professional natural resource managers. It is organized by the UMN Sustainable Forests Education Cooperative. There is a fee for symposium participation. For more information and registration, see SFEC’s Upcoming Event page: <https://sfec.cfans.umn.edu/upcoming-events>.
- Film: Oshkigin Spirit of Fire and panel discussion - Thursday, April 21, 6-8 p.m. Ely’s Historic State Theater.

A screening of a local 16-minute fire documentary followed by a discussion with tribal panelists on the value of Indigenous perspectives in transforming our relationship with fire and how we, as humans, relate to the whole community of life that we are part of. Panelists are from tribal nations within the 1842 and 1854 Treaty Areas.

➤ Saturday morning walking trips with Bill Tefft, Ely Naturalist to wildland fire sites, prescribed fire sites and more. Everyone is welcome. Get details at [elyfieldnaturalists.wordpress.com](http://elyfieldnaturalists.wordpress.com).

The Northland's premier food and beverage showcase competition is back!

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Woman injured in accident near Cook

FIELD TWP- An Angora woman was injured in a one-vehicle accident early Tuesday morning on Hwy. 53 near North Woods School northwest of Cook.

Emily Ann Mattila, 30, was traveling north on Hwy. 53 at East Olson Rd. at 7:06 a.m. when her 2010 Toyota Rav4 left the road and rolled into the ditch. The Minnesota Highway Patrol incident noted that the road was wet but did not indicate if that was a contributing factor to the accident.

Mattila was wearing a seatbelt and the vehicle’s airbag deployed, but she suffered unspecified non-life-threatening injuries and was taken to Cook Hospital.

The Cook Fire Department and the St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office assisted with the call.



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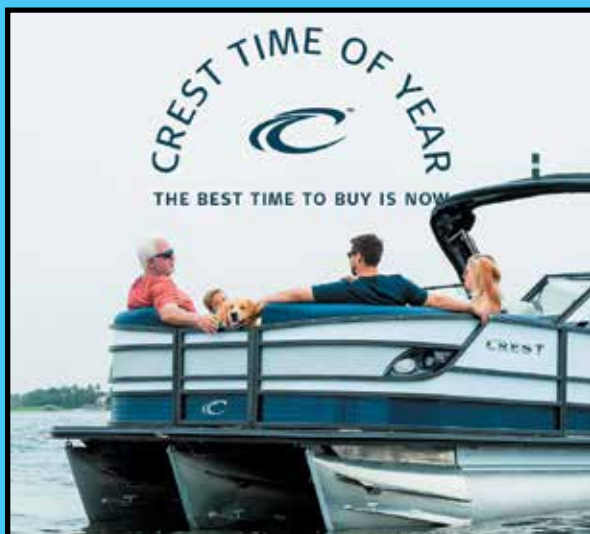
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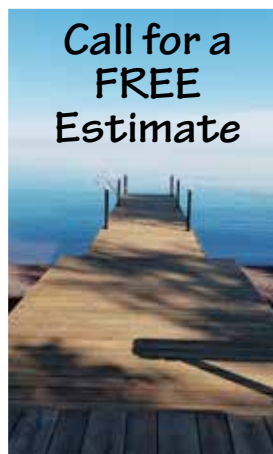
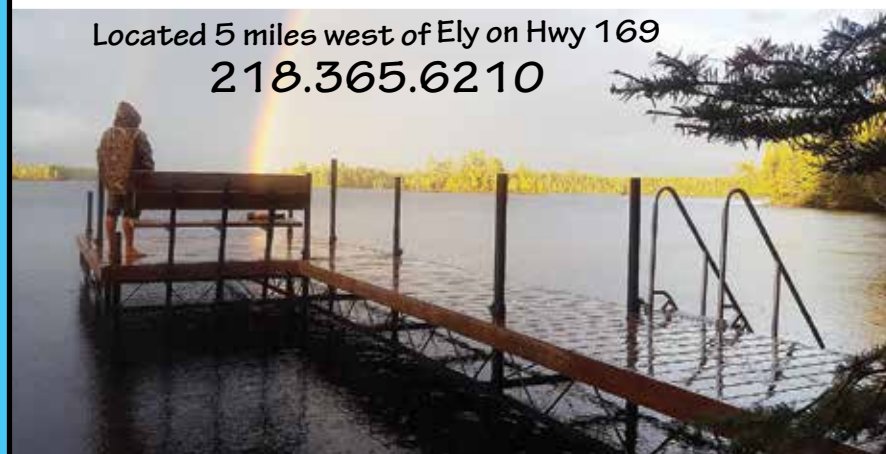
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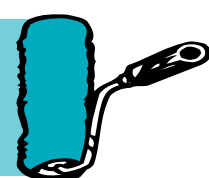
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### Answers

# Answers

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