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the TIMBERJAY



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989 VOL. 33, ISSUE 12 April 1, 2022 \$1⁰⁰

GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

Reelected clerk resigns during meeting

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

Debby Spicer leaves table following pay vote

GREENWOOD TWP.— With the seating of newly-elected Supervisor Rick Stoehr, changes were all but certain during Greenwood’s annual reorganization meeting, and changes, some anticipated, others not, did occur. The biggest surprise of the

meeting was when Clerk Debby Spicer, who had just been reelected, got up and left the table after the board voted to continue the current rate of pay for all township officials and employees.

The vote was included

in what is normally just a laundry-list of items that is dealt with during the annual reorganization. “Why do we need this?” asked Supervisor Paul Skubic. The board had set township salaries earlier this year.

Clerk Spicer responded, “Because I continue to fight for the pay to go where it was.” Spicer had repeatedly asked the board to increase the clerk’s office hours and pay to the level it was at prior to the summer

of 2020, when the board slashed the pay of Clerk Sue Drobac, who resigned shortly thereafter. After the motion to maintain current pay levels passed 4-1, with Mike Ralston voting against because he said the issue

had already been decided in January, Spicer was visibly upset that her repeated requests had been denied. “Congratulations to the new clerk,” said Spicer, who then walked out of the room. Spicer returned briefly to say her resignation would be effective at the end of the month.

See...CLERK pg. 11

ELY SCHOOL DISTRICT



School project eyes finish line

ISD 696 officials address cost overruns, design missteps

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – ISD 696 School Board members here approved some of the final pieces in the \$20 million facility renovation project this week and signs point to the doors opening on the new enclosed campus on the first day of classes for the 2022-23 school year. However, there weren’t many handshakes, back slaps and high fives in the board room this week as cost overruns and project design

EDITORIAL

New school facilities: Special interests have oversold the benefits of major capital projects. **Page 4**

missteps were discussed. For more than a year, the school district’s construction officials and the city of Ely have worked to solve a major infrastructure component of the project that was apparently overlooked in initial project design planning. Century-old water and sewer lines must be upgraded and partially relocated due to the addition of the connecting

building between the existing Washington and Memorial school buildings. An additional fire hydrant must be installed near the south side of the buildings as required by state fire codes. And the school campus is virtually surrounded by ledge rock, making water and sewer line relocation an expensive and

See...ELY pg. 9



The Ely school building renovation project is set for completion by Labor Day. photos by K. Vandervort

BREITUNG TOWNSHIP

Electee withdraws over conflict of interest

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

BREITUNG TWP.— Matt Tichel had expected to take the oath of office here last Friday, following his election as a township supervisor on March 8.

Instead, he submitted a letter to the township declining the position.

The surprising turn-about hinged on a potential conflict of interest, per a legal opinion issued by the township’s attorney, Robert Pearson. Perhaps the biggest surprise is the financial connection that tripped up Tichel, who serves as the township’s assistant fire chief, as an EMT for the Tower Ambulance Service, and as the full-time wastewater supervisor for the Tower-Breitung Wastewater Board.

Tichel said he had asked township officials to inquire with Pearson about potential conflicts out of an abundance of caution. “To me, there was no obvious conflict,” said Tichel. While Tichel, who has served as the township’s assistant fire chief, said he knew he couldn’t serve as the township’s fire chief, based on previous attorney generals’ opinions, it’s been clear for some time that elected



Matt Tichel

See...RESIGNATION pg. 10

LOCAL FOODS

Gardening misadventure leads to boutique cheese concept

by CHUCK FARMER
Contributing Writer

LINDEN GROVE TWP — In an unusual turn of events, a local couple here has turned a gardening misadventure into what looks to be an entrepreneurial success story. Josephine Oksem, a retired nurse, had hoped

to spend her golden years working her garden in her rural homestead west of Cook. But an encounter with a voracious woodchuck, which wreaked havoc on her squash and pumpkin bed in 2020, ultimately sent her life in an entirely new direction, as the co-founder of a boutique cheese manufacturing



operation that is attracting the attention of agriculture

officials. Oksem and her husband Warren recently received a \$35,000 Minnesota Farm Value-Added research grant along with seed capital from the Small Business Administration to grow their fledgling operation, known as Chuckling Cheese. The concept was pure happen-

stance, after Warren Oksem live-trapped a woodchuck that had caused considerable damage to his wife’s garden. Josephine, who had worked with young mothers during her nursing career, recognized that the woodchuck was lactating and, with her husband’s help, the couple was able to relocate the mother wood-

chuck and her “chucklings” as young woodchucks are called, into an enclosure, where they could live without further damaging the garden. Warren, a retired DNR wildlife biologist, noted that the mother woodchuck produced an abundance of milk

See...CHEESE pg. 10



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Community notices

Adult and Teen Challenge Men’s Choir in Embarrass on Sunday, April 3

EMBARRASS - The Adult and Teen Challenge Men’s Choir from Duluth will appear in concert at the Evangelical Free Church of Embarrass on Sunday, April 3 at 10 a.m. The church is located at 5606 E Taylor Rd., 1-1/2 miles north of Four Corners on Hwy. 135. For further information, call 218-984-3402.

Pancake breakfast and tack swap in Embarrass set for Saturday, April 2

EMBARRASS - Support the Embarrass Region Fair Association by coming for all-you-can-eat pancakes on Saturday, April 2 from 8 - 11 a.m. The meal also includes a choice of ham or sausage links, fruit cup, juice, and a bottomless cup of coffee. Pancake breakfasts are held the first Saturday of each month through May at the Timber Hall. Adults \$6, children (6-10 years) \$3, and under 5 years free.

Tack Swap, sponsored by Team Penning/Ranch Sorting, will be at the breakfast.

Vermilion Dream Quilters resume Thursday evening meetings

TOWER- The Vermilion Dream Quilters resume their traditional Thursday evening meeting time at St. Martin Catholic Church in Tower, on April 7 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.

Take and Write Poetry Workbook Kits available at area libraries

MT IRON - The Arrowhead Library System (ALS) will be providing Take and Write Poetry Workbook Kits to member public libraries for distribution April 1- 20. Celebrate National Poetry Month with the Poet’s Workbook designed by COMPAS Teaching Artist and Minnesota Poet May Lee-Yang. Included in the kits are several poetry-writing exercises designed specifically for new poets. Each writing exercise will include an example poem, some directions on how to write your own poem, and space to write. This program is for all ages. Kindergarten-ers and first-graders may need extra assistance.

Kits will be distributed at many libraries in the area including: Arrowhead Library System Book-mobile, Arrowhead Library System Mail-A-Book (patrons must qualify for Mail-A-Book services), Aurora, Babbitt, Cook, Ely, International Falls and Virginia. Each location has a limited number of kits. Contact your local library for more information.

This program, sponsored by Arrowhead Library System, was funded in part or in whole with money from Minnesota’s Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. To learn more about Arrowhead Legacy Events, visit www.alslib.info or Facebook at www.facebook.com/alslibinfo.

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Thursday, April 7

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The family of Anthony “Tony” Pecha would like to express their gratitude for the support and kindness we received with the sudden passing of Tony.

Thank you again, The Pecha Family

ARTS ON THE RANGE

Lyric Center Gallery presents art by local youth and photos with the Easter Bunny

Events part of April 7 First Thursday Queen City Art Crawl

VIRGINIA - The Lyric Center for the Arts in Virginia, an entity of the Laurentian Arts and Culture Alliance, will be hosting an open house in the Lyric Gallery on Thursday, April 7 from 4 - 6 p.m., as part of the First Thursday Queen City Art Crawl. The event will feature artistic creations by several students who participate in Lyric Youth Arts programming.

“We have students of all ages who participate in our arts programming,” said Lyric Executive Director Paul M. Gregersen. “Everything from painting to performing arts, these kids are remarkable.”

A special segment of work that will be featured is a display by students from East Range Academy of Technology and Science (ERATS).

“Students and instructors from ERATS have been visiting the Lyric on Tuesdays this semester to work on art and get inspired creatively,” Gregersen said. “It’s been so much fun having them visit. They are full of creative ideas. It is our privilege to provide a space for them to flourish artistically.”

A selection of unique work by various artists will also be on display and for sale as a fundraiser for the Lyric Youth Arts Program.

“Our youth programming is a unique resource to the Iron Range. Without it, there would be many young people without the opportunity to express themselves creatively.... something that is very important for kids to do as they mature both emotionally and physically,” Gregersen said.

During the open house, Lyric Youth Theatre participants will be rehearsing for their upcoming pro-



Participants in the Lyric Youth Theatre Program have been busy rehearsing for the debut of School House Rock LIVE JR in May. They will be participating in First Thursday art events on April 7 with a sneak peek of their show in the Lyric Annex.

duction of School House Rock LIVE JR which debuts in May. Visitors are encouraged to pop their heads into the Annex stage to see the progress the actors have made under the direction of Sue Nelson and Dorothy Sandness.

Festivities will also include on-site spring pop-up mini-photo sessions by photographer Cheryl Carlson, along with the Easter Bunny, from 4-7 p.m. in the Lyric Annex. Those interested in getting their photos taken are encouraged to contact Carlson at cheryl_carlson@hotmail.com, 218-780-9039, or visit

the website cherylcarlsonphotography.com.

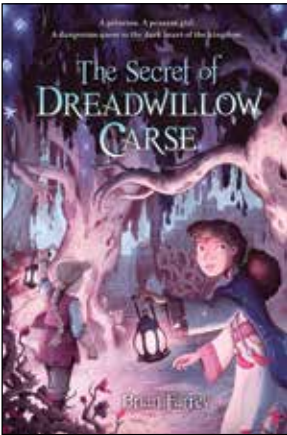
To round out the evening, free music at Tommy’s Rainy Lake Saloon and Deli will be presented from 7 to 9 p.m. featuring Christopher David Hanson and Karl Sundquist, courtesy of First Thursday Queen City and the Iron Range Original Music Association.

For more information about the April 7 First Thursday Queen City art events, visit lyriccenteronline.org or call the Lyric at 218-741-5577.

MINNESOTA CENTER FOR THE BOOK

One Book Program features YA book by Brian Farrey

REGIONAL – The Friends of the St. Paul Public Library, as the Minnesota Center for the Book, announces the seventh chapter of One Book | One Minnesota, a statewide book club that invites Minnesotans of all ages to read a common title and come together virtually to enjoy, reflect, and discuss. The seventh title for the program is “The Secret of Dreadwillow Carse” by Minnesota author Brian Farrey. Presented in partnership with State Library Services, a division of the Minnesota Department of Education, the program aims to bring Minnesotans together during a time of distance and adversity and highlight the role of librar-



ies as community connectors.

From March 28 through May 15, through their local libraries, Minnesotans will be invited to read the featured book selection and will have access to reading guides and virtual book club

discussions. Readers can access the ebook and audiobook for free on the friends.org/onebook (click on book availability) for eight weeks. All Minnesotans are invited to participate in a statewide discussion with the author on Wednesday, May 11 at 1 p.m. The Virtual Author Discussion, featuring Brian Farrey, is free and open to the public. In addition to the digital formats, hard copies of the book will be available through public libraries and independent stores across the state. Links to resources and more information can be found at thefriends.org/onebook.

About The Secret of Dreadwillow Carse

In the center of the verdant Monarchy lies Dreadwillow Carse, a desolate bog the people of the land do their best to ignore. Little is known about it except an ominous warning: If any monarch enters Dreadwillow Carse, then the Monarchy will fall. Twelve-year-old

Princess Jeniah yearns to know what the marsh could conceal that might topple her family’s thousand-year reign. After a chance meeting, Princess Jeniah strikes a secret deal with Aon, a girl from a nearby village. Aon will explore the Carse on the princess’s behalf, and Jeniah will locate Aon’s missing father. But when Aon doesn’t return from the Carse, a guilt-stricken Jeniah must try to rescue her friend—even if it means risking the entire Monarchy. In this thrilling modern fairytale, Brian Farrey has created an exciting new world where friendship is more powerful than fate and the most important thing is to question everything.

cret of Dreadwillow Carse won the inaugural Minnesota Book Award for Middle-Grade Literature in 2017. His most recent book is “The Counterclockwise Heart”, released in February 2022. He lives in the Twin Cities with his husband and their cats.

We will be CLOSED for kitchen renovations from April 3 – 25.

Apologies to all during this time.

See you on April 26!

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POLITICS

Duluth rep announces she’s challenging Stauber

State Rep. Jen Schultz will seek the DFL nomination in fight for Eighth District seat

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Two Duluth area residents could face off to represent the sprawling Eighth Congressional District this fall. State Rep. Jen Schultz announced Monday that she’s seeking the DFL nomination to challenge fellow Duluthian Pete Stauber, who has held the seat in Washington since 2018.

Schultz made her announcement at public events in both Duluth and Virginia.

Schultz has represented a portion of Duluth at the state Legislature since 2014.

“I’m running because I believe in the Minnesota values of hard work, decency, and fairness,” said Schultz. “I believe everyone in our district deserves access to good jobs, affordable healthcare, the best education, and the ability to afford a good life for their family. We need someone

in Congress to fight for all of us, not just some of us.”

Schultz noted the frustration voiced by many in the district who criticize the lack of leadership and tangible results from Stauber, and his votes that run counter to the region’s needs and undermine democracy. Stauber was among a large number of Republican

members of Congress in 2020 who joined efforts to overturn the 2020 election, which Biden won. Stauber has closely tied his electoral fortunes to former president Donald Trump, who was intimately involved in efforts to convince former

Vice President Mike Pence to throw out electoral votes from several states on Jan. 6 and replace them with electoral slates in favor of Trump. Pence’s refusal to engage in that unconstitutional action led to the Jan. 6 insurrection that caused death and destruction at the U.S. Capitol.



Rep. Jen Schultz

Stauber also voted against the creation of the bipartisan House committee that has spent the past year investigating the insurrection and those behind it.

Since then, Stauber has voted against major legislation, such as the bipartisan infrastructure bill, which is expected to bring substantial new investment and jobs to the district.

“We can do better,” said Schultz. “I’ve spent eight years in the Minnesota House with a track record of getting results with members from both parties. I am a better choice for Congress than Pete Stauber who votes against us. Stauber has repeatedly voted no to

jobs, families, workers, women, and kids. He voted against the infrastructure investments we need. It’s unacceptable.”

As Schultz made her announcement, she was able to tout major endorsements, including from former Eighth District Congressman Rick Nolan, who retired in 2018, creating the opening for Stauber.

“People need a clear choice this November, and Jen brings the passion, experience, and commitment that Minnesota needs. Stauber votes against everything we care about. He says no to investments our region relies on. Schultz will work hard so we all do better.”

Beth McCuskey, President of the Duluth Central Labor Body, also lauded Schultz, calling her “a strong advocate for workers,” noting she has a 100 percent AFL-CIO voting record. “Unlike Stauber, who votes against labor, Schultz has been fighting for workers her entire career. Schultz was instrumental in helping bring significant state and federal investments to northeast Minnesota, such as funding for the new Duluth medical district, University of Minnesota building projects, Great Lakes Restoration

Initiative, and local projects for the city of Duluth. Equally important for a legislator, Schultz has a reputation of working across the aisle and with stakeholders to get things done.”

Stauber’s campaign staff took aim at Schultz after her announcement. Campaign staffer Johnny Eloranta told the *Star Tribune* that Schultz is a “card-carrying member of the Twin Cities liberals,” and accused her of leading efforts to cut \$68 million from nursing homes, of supporting a 20-cent per gallon gas tax increase, opposing mining, and championing a government takeover of health care. “Pete looks forward to highlighting the stark differences between Schultz’s failed socialist policies and his strong record of fighting for our way of life.”

Schultz said she hopes to fight in Washington for many of the same issues that she’s worked on in St. Paul. That includes making quality education more affordable and accessible, reducing the cost of healthcare and prescription drugs, investing in broadband and other essential infrastructure projects, increasing

See **SCHULTZ...**pg. 5

CITY OF ELY

Ely Fire Department acquires two new trucks

Used ladder truck and engine from Pennsylvania will soon join the force

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY— The Ely Fire Department has been searching for a replacement aerial truck, but will soon have two additional firefighting vehicles on the force to keep this community safe. City council members this week approved a recommendation from the budget committee to purchase a ladder truck and an engine from a Pennsylvania fire department for about \$470,000.

Fire Chief David Marshall told council members in a special meeting Tuesday night that in searching for a replacement for the 1979 American LaFrance aerial truck, he recently traveled



Ely’s new ladder truck, currently located in Pennsylvania, is scheduled for pickup in June.

to Bloomsburg, Penn., after department members had looked for several months at online purchase opportunities.

“While we had set out to replace our 1983 Seagrave ladder truck, we might actually be able

to replace our 1979 LaFrance,” he said. “I don’t think we need to have two aerial trucks in town, but the LaFrance did not pass its pump test this year. That company is no longer in business, so finding parts is becoming increasingly

difficult.”

He noted that the department’s Seagrave truck, manufactured in Clintonville, Wis., is still in business and parts are available.

“Essentially, under that plan, our existing ladder truck will become our second engine, and will run alongside our Pierce engine truck,” Marshall said. “Through additional conversations with the budget committee, the recommendation was developed that while we are considering purchasing an aerial truck, we should also consider purchasing a second engine down the road.”

The city’s Capital Improvement Plan calls for fire department apparatus and

equipment replacement at a cost of \$600,000.

“Truly coincidentally, this same (Pennsylvania) department has an engine for sale,” Marshall explained. “In all honesty, I had to rein in (Assistant Chief) John Zobitz, and told him that we’re not interested in the engine, and we were there to look at the ladder truck.”

Budget committee member Al Forsman told the other council members that the committee was ready to make a recommendation to purchase the ladder truck for \$450,000.

“We had the information that would get us the ladder truck

See **TRUCKS...**pg. 5

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OPINION

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Editorial

New school facilities

Special interests have oversold the benefits of major capital projects

Too often, school boards are swayed by the sweet promises of lobbyists and consultants who have a financial stake in the seemingly never-ending push for new facilities and consolidation. There is big money, and we mean BIG money, in the school construction business, so it is no surprise that major contractors work hard to convince school boards that new facilities are the solution to their financial and academic challenges.

Sometimes, it's true. There are points at which new facilities can make a difference. But, too often, the benefits of new facilities are grossly oversold to a public that is generally willing to invest in public education but isn't sure how to get the most bang for their buck. Any number of area school districts come to mind here.

In the past, school districts had typically sought excess operating levies, but you don't hear much about those these days. Excess operating levy campaigns, after all, were low-budget affairs, generally run by volunteers, parents, students, and teachers on their time off. Not surprisingly, it could be tough to pass an operating levy, especially when school officials were often reluctant to say where the new funds would even go. And since there was no built-in constituency that stood to cash in on a Yes vote, these levy campaigns often fell flat.

That's not the case these days, at least when it comes to capital spending projects. As we saw most recently with the new Rock Ridge School, big contractors, like Kraus-Anderson, virtually take over the Vote Yes campaigns, using public funds. They pull out all the stops, sometimes crossing way over the line into open advocacy for passage, something school districts are prohibited from doing, at least with tax dollars. For the contractors, there's real incentive here, of course. Winning a bond campaign typically puts millions, often tens of millions, into the corporate coffers of these big players.

In the case of the new Rock Ridge school district, which combines the former Virginia and Eveleth-Gilbert districts into brand new or renovated facilities, the merger was supposed to solve their budget woes and expand opportunities for students. But as was recently reported, that school district is now facing significant teacher cuts due to a projected budget shortfall, which suggests the new facilities and consolidation weren't the keys to success promised to voters.

While enrollment declines

have contributed to the district's financial squeeze, that's another factor that school districts often overlook. In an age of open enrollment, parents alienated by consolidations and restructuring, can express their displeasure by sending their kids elsewhere. The St. Louis County School district lost significant numbers of students in the northern half of the district, where opposition to the 2010 restructuring was widespread. It appears that Rock Ridge may be suffering from the same phenomenon, with student numbers down about 275 since 2020.

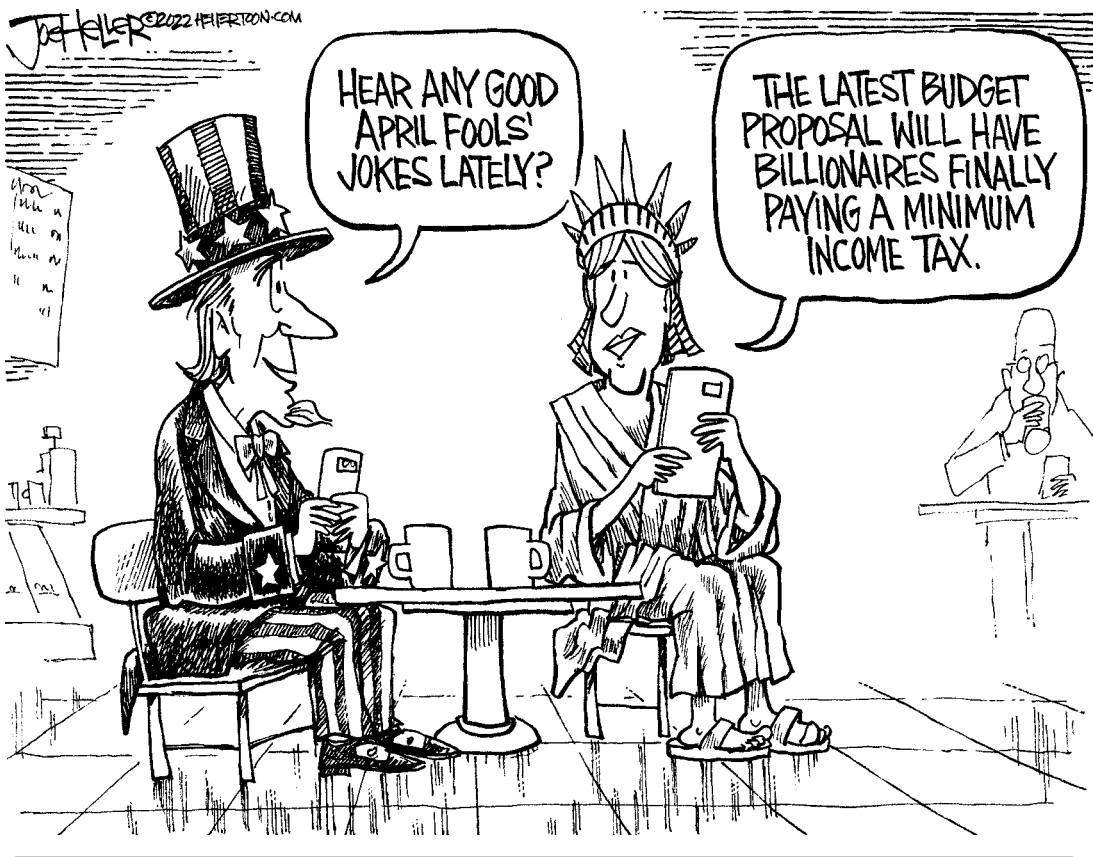
It appears that new facility renovations haven't been the answer in Ely, either. The \$20 million renovation, which is now underway, has run into problems due to skyrocketing construction costs. To be fair, that problem isn't the school board's doing, but it is a risk that every school district takes when it signs on to a major capital project. Engineering firms in the region, which are among the winners in the school construction game, have demonstrated a tendency to low-ball cost estimates. That allows them to promise more to voters, who won't find out that the project is being scaled back, or is running over-budget, until after they approve the bond.

Despite the promise of updated facilities, the Ely schools have been hemorrhaging students and the district is now facing serious budget concerns, both on its capital project, as well as its operating budget. The district is now shifting to a six-hour day, from the previous seven, which almost certainly means fewer opportunities for students.

The lesson in all this is that buildings don't teach students, teachers do. And new facilities rarely yield the kind of operational savings that are promised by those who stand to benefit from these enormous public expenditures. In addition, school restructuring and consolidations often leave some parents with a sour taste, a feeling that frequently leaves them looking at alternative schools.

It's understandable that school boards sometimes turn to consultants to help them wade through the complexities of operating a school district in difficult times. But they need to recognize when these consultants have a vested interest and view their recommendations accordingly.

It would be nice to think there's an easy answer, like shiny new schools, that will address the many challenges in education today. Most of us recognize it's nowhere near that easy.



Letters from Readers

Pleased to see the attention on ALS

Being a former Ranger, reading your March 18 article about ALS research authored by northern Minnesota lawmakers, I am feeling proud and grateful.

In a week, it will be eight years since Jim Macomber, my best friend and life partner, succumbed to ALS in Tower. It was less than two years from diagnosis to death with no treatment options.

Sen. Tom Bakk's comment, "It doesn't affect a large cohort

of people," caught my eye. Your article reported 450 cases in Minnesota. At the time we heard the statistics, "one in 100,000." Jim was the second Tower resident to be affected at that time and there have been more in northern Minnesota, including beloved David Tomassoni. I sincerely hope that research will focus on geographic areas. I appreciate northern Minnesota's leadership as demonstrated in this anti-ALS legislation and in the ongoing quality reporting in the *Timberjay*.

Ann Flannagan
St. Paul

What happened to our security guarantee for Ukraine?

Have we forgotten the Budapest Memorandum?

In 1994, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States signed an agreement guaranteeing Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity in return for the decommissioning of its nuclear arsenal.

Jim Ganahl
Cook

COMMENTARY

A free press is essential to democracy

The value of a free, independent press to representative democracy is incalculable. Our system of government relies on the people knowing what their elected representatives say and do. The best check on every elected official is an active news media looking over their shoulders.

Autocrats know this as well as anyone. Witness what happened when Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a brutal war against neighboring Ukraine last month. One of his first actions was to clamp down on the last vestiges of a free press in Russia, replacing news with propaganda. A week into the fighting, Putin signed a law that effectively criminalized honest reporting about Ukraine. News media couldn't call the war a war; they had to use the Kremlin-approved term "special military operation." Violators could face 15 years in prison.

Russia's independent media, weakened by 22 years of Putin's rule, effectively folded. Upstart radio and TV stations suspended operation. Russia's last major

independent newspaper deleted content about Ukraine to protect its staff. By most accounts, the Russian public is being kept in the dark.

It's no wonder America's founders, with their distrust of government power fueled by resentment of the excesses of English colonial rule, valued a free press so highly.

The First Amendment to the Constitution enshrined as fundamental freedom of the press, along with freedom of speech, religion and assembly and the right to petition the government. George Washington said that, without freedom of expression, the public could be led "like sheep to the slaughter." Thomas Jefferson wrote that, "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

American officials haven't always lived up to those ideals. News organizations and reporters have been censored during wartime. From the Sedition Act in

the 1790s to the Pentagon Papers in the 1970s, the government has tried to block publication of unflattering information. Fortunately, courts have largely upheld the right of the press to report the news, provided it's not false and libelous.

Today, America's news organizations produce outstanding work, and professional journalists hold elected officials accountable every day. At Indiana University, I have been privileged to present public service fellowships to distinguished journalists like Maggie Haberman, E.J. Dionne, David Ignatius and others.

But we have seen an undeniable decline in local news. According to the Pew Research Center, paid circulation of local newspapers has declined by half since a generation ago. Two hundred U.S. counties are "news deserts," without a daily or weekly newspaper. A decline in local news means a decline in civic engagement. Fewer people run for office, and fewer people vote.

Increasingly, local newspapers and radio and TV stations are part of nationwide conglomerates. The people who make decisions about news coverage and

See **PRESS...**pg. 5



LEE
HAMILTON

Avoiding the risk of becoming an April fool

Rarely in my life have the stars aligned so perfectly and yet remained so far out of reach as they have this week in my life at the *Timberjay*.

As luck would have it, this soul so enamored with life's endless absurdities was up for his turn in the paper's rotation of columnists for the April 1 edition. My office colleagues will readily



DAVID
COLBURN

confirm that I was beside myself with glee when realizing the April Fools' Day commentary would be the playground for my irreverent mind. I was nigh on the edge of breaking out into a Sister Act 2 style chorus of "Oh, Happy Day," but with my days as a choirboy far, far behind me, I wisely, and mercifully for my colleagues, chose to

refrain from that refrain.

Nonetheless, I was tickled 20 different shades of pink to have the chance of a journalistic lifetime to follow in the steps of a personal favorite and one of the all-time great political satirists, Art Buchwald of the *Washington Post*. A prolific writer whose column was syndicated in over 550 newspapers at the height of his popularity, Buchwald found most of the fodder for his edgy comedic writing in the news of the day, once saying he could not make up the absurd situations he

saw being reported every day. It's a shame he didn't live to see the past decade. Having somewhat lost his edge and countless readers in the waning years of the 20th century, he undoubtedly would've experienced a massive renaissance in the 2010s fueled by the seemingly endless avalanche of absurdity inside and outside the Washington Beltway.

Satire, however, is a terribly tricky thing. Beginning with a kernel of truth recognizable to most, a successful satirist has to balance their personal dive into

the pool of thoughtful foolishness on the edge of a knife, walking a very thin line to create something realistically fanciful that readers still recognize as nothing more than laughable fiction.

A former editor of one of the weekly newspapers I oversaw in Kansas toppled off that edge spectacularly a number of years ago. He tried writing an edgy satirical column to fire up a cross-county school rivalry by comically trashing the opposition's football

See **FOOL...**pg. 5

COMMENTARY

The Complexity of Simple: How Political Sound Bites Resemble an Old Pickup Truck

by PETE LESCHAK
Contributing Writer

One summer afternoon in 1977, I was cruising a rural highway in my 1966 Ford pick-up. The F100 exhibited high mileage and some chronic issues, but was more or less intact, so I was startled when black smoke began streaming from the engine compartment. I steered onto the shoulder as the motor died.

It wasn't entirely prudent, but I unlatched the hood and flung it open. Flames erupted from the compartment, licking the underside of the hood. I was already mourning the loss of my truck as I grabbed a #2 shovel from the box and scooped a spade-full of sand from the shoulder. It seemed futile, but I figured a guy should give it a shot. I flung sand at the flames, and to my astonishment, the fire went out.

That was nice, but I still assumed the 352 V8 engine was history. As the smoke cleared, I noticed the split in a short segment of fuel hose from which gasoline had sprayed onto the hot block, and that all eight spark plug wires were burned away. But in a second wave of wonder, I realized that was it. The impressive pyrotechnics had been mostly bluster—and droplets of gasoline.

I bummed a ride into town and purchased a few inches of fuel hose and new plug wires. Back at the truck I spent less than an hour at the repair, wielding nothing more than the pliers and screwdriver I kept in the glove box, then turned the key and drove home. I never did get all the sand out of the nooks and crannies of

the engine block, but it didn't appear to matter.

As a former firefighter who battled several vehicle fires, I can attest with a high degree of certainty that if your contemporary car or truck suffered a similar event, it would be a meltdown. Sure, modern vehicles are more reliable, more efficient, and safer than those of five decades ago, but they are also more tender (plastics) and complex.

I've never been mistaken for a mechanic, but that 352 V8 was so simple that I could perform most of my own maintenance and repairs with a modest collection of basic hardware-store tools. I tried to stay the course as engines became computerized and more compact. I stubbornly changed oil and filters until the task evolved into a cramped, knuckle-skinning ordeal instead of a fairly congenial way to save a few bucks and retain a sense of self-reliance. Now, as I approach a commercial shop I remind myself why I work—so I can pay other people to bleed.

We've been encouraged to seek simplicity. Henry David Thoreau, temporary resident of Walden Pond, admonished, "Our life is frittered away by detail.... Simplify, simplify." Apparently there was already too much complexity 160 years ago. The poet Ihara Saikuku, founder of the floating world school of Japanese literature, lamented that, "Ancient simplicity is gone." That was circa 1675. I suspect those two writers may've had difficulty appreciating the "simplicity" of my 1966 Ford. "Simple" can be in the eye of the beholder. Did Cro-Magnon

hunter-gatherers in the Late Pleistocene pine for the casual lifestyle of the Neanderthals?

If so, we still do. For example, just before sunset in early October I stepped outside. Ribbons of stratus were poised to fashion the dusk, promising an aerial tableau of color to match the autumn leaves. I heard the call of swans from the northeast and scanned the sky. A pair of trumpeters flapped into view, their long alabaster necks aimed southwest. As I watched, their feathers were rapidly dyed by fading sunlight—from white to pale yellow, and finally to orange. I felt a wash of wistfulness. Who hasn't—after a long, tiring human day—envied a flying bird. It seems so uncomplicated.

An illusion, of course. Any creature's relationship to its ecosystem is complex, not to mention the tangles of its biochemistry. For migrators like swans, we're still unsure how they navigate. Some species might actually be able to see the earth's magnetic lines of force. How's that for a killer app? Even seems a cut above our complex GPS infrastructure.

Most of the time we want our lives to be simpler, but that doesn't appear to be the method of the world. For example, we may be tempted to vote for a politician who insists, "It's just that simple!" and we long to believe it, but many understand at some level that such a candidate is blowing smoke. Those very words were the mantra of presidential hopeful H. Ross Perot in 1992, and he garnered less than 20 percent of the vote. Other factors were at work in his third-place finish,

but it could be that dumbing down issues as complex as the economy, the environment, and foreign affairs is not ultimately a viable political strategy—or so it's comforting to hope. Most campaign managers would probably consider that sentiment naïve, even quixotic, like trying to extinguish your burning SUV with a scoop of sand. After all, Donald Trump—master of Twitter tidbits—became president.

But it's important to remember that Trump lost the popular vote—twice—and nothing of importance is truly simple. That's why we're often disappointed by elected officials. We vote for sound bites, but must live with symphonies. If a candidate says we need to curb global warming, or ensure quality healthcare for all, or establish peace in the Middle East, they may garner applause, but attempts to follow through on that commitment will face friction, because action will incur real costs.

For example, it's widely acknowledged that protecting the Amazon rainforest, dubbed "the lungs of the earth," is crucial to any climate change policy. However, despite laws in Brazil and other South American nations, the forest continues to shrink because local people—mainly via logging and ranching—are attempting to build a decent living. They denounce the environmental hypocrisy of North Americans and Europeans, who over the past two centuries have destroyed millions of acres of forests and wetlands in the name of economic growth, but who tend to point accusing fingers at ambitious Brazilians doing the

same. So an important facet of the climate change political struggle would be to initiate and sustain a substantial redistribution of wealth from the North to the South—essentially payment to preserve the Amazon. In other words, Americans would be taxed to build schools, hospitals, and other infrastructures of affluence for South Americans.

In the United States, the worst of our deforestation occurred in the late 19th century, during the *laissez-faire* ethos of the Gilded Age. The relative simplicity of those days ("the forests are inexhaustible", "nature is an adversary to be defeated") no longer pertains; the slash and burn practices of that day are not operative in the North. Unfortunately they still are in the rainforest, but do we have the right to declare to the poor of Amazonia: you people must live in poverty to help pay for our excesses and mistakes? We will drive SUVs and you will drive oxen?

A complex global challenge requires a complex global effort, and it could be that one day I will pay a tax to continue to savor the flight of swans (or loons) in the sky of northeastern Minnesota, a fee paid to the indigenous citizens of Amazonia to leave their ecosystem intact so that our much-compromised landscape (and theirs) has a chance to thrive. Ultimately, as well as an affair of biochemistry, climate change is also a matter of justice; if South Americans can't live and prosper, then neither can we. If that level of cooperation and sharing is unacceptable, then what is our Plan B? Makeshift responses, like a scoop of flung sand, will not suffice.

FOOL...Continued from page 4

team, school, and entire community. It was supposed to be all in good fun, but neither town found the column humorous at all. The ensuing outrage was such that three days after the column was published it was the reason he became a former, and not fondly remembered, editor.

Newspapers across the country have tackled the challenge of April Fools' Day columns for decades and have generally escaped inflicting harm, but there are exceptions. A notable recent faux pas happened in Oklahoma in 2020, when a newspaper in Sapulpa tried using satire as a response to the closing of schools due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The paper's April Fools' Day edition proclaimed in supposed good fun that because of the COVID closures all students would have to repeat their current grades the next year. School officials were inundated with calls from concerned and outraged parents, and the embarrassed paper had to immediately retract the story and issue an apology.

As did Buchwald, I find opportunity upon opportunity for satirical material when I scan the news, whether it be global, national, regional, or local. I occasionally tackle such things on my personal social media account, the one I've had for 13 years where a relatively small

group of 60 or so carefully chosen "friends" on both sides of the political spectrum know me well enough to spot my attempts at satire and laugh along with me, even when my posts aren't as funny as I think they are.

However, as I began running through numerous possibilities for a satirical gem for this week's *Timberjay* I began thinking about how tedious good political satire has become. As I noted earlier, good satire takes root in a kernel of truth. But these days, agreed-upon truths have become increasingly scarce in an age where people gobble up social media memes without thought as truths, and all too readily

accept willful distortions and fabrications as facts, despite all evidence to the contrary. Swimming satirical writers have always known they might encounter a shark or two, but the seas of satire today are more frequently patrolled by submarines with unreliable radar, manned by irrational itchy trigger fingers on the torpedo tubes, and skipped by captains possessing the mental health of the monomaniacal Captain Ahab of Moby Dick fame.

My aging face is challenged enough with growing wrinkles and progressively sagging skin. I need not add any battle scars to it because I glibly dove into that dangerous

ocean without the proper equipment to navigate it. So, after thoughtful consideration, I reluctantly retired my initial glee and decided it would be better to leave cutting political satire to others than to risk becoming the ultimate April fool with an ill-considered humorous word or two.

But it IS April Fools' Day, a day that demands levity of some sort or another, and toward that end I offer the following from

my distant past as a young, easily humored Cub Scout: Knock, knock.

Who's there?

Red.

Red who?

Red pepper—ain't that a hot one?

(insert raucous laughter here)

And to my satirical idol, Mr. Buchwald, wherever you are, I appreciate your talent more than ever. Carpe absurdum.

PRESS...Continued from page 4

the allocation of resources may have sound journalistic values, but they cannot focus on every target.

I believe we need journalists looking into every nook and cranny of what government does. When we lose that, we lose a lot of the strength of American

democracy. Fewer reporters covering local news means less attention paid to school board and city council meetings, less oversight of local government spending and less accountability. That's bad for all of us.

Ukrainians are report-

ing that relatives and friends in Russia don't know there's a brutal war going on. Those friends and relatives think Russian troops have crossed the border to help Ukrainians, not to kill them. That's what they're hearing from state-controlled media.

The decline of local news in the United States is a far cry from what's happening in Russia, but it's cause for concern. A dynamic, free press is essential to a free nation. This can't be emphasized enough.

TRUCKS...Continued from page 3

for about \$400,000. It was obvious that we could meet all our immediate needs in the fire department by also making an offer on the available engine as well," Forsman said.

The budget committee authorized Marshall to submit a bid for both trucks, and he negotiated a price of \$467,485.

"The budget committee fully supports the purchase of both the ladder truck and the engine for that price," Forsman said.

Both trucks are manufactured by E-One.

"It will be good to have trucks from a strong company that is still in business, and parts are available. I'm all for this

double expenditure that I didn't expect," he said.

"The new ladder truck will have more capabilities," Marshall said. "What we have now is a 75-foot ladder, and the new vehicle will have a 95-foot aerial platform. It is much safer than a ladder. It is substantially different from the truck we currently have."

He noted that all Ely Fire Department members fully support the equipment upgrade.

Mayor Roger Skraba expressed his vision of the Ely Fire Department maintaining and operating two aerial trucks. No decisions have been made on what equipment will be kept on the firefighting force.

SCHULTZ...Continued from page 3

economic development and supporting jobs in the region. She said she'd also work to expand affordable housing and address food insecurity, and the impacts of a changing climate. Above all, Schultz said she's interested in making sure Minnesota families are able to afford their lives and build a better future.

During her legisla-

tive career, Schultz has authored and advanced bills increasing access to affordable health coverage, closing corporate tax loopholes, protecting the elderly in long-term care facilities, increasing wages for personal care assistants, reducing the cost of prescription drugs, investing in home- and community-based services,

expanding age-friendly communities, and funding historic health and human services bills with bipartisan support. She currently serves as Chair of the House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee. She is also a commissioner on the Great Lakes Commission where she has advocated for the protection of the Great

Lakes, climate resilience, restoration of habitat, and sensible economic development.

When not in St. Paul, Schultz is a professor at UM-D. She holds a Ph.D. in economics, with a focus on health care policy. She's married and lives in Duluth with her husband and two sons.



the
TIMBERJAY

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Week of April 4

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

Tuesday
Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5:00 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is April 19.

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

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

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

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

Support your local food shelf during the March Campaign

TOWER-SOUDAN- The Minnesota Food Share March Campaign runs through April 10. The donations received locally are used by the Tower Area Food Shelf to purchase food and household items for families in our area. We always like to remind folks that cash donations can buy many more items through our Food Bank than can be purchased by an individual at the grocery store.

Donations can be mailed to the Tower Area Food Shelf, PO Box 533, Tower, MN 55790 or dropped off at the Timberjay office.

The Tower Area Food Shelf is located in the basement/lower level of the Timberjay building on Main Street, and is open the third Tuesday of the month from 2:30 – 5 p.m. or by appointment. For questions, please contact Marge McPeak at 218-753-3503.

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THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone in our community for electing me to serve as Breitung Township Supervisor. Unfortunately, I had to decline the position due to the township attorney discovering a conflict of interest with my full-time employment with the Tower-Breitung Wastewater Board. My apologies to the Town Board, its staff, and to you for the inconvenience this causes. I am very grateful for the support you have always shown me and I look forward to serving you in my other capacities.

Sincerely,
Matt Tuchel

HOCKEY



Left: The 10U team took home silver medals.

Above: Nico Lenci and the 12U team took home the gold. submitted photos

Hockey kids dreaming big at Lake Placid

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

REGIONAL- As hockey venues go, this is the rink of legends, where the 1980 U.S. Men’s Olympic Hockey Team, composed of amateur and college players, defeated the Soviet Union, the favorite. The Russian team had beaten the U.S. team in all 12 games played the 20 years prior, including an exhibition game played just the week before the Olympics. The U.S. team went on to win the gold medal, dubbed the “Miracle on Ice,” cementing the game in the hockey legend book.

And for a handful of local youth hockey players, it was a dream to be able to skate on that same ice in the Herb Brooks Rink at the Lake Placid Olympic Center.

The Northland Hockey Group, which sponsors a summer hockey league for players in the Midwest, has been bringing teams to Lake Placid for the last nine years. This year, several local families with children playing on Northland Hockey Group select teams made the trek to Lake Placid for a weekend full of hockey memories that will last a lifetime.

“It was pretty exciting,” said ten-year-old Kasen Dostert, of Soudan, who played on the 10U

NHG Beast team along with his twin brother Kooper. The boys play winter hockey on the Ely Squirts, where their father Nate Dostert is the assistant coach.

Nate coaches the local summer league NHG team, Iron Range Blast, where the boys have played the last three years.

Dostert was selected as the team coach for the group of 15 selected players who traveled to Lake Placid, which also included Kayson Cook, from Ely, a couple of players from Virginia, and the rest from the Twin Cities, Wisconsin, and South Dakota.

“They will have lifelong memories from this trip,” said Nate.

Families pay all the expenses for the trip and tournament.

“This might be a once-in-a-lifetime trip for us,” said Nate.

Nico Lenci, of Tower, played on the NHG 12U team, and was clearly excited that he had played on the same ice as hockey legends.

“There were lots of people who were really good at hockey who skated there,” he said, “and we got to see Olympic athletes from Germany, Italy, Canada, and Ukraine during a parade of past, present and future Olympians.”

“We won our first game 22-0,” said Lenci. “The parents of the other team were going crazy

and said we were cheating.” Lenci scored three goals in the first game, added another two in later games, and also logged three assists.

Lenci’s team took home gold medals in their division, and he scored the team’s first goal in the championship game. He led all the players in his division in assists and was ranked as the 19th player overall.

Lenci has been playing hockey since he was two and has played summer league hockey the past four years. He currently plays for the Blue Devils Pee-Wees and is a seventh grader at Virginia High School.

Nate’s boys have been crazy about hockey since they were old enough to walk. When asked who their favorite hockey player was, they both quickly piped up it was their dad, who still plays on adult recreational teams. After their dad, the two picked their favorite player from the Minnesota Wild, Joel Eriksson Ek.

Dostert’s team took home a silver medal, losing 6-5 in the championship round, after putting in a terrific effort.

Both families made the trips a family affair. Nico’s mother, Val Turnbull, brought along one of Nico’s younger brothers, Nolan, who is also a hockey player, and met up with Val’s sister in Lake Placid. Nate’s parents, Joan

and Greg Dostert, made the trip.

Val said their family took full advantage of the entire Olympic facility.

“It was surreal to be in a place where so many great talents were developed,” she said. “And it is so beautiful there.”

The family toured the Olympic ski jump facility, taking a gondola up the hill, and then a glass elevator to the top of the jump.

“I sat on the floor and was afraid to stand up,” said Nico, “but now I’m not afraid of heights anymore.”

Val said it hurt her stomach to stand at the top of the jump and look down.

“I can’t imagine having the desire to go down there,” she said.

Both families were able to take in some premier college hockey, with the Division III Championship games going on that weekend, including watching the Augsburg Auggies play in semi-final match.

Tournament families also got to tour the Olympic bobsledding facility, see some Nordic skiing and visit the Olympic Museum. The Dosterts also stopped to visit the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

Anthony Folstad promoted to Master Sergeant

REGIONAL- Sergeant First Class Anthony Folstad, a member of the Minnesota Army National Guard for 22 years, was selected for promotion to Master Sergeant and assignment to the 34th Infantry Division Master Gunner and Senior Operations Noncommissioned Officer. In his new role, he will specialize in weaponry, resource management, plans, and policies for the 34th Infantry Division. Master Sergeant Folstad has distinguished himself in his previous assignment at the MN Joint Force Headquarters, where he served as the state’s lead Equipment Fielding Project Manager. The Minnesota Army National Guard wished MSG Folstad great success in all of his future assignments.

Tony Folstad is a 2001 graduate of Tower-Soudan High School. He is the son of Peanuts and Linda Folstad of Soudan and Dawn and Joe Connor of Silver Bay.

Anthony Folstad is pictured with his wife Tiffani, and children (from left) Harmony, Karli, Cooper, Jazzmyn. Not pictured is son Sage, who was out of town. submitted



COMMUNITY NOTICES

Bishop Odgren to speak at St. Paul’s on April 3

SOUDAN- Bishop Amy J. Odgren will speak at St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church during their Sunday Service on April 3 at 8:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Ecumenical Good Friday Service

TOWER- An ecumenical Good Friday service will be held at St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower on Friday, April 15 at 7 p.m. The Tower-Soudan Area Singers will help present the Tenebrae Service, the story of Christ’s suffering and death, presented with prayer, music, and narration.

TS Historical Society received \$10,000 from Minnesota Historical Society

REGIONAL- The Minnesota Historical Society is pleased to announce the newest recipients of 42 Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Small Grants (\$10,000 and less), totaling \$355,452 in 23 counties.

Recipients in our area included the Tower-Soudan Historical Society which received \$10,000 to improve public accessibility at the 1895 Tower Fire Hall and better comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The project includes the construction of an ADA-accessible restroom. The Virginia Area Historical Society received \$2,815 to produce and in-

stall six exhibit markers at the Virginia Area Historical Society.

Small grants are awarded quarterly to help nonprofits, educational organizations, government units and federally recognized tribes to preserve and share Minnesota history. This cycle of awards was approved on March 10, 2022.

Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants are made possible by the Legacy Amendment’s Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on Nov. 4, 2008. The Legacy Amendment supports efforts to preserve Minnesota land, water and legacy, including Minnesota history and cultural heritage.

OUR COMMUNITY

Ely Spring Musical opens tonight

‘Grand Night for Singing’ runs through April 9

by **KEITH VANDERVORT**
Ely Editor

ELY - Northern Lakes Arts Association and Vermilion Community College’s presentation of the Ely Community Spring Musical, a Rodgers and Hammerstein revue entitled “A Grand Night for Singing,” opens tonight. 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 next weekend, Friday Saturday, and Sunday, April 7-9 at 7 p.m. Advance tickets will be 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. Advance tickets will be available online after March 18. Featuring many popular tunes from many successful musicals, including The Sound of Music, Oklahoma!, Cinderella, South Pacific, and more, 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 Sara Skelton, Marcia Homer is music director, Peter Kess designed the sets, Greg Mann is in charge of lighting, and Laurie Kess costumed 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.



The Lah family from left, James, Ruth and Ian, are in the cast of “A Grand Night for Singing” at Vermilion Community College’s Fine Arts Theater. photo by K. Vandervort

TUESDAY GROUP

New Ely residents tell how they came to the end of the road

by **KEITH VANDERVORT**
Ely Editor

ELY – Several new Elyites recently shared their stories at a Tuesday Group gathering of how they came to live at the end of the road. Two couples, one with two adorable young daughters, and another who recently retired, along with two women shared how and why they look to make Ely their home. DiAnn and Rusty White are both retired educators from Nebraska. She worked in the Lincoln, Neb., school system, and he worked at the University of Nebraska and in Kentucky. They met more than a dozen years ago through their mutual love of cycling, particularly while participating in the “Tour De Nebraska.” “If you have ever been to Nebraska, particularly long Interstate 80, you may think it is flat, but it is not,” she said. “Sometimes you have to push your bicycle up a hill.” After many trips to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in recent years, they decided to buy a cabin on White Iron Lake about 10 years ago and make Ely a permanent residence.

“I love the prairie and when Rusty and I met, I said he will never take me away from the prairie,” she said. I didn’t even know what the Boundary Waters was,” she said. “After our first trip, she was hooked,” Rusty said. After retiring from teaching music, he now enjoys time as a woodworker, painter, cook and cedar strip canoe builder. The couple now make Ely their year-round home



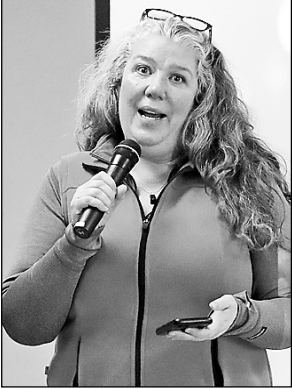
New Ely residents featured at a recent Tuesday Group gathering include, clockwise from above, Grayson Scoggin and Rosa Oesterreich and their children Sal and Loretta, Jerie Meakins, Jamie Gadberry, and DiAnn and Rusty White. photos by K. Vandervort

following their cabin purchase here in 2020. “We had a sauna built. We have a chandelier in our outhouse. We are uppity folks!” Grayson Scoggin and Rosa Oesterreich are new to Ely and have two daughters, Sal, 4, and Loretta, one-and-a-half. They moved here last May. He ran a handyman and construction and remodeling business in the Minneapolis area before they moved to the end of the road. “I will likely get back into that up here,” he added. Rosa is a licensed midwife. “We are excited about our kids living in the woods, she said. “We are happy and grateful to live here.” Jerie Meakins, of



Excelsior, Minn., worked in the corporate world in the Twin Cities. About five years ago she started getting a little antsy. “I sold 90 percent of everything I own and lived in 33 different neighborhoods in the Twin Cities. I fell in love with so many of them but also love living the nomadic life,” she said. She bought a van and turned it into a tiny house on wheels. “I kept coming up here to Ely to visit some high school classmates. That led to getting a job

up here.” She works for Wintergreen Northern Wear and Northern Toboggan Co. here in Ely. She said she has extensive copy-editing experience and enjoys helping businesses develop their products. “I come from a deeply-rooted community area, and I want to extend that to here,” she said. Jamie Gadberry is a Texas transplant. Like so many people who visit the Ely area, she fell in love with the community and moved here last August.



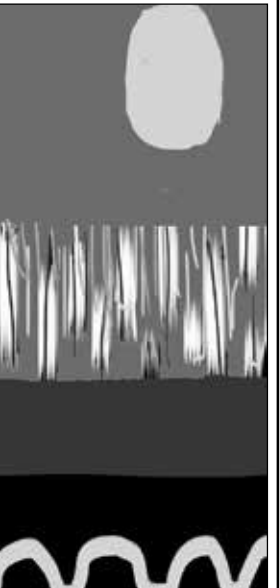
She visited a friend here in the summer. “I came back a couple of times to visit and loved it,” she said. “I put everything in storage and gave it a try. I didn’t realize until I moved here how much I was drawn to the forest and the trees and the water,” Gadberry said. When winter arrived, she said she told herself that she wasn’t ready to leave. “Here I am, about to survive my first winter here. Even on the snowiest of days I find something beautiful about Ely.” Following a couple of decades in the health care corporate world, she is making a career move to life coach and personal stylist. “I enjoy being a part of people’s lives and helping them make changes for the better,” she said.

Folk School classes geared for kids

ELY - The Ely Folk School is gearing up to host a week of youth classes in April. Registration is 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

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2022



grow-light plants appear onions, peppers, and shallots

planting gardens soon

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

Essentia opens pharmacy in Ely

Essentia Health officials, along with local community members, recently celebrated the grand opening of a local pharmacy in the former Shopko facility here. The new pharmacy is located in the Zup’s Market, 1500 E. Sheridan St. Access to the pharmacy, which opened on Monday, March 21, is available through an entrance in the grocery store and a drive-thru. Pharmacy staff offers prescription and medication services, flu shots, specialty pharmacy services and more. The pharmacy is open from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Their phone number is 218-365-7957. To learn more about Essentia Health’s pharmacy services, visit EssentiaHealth.org. photo by K. Vandervort



LOCAL BUSINESS

Art Unlimited to celebrate 40th anniversary

ANGORA- Art Unlimited, a nationally-recognized marketing and web development company tucked away in the quiet woods near Angora, is celebrating 40 years of business this year with a number of in-person and virtual events.

The company has grown from humble origins when Tom and Pat Chapman began Art Unlimited in 1982 with a vision of a dynamic company in a rural setting. They wanted to provide world-class customer service while also raising a family. Over the years Art Unlimited has become creative powerhouse in an ever-changing industry driven by digital technologies yet to be invented when the Chapmans embarked on their creative business venture.

Current owners Anna Anderson and Elizabeth Chapman, daughters of the company’s founders, plan a celebration week in May for company staff members and Art Unlimited’s many clients in roofing, home services, healthcare and non-profits.

CEO Anderson said, “God’s blessing has enabled a small rural company to exceed natural boundaries. This one element has propelled me to continue to press forward, as God has never disappointed us. We look forward to the future with excitement!”

Chapman, Art Unlimited’s chief financial officer, said that many of the plans for staff members and clients are a surprise, but a highlight will be launching the Live to Give Foundation. This charitable

non-profit foundation advances their desire to support doing good both locally and nationally.

Art Unlimited collectively works hard to provide quality jobs in a safe, nurturing work environment for an 80-plus person team. Growing from a solo-entrepreneur business to become a vibrant national player in the marketing and digital worlds couldn’t have happened without the entire team’s dedication to excellence.

“We are proud of our amazing team, who are located in the Northwoods and across the country,” said Chapman.

Pausing to celebrate Art Unlimited’s 40-year anniversary, Anderson and Chapman look to a bright future for the rural agency with a big-city vibe. That future, said Chapman, will



Art Unlimited founders Tom and Pat Chapman, center, pose with daughters and current owners Elizabeth Chapman, left, and Anna Anderson. file photo

advance the company’s tagline. “Art Unlimited brings Life to marketing,” explained Chapman. “We truly believe that the life source of all things comes from our faith in Jesus. As owners, we want to bring that life to marketing, to our team and clients.”

Looking back on the growth of the second-generation company, Anderson said, “We’ll continue to hold fast to the core values that brought us through 40 years. We look forward to the future and using those values to expand, innovate and continue to create lasting relationships.”



DOUBLE EAGLES
A pair of scavenging bald eagles await the passage of traffic on Hwy. 53 north of Cook one day last week so that they may return their roadside venison feast.
photos by D. Colburn

North Woods archers score in Duluth

DULUTH- The North Woods School archery team wrapped up its season this past weekend in Duluth with state tournament competition in both Bulls-Eye and 3D formats.

In the 3D section, Brady Swanson shot for nine tens and a score of 253, good enough to place second for fifth-grade boys and also second among all 71 elementary boy competitors. Buckely LeForte was close behind, placing fourth among fifth-graders and fifth overall. Cooper Long also slipped into the top-ten, nabbing sixth among fifth-graders and ninth overall.

Among 47 girls com-

peting in the elementary division, Michaela Brunner’s score of 235 placed fourth, and she was third among fifth-grade girls.

Merilee Scofield was the only North Woods middle schooler with a top-ten finish, taking third in the seventh-grade girls section and seventh overall out of 89 competitors.

There were 134 competitors in the elementary boys section of the Bulls-Eye competition, and Buckley LeForte’s 278 score with 16 tens beat all but one of them. He took top honors among the 65 fifth-graders competing. Brady Swanson chalked up fifth among fifth-grad-

ers and seventh overall, and Clark Danielson was the fourth-ranked fourth grader.

Michaela Brunner and Kaidence Scofield swept the top two overall spots in the elementary girls division. Brunner placed first overall and for fifth-graders, while Scofield finished second overall and first among fourth-graders.

Merilee Scofield placed sixth out of 83 seventh-grade girls.

In the high school division, Cadence Nelson was up against 84 other tenth-grade girls and finished fifth.

NORTH WOODS SCHOOL

Technology has far-reaching impact on schools

FIELD TWP- In a conversation with a colleague a while back, we were talking about student engagement and how important it is to do everything we can to get kids interested in school and the different subjects. We all had favorite subjects, and we all had our least-favorite subjects. I know I worked harder in subjects that I liked and for teachers that I liked, but I still did the work for the classes I did not like as much. Work ethic was important and my parents expected me to earn good grades. I didn’t want to let them down. I was lucky enough to have some excellent teachers, but also some who were average on their best day.

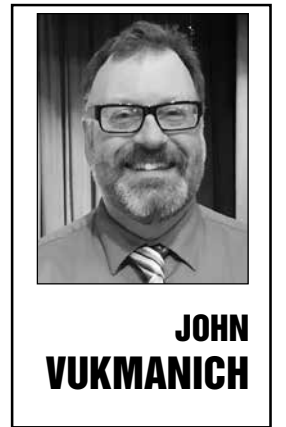
Back to the conversation with the colleague. Teachers 20 years ago and longer did not have to compete like teachers do now, and I am not talking about competing with each other. I am talking about competing for kids’ attention.

We are competing with technology. National figures vary slightly, but a Pew Research Study shows that 95 percent of teens have a smartphone. The rates of teen smartphone use are consistent, close to the same regardless of gender, race, or socioeconomic status. Owning a smartphone has gone from being a status symbol to now being the great equalizer.

It is not uncommon for us to see kids in early elementary school with the latest smartphone, and the age of access that once seemed a rite of passage, much like a driver’s li-

cense, does not seem to exist. Phones are as common at school as a backpack.

Teachers, who really do try to be as interesting as possible, are tasked with the jobs of teaching math, science, history,



JOHN
VUKMANICH

and British Literature in competition with the latest and greatest social media trends. Phones are everywhere.

Then there is school technology. We all know technology is here to stay and that we need to teach our kids to use it responsibly. Adults often do not. I have a friend who works in a field where using your phone while on the job is grounds for instant dismissal, but the company is getting pushback in the adult world.

Our kids in seventh through twelfth grades all have a school-issued iPad or laptop. It is very common, and the majority of schools have gone away from textbooks and now utilize digital platforms. But again, this has pitfalls and is one more piece of technology to manage. Our internet at school is filtered and monitored, but tech-savvy kids seem to

always find a way to work around it. Sometimes we feel like technology is a leaking Hoover Dam and we are trying to stop the leak with a piece of chewing gum.

Parents and students alike have mentioned that we should not allow phones at school. I am pretty sure that if we tried to do that, there would be a public outcry based on the premise of student safety. In reality, it is leading to the opposite.

Kids are now reacting to how they feel at school, and parents, who are now instantly accessible, are reacting to their upset kids’ demands. Kids know how to manipulate their parents, and on many occasions a parent will contact me at school regarding a situation that I actually had no knowledge of, and they have already been in to pick up their child. How can I compete with that? It’s like trying to do damage control after the fact.

Parents and kids alike

have taken school issues and blown them up on social media. Kids gossip, parents gossip, but now all the gossip is in writing, and much of it is simply attention-seeking behavior. Actually, social media sometimes puts the school in a horrible place where data privacy 100 percent prevents us from saying anything and leaves us at the mercy of those who do not trust our system.

Kids also are mean to each other on social media. Even though most of this conflict and bullying is done off-campus, it seems to always trickle into school. Mark Zuckerberg, CEO and founder of Facebook, should be required to establish a foundation to pay for all of the time that school staff have had to put into fixing student conflict issues on social media. Pony up, Mark. I guess TikTok is where it is at now, but I am not sure who is in charge of that.

My own child just fin-

ished Driver’s Ed. Our local driver’s education instructors are also teaching kids a technological skill, and it is a skill that the kids are hungry for. It is a skill they are desperate to have, but it is a skill that is a privilege, not a right. I have heard kids talk about situations where they were kicked out of driving class or denied the privilege of earning the reward.

We cannot do that. We have less leverage. Can we take a student’s phone? Yes. How about every day? Maybe. If we hold their phones, we are also liable for them. How about the parent who doesn’t support us? How about when it happens every day for weeks? Folks, they wear us down, too. I have witnessed children wear down a parent and get the parent to give in to their demands in a matter of minutes, and we have a room full every day.

We get tired of the fight, and never before have I felt more tired after

two years of COVID and all of the crazy it has created. By the way, COVID seems to have led to an even greater dependence on phones and social media.

I think everyone can do better on this. Kids, parents, and us. We are trying. We only want the best for our kids. We want them to function once they graduate. If you are a parent, please support your school 100 percent in enforcing appropriate phone use. If you spent an hour in a classroom, you would know why.

Technology has forever changed our world, and there is no going back. I just hope that going forward means getting a handle on what I see as an addiction for many people.

SAINT LOUIS COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES
BETTER WASTE SOLUTIONS

Ash River Trail Canister Site
11391 Ash River Trail
Winter Hours
Sat: 12:30pm–4:30pm

Orr Canister Site
4038 Hwy 53
Winter Hours
Tue, Thu: 9am–noon
Sat: 8am–noon

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

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

Kabetogama Lake Canister Site
10150 Gamma Rd
Winter Hours
Wed: noon–4pm
Sat: 8am–noon

Portage Canister Site
6992 Crane Lake Rd.
Winter Hours
Tue, Sat: 1pm–4:30pm

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

Sat: 8am–1pm

Area Solid Waste Facility
site hours

Sturgeon Canister Site
8380 Hwy 73
Hours
Sun: 8am–Noon

County 77 Canister Site
2038 County Rd. 77
Winter Hours
Thurs, Sun: noon–5pm

St. Louis County
Environmental Services
Department
1-800-450-9278
Office hours 8-4:30
Monday through Friday
www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle

Facebook icon

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th

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of Trust

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- Pre-Need Planning
- Monuments by Warren Mlaker

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HOME

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Cell-218.240.5395

Cook, MN
24 Hours A Day

"We are looking locally to get that money back as related to granting institutions. I am confident we are going to get some of that back. We are working on a plan. How successful we are depends on the legislature and other things," he said. "We can also bond without it costing the taxpayers through long term facilities maintenance. We still have some dollars available there if we stretch out to 20 years. We have to deliver on what we promised."

LEGISLATURE

Tomassoni ALS research bill signed into law

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ST. PAUL - A bill to provide \$20 million to help find a cure for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis was scheduled to be signed on Wednesday after the Minnesota Senate took final action Monday on the measure authored by Sen. David Tomassoni, I-Chisholm, who was diagnosed with ALS last summer.

First passed unanimously on March 10, senators on Monday took up a slightly modified version of the bill passed 121-9 by the House of Representatives last week. Six Republican and three DFL House members voted against the bill.

“The House made a small change in the caregiver grant portion of the bill,” Sen. Tom Bakk, I-Cook, told the Senate. “I

think it’s a good change. Sen. Tomassoni thinks it makes the bill better. The amendment the House put on made caregiver respite support also eligible for grants under the program.”

The bill’s \$5 million for caregiver supports is in addition to the \$20 million designated for research.

Bakk also read a note from Tomassoni prior to the chamber’s vote.

“Thank you for allow-

ing me to comment on the ALS bill and thank you to Sen. Bakk for reading them and shepherding the bill through the process,” Tomassoni said. “It’s been an emotional several weeks for me and my family, one full of love and overwhelming gratitude. I am so proud of this legislature for coming together in almost unanimous support of an issue that’s bigger than all of us. This bill

has the potential to be the beginning of the eradication of an insidious disease, not for me, but for future generations. That is something we can all be proud of. If we do nothing else this session, and I really want a big bonding bill (‘Is that David or what,’ Bakk interjected), we can all say we’ve accomplished something significant.”

Tomassoni also acknowledged the many

people who testified on behalf of the bill, legislators, family, friends and others who helped to move the bill along.

A signing ceremony including Gov. Tim Walz, Tomassoni and his family, Senate and House bill authors, legislative leaders and ALS research advocates was scheduled for Wednesday at 3 p.m., after the *Timberjay’s* press deadline.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

United Way of NE Minnesota is soliciting names, photos for ‘In Memory’ program

REGIONAL – In three short months, the United for Veterans Committee of the United Way of Northeastern Minnesota (UWNEMN) will be staffing The Wall That Heals, which is a Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall replica.

It will be staffed 24

hours a day in Chisholm.

Until then, committee members and UWNEMN staff are getting the word out about The Wall and everything that will come with it – including the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund In Memory Honor Roll, which will open to the public on June 23.

On the Vietnam Veterans Memorial site in Washington, D.C., a special plaque reads: “In Memory of the men and women who served in the Vietnam War and later died as a result of their service. We honor and remember their sacrifice.” The Wall in Chisholm will include a replica of that

plaque – along with a digital presentation of the photos of Minnesota-area Vietnam veterans who have passed away since returning home from war.

“Bringing The Wall That Heals to Chisholm is such an honor – and such an opportunity,” said UWNEMN Executive

Director Erin Shay. “It’s an opportunity to heal, an opportunity to educate, and an opportunity to pay our respects to our hometown heroes.”

Local service clubs are encouraged to host in-person application days for the In Memory program for those who prefer not to

use computers. Upcoming opportunities to fill out paper applications in person include Saturday, April 12 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Friday, May 11 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at UWNEMN’s building in Chisholm.

For more information, call UWNEMN at 218-254-3329.

CHEESE...Continued from page 1

for her young. The light bulb went on immediately in Josephine’s head, who did some online research and discovered that woodchuck milk was particularly rich in fat, vitamin A, and antioxidants. The woodchucks were surprisingly docile when handled and Josephine decided to extract some of the milk as an experiment. After a couple unsuccessful attempts, she rigged a harness that allowed her to suspend the woodchuck over a small container and her first batch of woodchuck milk, about a cup’s worth, was soon in the kitchen.

Josephine had been learning to make her own cheese and she decided



The original trapped woodchuck that started a local boutique cheese manufacturing operation.

to make what could well be the world’s first batch ever created from woodchuck milk. “The results were astonishing,” said Josephine. “I don’t know what I expected, but I did not expect it to taste extraor-

dinarily sweet, delicate, nutty, and buttery. It was like nothing we had ever eaten. Our first batch was no bigger than a spool of thread. We cherished it and gave small tastes to all our friends.”

A two-inch chunk of cheese is hardly the basis for a business, but using his biologist know-how, Warren applied for permits to raise a small “herd” of woodchucks as part of a breeding program that is now supported by their research grant.

As they’ve expanded their operation, they’ve been able to produce more of the unique cheese.

Laboratory testing of their product shows it has a safe microbial profile and a unique mix of proteins, fats, and sugars, not seen in typical commercial cheeses. It is also lactose-free, helping to tap a growing niche market.

Since producing their first batch of cheese in the

fall of 2020, the Oksems have continued to share some of their product with others, including people in the food industry, ranging from manufacturers, restaurateurs, and specialty shops. “Everyone who has tasted it has raved,” said Josephine. “They’re constantly calling us up to see if we have more. The memory of this cheese just lingers and you can’t wait for your next taste.”

The Minnesota Farm Department’s Marketing and Development Director, Rory Matthews, says that while his agency has been funding agriculture research for decades, this project has an unusual blend of strengths. “I have been fortunate to have a

taste of this, astonishingly good, woodchuck cheese. I am glad that the state can help bring this food to market. Importantly, the potential for economic benefit is great, ranging from employment for woodchuck growers and breeders, creamery workers, fromagers, as well as marketers for this ridiculously tasty cheese.”

The cheese is, without doubt, a boutique product, but its relative scarcity in the market at this point ensures that it fetches a high price, currently around \$28 a pound.

For now, it’s only available through online orders at chucklingcheese.com/aprilfools.

RESIGNATION...Continued from page 1

town board or city council members can hold lower-level positions within city or township depart-

ments, as long as their position does not answer directly to the council or town board.

His job with the wastewater board is unlikely to create a conflict, given that it’s a separate

governmental entity, governed by a joint powers agreement between the city and the township. Tichel

said he had assumed that he would not be able to represent the township on the wastewater board, since the board does control his wages, determine his job duties, and supervise his performance. Township representatives make up two of the four members of the wastewater board.

But he said attorney Pearson had concluded that his position as wastewater supervisor was, in fact, a conflict of interest. According to Tichel, Pearson laid out his rationale in the letter, and though he doesn’t agree with the attorney’s conclusions, he opted to step aside to avoid any questions. The *Timberjay* requested a copy of the attorney’s letter, but the township did not respond to the request as of press time. The *Timberjay* also contacted Pearson’s office in Duluth but he did not respond to a message seeking clarification.

The Minnesota State Auditor addresses the issue of conflicts of interest, which generally states that “a public officer authorized to make a sale, lease, or contract in an official capacity must not have a personal financial interest in that sale, lease, or contract, or personally benefit financially from it.”

As town supervisor, Tichel would have exercised no apparent authority over his wages or duties as wastewater manager. Tichel is employed by the wastewater board, which is specifically designated as a separate government entity according to its joint powers agreement. The wastewater board, which is governed by a four-member board including two rep-

resentatives from the city and two from the township, does its own hiring and oversight of its employees, and pays Tichel’s wages from its own accounts, which are overseen out of Tower City Hall.

Tichel said he would have declined an appointment to the wastewater board, which could have presented at least an appearance of a conflict of interest.

Tichel said he disagrees with the attorney’s decision but recognizes it was made with an abundance of caution. At the same time, he said he didn’t want there to be even the appearance of a potential conflict. “You don’t want to put the township in a questionable situation,” he said. “I didn’t want it to impact the public’s trust. If it’s not straightforward, why do it?”

Tichel said he could have filed for an exemption from the Attorney General’s Office but said he didn’t want the township to expend any resources. And, in the meantime, Tichel said the attorney had recommended that he not vote on any township matters, which could have left the town board in a kind of limbo, potentially for months, as they awaited a determination.

So, rather than take the oath of office, he submitted his letter of withdrawal. “It stinks,” said Tichel, “but in retrospect, I’m glad we found out now, rather than six months from now.”

Tichel’s decision leaves the town board with a vacancy that will need to be filled by appointment. The appointee would serve until the next township election, set for next March.



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◆ NEW Items and OLD Faves!
◆ GOURMET DESSERTS

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Closing
6:00 pm Sunday,
April 3

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NOW!!

Most items available for shipping or local delivery.

Bidding will close for specific items every half hour from 2:30-6:00 on April 3.

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ST. LOUIS COUNTY

County property valuations take big jump in seller’s market

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- North Country homeowners could be in for a type of “sticker shock” when they receive their statements of the estimated market value (EMV) of their properties from the St. Louis County Assessor’s office in the next several weeks.

Public Records and Property Valuation Director Mary Garness said that some buildings will see an increase in their valuation of well over 20 percent, and some parcels of land will skyrocket by as much as 50 percent.

“It’s kind of a wide range, and it really depends on the property, its location, if there’s lake frontage or not – there’s a broad spectrum,” Garness said. “Some property owners will see a zero-percent increase, and others will see something quite significant. That’s mainly due to the sales prices that we’re seeing in the market.”

Garness has been in her position for three years, but the “sellers’ market” demonstrated by sales activity that took place in the county between Oct.

1, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2021 drove valuation increases that surprised even her most seasoned assessors.

“What I’m hearing from the assessor’s office and folks that have been employed here for quite a while is that they haven’t seen this type of activity in 20 years, so it is quite remarkable,” Garness said. “I’m hearing surprise and shock and awe that some properties are selling for \$40,000 to \$50,000 over list price and there are some bidding wars going on, which is interesting.”

While an increase in valuation might be seen as a boon to a property owner who is considering selling, to the vast majority of homeowners who intend to stay put, another question looms large: How much is my property tax bill going to increase?

That’s a question without a specific answer for now, Garness said. The estimated market values being distributed now will apply to the 2023 tax year, and taxing entities won’t finalize their new levies until December. With the number and variation of taxing entities involved and 2023 budget formulations

still months and months away, one homeowner may see a tax increase while another owner with a similarly valued property may see little to no increase.

However, what is likely in the big picture, Garness said, is that residential property owners will assume a greater share of the overall tax burden.

“It’s the value that distributes the tax bill among different property categories such as commercial, agricultural, residential, industrial, etc.,” she said. “Last year for the 2021 assessment for taxes payable in 2022, (increased) residential property values made up 75 percent of the total value increase for the county, which was about a billion dollars, so the burden shifted more to residential. We don’t have all the final numbers put together yet, but that’s a likely scenario for the 2022 assessment as well. My best guess is that this will equate to some increase in taxes, but it’s too soon to tell how much.”

The EMV notice provides details on a property’s estimated market value - the price a property would sell for on the open market - as

well as its classification and a list of possible deductions that end up with the property’s Taxable Market Value, or TMV. The most common exclusion is the Homestead Market Value Exclusion, which declines as the property value increases.

Another important piece of information on the EMV comes into play for those property owners who want to contest the county assessor’s findings. As only 20 percent of properties in a given assessment district are physically inspected each year, there may, for example, have been changes to the property that weren’t taken into account. The first line of inquiry is to place a call to the assessor designated on the EMV to talk informally about your concerns, or attend a local meeting if one is available.

“Often times, if there are errors or issues, the assessor can answer questions or make corrections without the necessity of going to a local board of appeal,” Garness said.

Formal appeals begin with the local board of appeal and equalization. For smaller towns, there may not be an actual board meeting at all, but the

EMV has the information someone needs to file an appeal for consideration. If a property owner isn’t satisfied at the local level, they can take their case to the county board of equalization or to the Minnesota Tax Court. These steps are described on the back of the EMV form.

Garness encouraged those pursuing formal appeals to be well prepared. A little research can go a long way toward supporting your claims. “An appraisal is always the best evidence, but there’s a cost to that,” Garness said.

The county has freely accessible online resources available through links on the county assessor’s property information webpage, Garness noted, such as the map-driven County Land Explorer and the address entry form of the property details search. One layer of the County Land Explorer displays recent property sales, which may help property owners more quickly identify properties comparable to their own.

“If you do some research about the market, then that typically will provide the information that’s needed for a good

appeal,” Garness said.

Garness also promoted two options offered through the Minnesota Department of Revenue that could provide tax relief for certain taxpayers who qualify.

“The regular homestead credit refund is for homesteaders whose property taxes exceed a specified percentage of household income. That’s the first. The other is a special homestead credit refund program for homesteaders whose net property tax increase exceeds 12 percent, and is \$100 or more, and that is a refund that would be on their Minnesota tax return,” Garness said.

The St. Louis County Assessor’s Office has created a webpage with answers to frequently asked questions and links to additional resources. It can be found at stlouiscountymn.gov/assessor. Any property owners with questions specific to their valuation and classification notice should contact their assessor first, using the information provided at the bottom right of the front page of the EMV notice or on the contacts webpage at stlouiscountymn.gov/assessor.

CLERK...Continued from page 1

A motion to accept the clerk’s resignation passed 3-2, with Ralston and Skubic voting no.

“It is not in writing,” said Ralston.

The town board will need to address the clerk opening at their next regular meeting in April.

Greenwood voters rejected the option of moving to a paid clerk and treasurer position (versus elected) in two previous votes, in 2020 and 2021. This option would have given the town board the authority to hire for these two positions, instead of having to elect a clerk and treasurer.

Drobac elected chair

Supervisor Sue Drobac was nominated for the chairman’s position and was elected by a 3-2 vote, with Drobac, Barb Lofquist, and Stoehr voting in favor, and previous Chairman Mike Ralston and Paul Skubic voting against. Lofquist was nominated as vice-chair, and that vote was 5-0 in favor.

Drobac had served four-and-a-half years as Greenwood’s elected clerk, but resigned from her seat on Aug. 31, 2020, due to actions taken by the town board to reduce the position’s pay, install surveillance cameras in the clerk’s office, and restrict the township’s public data policy. She ran for supervisor in the next election and ousted incumbent Byron Beihoffer, 184-144. Lofquist was also elected at that time, running against incumbent Larry Tahija and winning with a narrower 167-160 margin.

Lofquist and Drobac formed a clear alliance on the board, but the two were often outvoted by the block of Ralston, Skubic, and Carmen DeLuca. The election of Stoehr, who easily out-polled incumbent DeLuca in the March 8 township election, changed the balance of power on the board.

This new board majority also made changes to improve the transparency of township and department meetings. The board passed, again on a 3-2 vote, a motion that all township meetings, including departmental meetings

like the fire department, must be held at the town hall, will be open to the public unless considered closed under state law (for example, to discuss specific personnel or legal issues), and that audio and video recording of meetings is permitted. The previous board, with one supervisor objecting, had allowed the fire department to meet in private, had no issues when a fire department business meeting was moved to the chief’s private residence, and had passed a motion to not allow any audio or video recordings of these meetings.

The board also unanimously approved the payment for any MAT-sponsored trainings for township officials and deputies, without the prior approval of the town board.

Other business

The board did other routine business during the reorganization, including:

- Selected the *Timberjay* as official newspaper on a 3-2 vote, with Ralston and Skubic voting against. The *Timberjay*’s bid was higher at \$1.49/\$3.25 versus The *Tower News* at \$.65/\$2.50, but Lofquist said the *Timberjay* had an online edition and a larger circulation. The *Timberjay* publishes all its legal notices online, and they are archived by week and available to view at no charge.

- Set the meeting dates for the upcoming year, with regular board meetings on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. except for August and November when, due to elections, meetings will be held the next day (Aug. 10 and Nov. 9).
- Noted the continued annual meeting will be held on Thursday, June 23 at 6 p.m. to set the 2023 levy.
- Voted to continue with the firm of Couri and Ruppe as township attorneys but will look into finding a different law firm.
- Heard that St. Louis County will not plow Birch Point Extension in the future unless the township signs a hold harmless agreement.
- Updated signing authority for township checks.
- Appointed Rick Stoehr as Tower Area

Ambulance Commission representative and Lofquist as the alternate.

- Appointed Stoehr as grounds and maintenance supervisor and also responsible for 911 signs. A vote to reduce the spending authority of the maintenance supervisor from \$1,000 to \$500 failed on a 2-3 vote, with Drobac and Lofquist voting in favor.
- Appointed Drobac as noxious weed inspector.
- Ralston thanked Carmen DeLuca for his years of service to the township and welcomed new Supervisor Rick Stoehr.



Newly-elected Greenwood Chairman Sue Drobac, is shown at right with vice-chair Barb Lofquist. photo by J. Summit



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PAGAMI CREEK RETROSPECTIVE

Ten years after The Big One

Prescribed burning lessons learned from the Pagami Creek Fire

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY—As another spring wildfire season looms in the next few weeks, the Ely area is looking back at the tenth anniversary of the Pagami Creek Fire and the lessons learned from that devastating event, as forest management evolves through the use of prescribed burn techniques.

A series of free events, sponsored by Dovetail Partners and Minnesota Firewise organizations, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, is continuing here this month to inform and educate those who make their home and livelihood here about how to live with wildfire in the North Country.

Fire professionals gathered with the public last week to present an overview of the Pagami Creek Fire to give a firsthand account of working the fire line, and they discussed managing the fire (closures, evacuations, public safety), as well as how the USFS currently applies lessons learned (See story below).

Last Saturday, fire professionals discussed what prescribed fire is and how the

Above: The massive plume of smoke from the Sept. 12, 2011, Pagami firestorm filled skies with smoke as far away as Chicago.
file photo

Right: Attendees inspect Forest Service maps with planned prescribed fires for 2022 highlighted.
photo by K. Vandervort

USFS plans for it, taking into account weather and smoke management, communication strategies, and tools and techniques used in prescribed fire operations.

The USFS is planning to conduct thousands of acres of prescribed burns in 2022 all around the Ely area. Nick Petrack, USFS Superior National Forest West Zone Fire Management Officer, explained that the planning phase to identify possible locations for planned burns this spring is wrapping up.

While this week’s continuing snowfall may not look much like spring, wildfire season could start in earnest within weeks.

“The biggest thing with prescribed fire is flexibility

See BIG ONE...pg. 2B



Pagami Creek Fire: An overview

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY— When lightning ignited the Pagami Creek wild-fire fire in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness on Aug. 18, 2011, Superior National Forest personnel made the decision to keep it within a reasonable maximum management area while allowing natural processes to do their thing, rather than try to suppress it.

The fire smoldered in a bog for several days. After 12 days of the fire burning east of here off the end of the Fernberg Trail, it had grown to about 130 acres, and fire management officials thought things were going well.

But on Sept. 12, strong, gusting winds spread the fire 16 miles to the east, and 93,000 acres later, the fifth-largest fire in Minnesota history, and the largest in nearly a century, was



Carl Skustad, of the U.S. Forest Service, recently talked about the Pagami Creek Fire, which burned nearly 100,000 acres in the Superior National Forest in 2011.

running rampant. The fire was finally extinguished some 70 days later at a cost of nearly \$6 million

Two Ely-area fire professionals spoke to a packed Tuesday Group gathering last week to give an overview of the events of the Pagami Creek

Fire. The discussion was part of a series of events marking the tenth anniversary of the fire emergency near Ely. Another Tuesday Group session on the beneficial effects of fire, including post-Pagami Creek Fire insights, is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12.

Tom Roach was a fire fighter working on the Lake One portage during the fire, and was actively engaged on the fire line. He is currently the Superior National Forest Assistant Fire Management Officer based out of Cook.

Carl Skustad, Superior National Forest Kawishiwi District Recreation and Wilderness Lead, was an acting District Ranger and Lead Resource Advisor during the Pagami Creek Fire.

Ely was at least eight to ten miles from the Pagami Creek Fire and few people even smelled smoke. However, for areas to the south, like Duluth and on to Milwaukee, Wis., and even Chicago, the scene was quite different.

“The fire started in a lowland, black spruce piece of ground near Pagami Creek off

See PAGAMI...pg. 2B

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Babbbitt officer brings down fugitive with taser

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

KUGLER TWP- A Wisconsin fugitive who threatened a St. Louis County Sheriff’s deputy during a traffic stop on Wahlsten Rd. just after midnight on Thursday was apprehended after a short chase when a Babbitt Police officer used a taser to help subdue him.

According to a sheriff’s office press release, Eric Anthony Newman, 47, was stopped by the deputy for suspicious behavior in the 5200 block of Wahlsten Rd., east of the intersection with Hwy. 135, at 12:07 a.m. on Friday. As the deputy opened the door of his squad car and began issuing verbal commands, Newman put his truck into reverse and rammed the squad car with the deputy still inside, then fled eastbound.



Eric Newman

The deputy immediately pursued the truck, but two attempts to force Newman to stop were unsuccessful.

A Babbitt Police officer responded to the area and deployed stop sticks on Hwy. 21, about three miles from the traffic stop location. Newman drove over the sticks, causing damage to both front tires, but continued driving. The deputy was able to use his squad car to force Newman to stop about a half-mile beyond the stop sticks.

Newman exited the truck brandishing a screwdriver as a weapon. With his gun drawn, the deputy issued multiple commands for Newman to stop and drop the weapon, but he continued to approach the deputy. At that point the Babbitt officer successfully deployed his taser and Newman fell into the ditch. Newman continued to resist as the officers tried to place him in handcuffs, grabbing at the deputy’s gun belt and groin. Additional law enforcement officers arrived on scene and Newman was successfully secured.

The deputy was treated for a hand injury and the Babbitt Police offer had a facial injury caused by a head butt from the suspect. Newman was examined by Essentia Health staff in Virginia, before being released into custody.

It was later determined that Newman had an active Wisconsin Department of Corrections warrant for his arrest, the release said. The *Timberjay* examined WDOC online records and discovered that Newman was convicted in 2019 of aggravated battery of a physically-disabled person and forgery, both felonies, along with misdemeanor counts of disorderly conduct and resisting or obstructing an officer. He also received a felony conviction for fleeing an officer in 2007. He was released on active community supervision in May 2021, but Wisconsin Department of Corrections records currently list his status as “absconded” and his whereabouts unknown.

It was also determined that the suspect was utilizing a law enforcement scanner on his iPhone during the incident.

Newman was booked into St. Louis County Jail at 4 p.m. Friday and is being held without bail on 13 felony and misdemeanor charges, including second-degree assault, fourth degree assault, first degree

See FUGITIVE...pg. 2B

PAGAMI...Continued from page 1B

Lake One,” Roach said. “It was pretty inaccessible at that point, and we watched it burn from the air for the first week or ten days. The wind picked up and it took off like fires typically do up here, and burned into a big cigar-shaped fire spreading into no man’s land.”

By Aug. 27, it had grown to about 300 acres. “The fuels were dry and everything was available for consumption at this point. We weren’t in what would be considered a drought, but in mid-August things were pretty dry,” he said.

Some torching of trees was beginning, and air attack crews were immediately called in.

Skustad was on the helicopter attack crew based at Ely and served as a resource advisor. “We wore many hats and I was also a helicopter manager and was managing helicopter crew safety,” he said.

Roach added, “The reason we have helicopter landing spots in there is we have to have a way to extract our personnel in an emergency. It is also an efficient way to get gear in and out of the area. There were very few safety zones, few water sources and a lack of natural boundaries around the fire at this point.”

For Labor Day weekend, many canoe

campers had plans to go into Lake One, Lake Two and beyond.

“We were trying to manage that situation without having to close down a huge chunk of wilderness,” Roach said.

Resources were called in from around the country, as far away as Missouri and Montana, to help monitor and respond to the fire, according to Roach.

“Our primary objective at this point was to keep the fire from getting out of the wilderness and burn north toward the Fernberg (Trail) corridor and the resorts up north. We were looking to nurse this thing around the bottom of Lake Two and to burn in the wilderness. The perimeter did hold, except for the perimeter that didn’t hold.”

On Sept. 12, shifting winds caused the fire to begin a sequence of crown fire runs. Four public safety crews were in the Insula Lake area moving canoe campers out of an area fire managers thought might be threatened. A rapid run east by the fire overtook six wilderness rangers, who followed protocol and deployed fire shelters. None of them were injured.

“There were campers out there,” Skustad said. “We were out in front of this with our public safety crews and moving people out of the way. We closed



A scene from Isabella Lake in the aftermath of the Pagami Creek Fire.
file photo by M. Helmberger

a few lakes at a time, and usually that is enough. We learned from this fire that many times that is not enough.”

He referenced the Greenwood Lake Fire of last year.

“When you saw last summer that we chose to close larger areas of the wilderness, that is a direct result of what we learned on the Pagami. We learned that it takes a long time to get people out of the wilderness. Last summer, some five days after closing a portion, I still found people in there who had no clue the area was closed.”

Another wind shift caused the fire to expand

further east. This was followed by another wind shift to the northwest, causing the fire to spread more than ten miles southeast and outside of the southern wilderness boundary, threatening an area northeast of the town of Isabella.

By Sept. 13, the fire was approximately 93,000 acres in size. After fire crews prevented any further significant expansion of the fire, and despite difficult access and terrain, containment lines were constructed around most of the fire.

Campfire restrictions were lifted across the area by Oct. 14. By mid-November the area within the

fire perimeter remained 93,000 acres and more than 90 percent of the fire was surrounded with a continuous fire break.

A significant change in weather contributed to the fire burning out. “Rain and an accumulating amount of hail on the evening of Sept. 12 was what did it,” Roach said.

The humidity went up and the rain came down. The Pagami Creek Fire was a national-priority fire, he added. “By this time we had many aircraft from across the country that had been prioritized.”

More on Pagami

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

➤ **Beneficial Effects of Fire Post Pagami Creek Fire**– Tuesday, April 12, noon-1 p.m. at Grand Ely Lodge. 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

➤ **Pagami Creek Fire Ten Years On: What we’ve learned**– April 20-21, at Ely’s Historic State Theater. A two-day symposium on lessons learned from the Pagami Creek Fire that includes visits to the 2021 Greenwood Lake fire site. For more information and registration, see SFEC’s Upcoming Event page at <https://sfec.cfans.umn.edu/upcoming-events>.

➤ **Film: Oshkigin Spirit of Fire and Panel Discussion** - Thursday, April 21, 6-8 p.m. at Ely’s Historic State Theater. Includes 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 the whole community of life. Panelists will be from tribal nations within the 1842 and 1854 Treaty areas.

BIG ONE...Continued from page 1B

and adaptability” Petrak said. “We need to make sure we have a wide variety of prescribed fires, including what we call burning and slash. We might be burning for grass (reduction), burning for habitat, reforestation, or hazardous fuels.”

“We take into account the varied weather up here,” he continued. “On any given day it might be raining in Virginia. It might be sunny here in Ely. And it’s always cold in Embarrass.”

The USFS West Zone Fire District encompasses an area from Chisholm to Lake Superior and from the Boundary Waters south to

the Duluth area, he said. “Within this area there are about two dozen county fire departments, three different Department of Natural Resources offices, as well as Voyageurs National Park,” Petrak said.

“We are working on our 2022 plan and are doing our best to include what we plan on doing. We want to be very transparent to the public,” he said. “Some burns are in the final stages, some are in the middle stages and some are in the beginning stages.”

Prescribed burns in the North Country are planned to begin as soon as the snow leaves and continue until the first autumn snowfall.

“We did a lot of burning last season up in the Ely area, and there were many high-priority areas here. We worked as a zone so there were many partners here, including the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the DNR,” he said. “We pooled our resources to get more bang for the buck.”

Petrak said burning will be conducted this year in the Kangas Unit near Little Lake Rd. and Birch Lake areas. In addition, areas north of Orr and in the Echo Trail area, referred to as the Oak/Blueberry Prescribed Burn Units will also be targeted this year.

“We want to do a lot of burning in the Echo Trail

area,” he said.

North of Virginia, a 700-acre timber harvest area that has been active for about six years is near completion, according to Petrak.

“We want to go in there and do a lot of fuels reduction treatment in this very populated part of the forest,” he said. Moving clockwise around Ely, an area near Aurora and another near Bear Island Lake are also in the 2022 prescribed burn plan, along with small areas near Perch and Whisper lakes southeast of Ely.

“We probably have 8,000 acres of area planned to burn,” Petrak said.

Since last October, some 1,500 acres of wood in burn piles have been cleared, he added.

“We are looking at starting to implement prescribed burns from the end of April through the first week of June. That is typical of prescribed burn season. More information will come out as we get closer to these dates.”

Why burn on purpose?

Petrak described the reasoning behind the prescribed burning process.

“Fire is a natural part of the ecosystem” he said. “It is not a matter of if we burn, it is a matter of when we burn. The habitat of the north woods, including the ecosystem that includes wildlife and humans, is another reason why we burn.”

He continued, “Protection of the public and safeguarding those who live here is a big reason why we have prescribed fires. A lot of the fuel-reduction burns are developed strategically to protect the public. As we enter 2022, more and more, everybody wants to live in the woods. We do what we can to develop projects to safeguard the public.”

He said that preferred methods are developed for each of the areas that are to be protected. “We have a variety of methods,

including mechanical thinning. We might come and burn to prepare an area for new growth. We look at protecting the public and habitat, or reforestation of a harvested area, all sorts of things,” he said.

An ongoing concern in the forest is balsam removal.

“This is very prevalent in our landscape up here,” Petrak said. “It is very flammable and we are constantly trying to reduce balsam in strategic locations. As firefighters we don’t want to see balsam trees growing right up to someone’s property. It is very challenging to suppress balsam fires.”

He noted that often-times, multiple prescribed burns may be needed to mitigate certain areas and landscapes.

“As the public, you might ask why the same area is burned again three years later,” he said. “I tell our firefighters that they are ignition crews and not magician crews. It may take a few intervals to get that site prepared to meet our long-term objectives. We might have a low intensity burn in a certain area one year and come back with a high intensity burn the next year, or vice versa. There is a science behind it. There is a prescription developed for the area.”



It’s time to build up our financial resources at the Ely Area Food Shelf

Each March food shelves across Minnesota take part in a statewide effort to raise money and food donations so that our hungry friends and neighbors have food. This grassroots effort is called the March Campaign and this its 41st year.

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- **Give time.** Volunteering at the Ely Area Food Shelf is fun and rewarding. We have a pool of 70 volunteers and most have been volunteering over 10 years.
- **Ask.** As we move forward into a time of potential food shortages please ask your friends and neighbors if they need food and offer to come with them to the food shelf. I think we can all agree that no one in our community should be hungry.

Ely Area Food Shelf March Campaign 2022 runs through April 10.
We thank you in advance.

FUGITIVE...Continued from page 1B

damage to property, fifth degree drug possession, fleeing in a motor vehicle, obstructing with force “attempting to disarm a police officer,” use of police radio during a commission of a crime, fourth degree DUI, possession of metal knuckles, reckless driving and driving after revocation.

“Although deadly force options were justified numerous times during the incident with this suspect, the two law enforcement officers chose less lethal tactics and options which resulted in a successful end to the incident,” said St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office supervising deputy Jon Skelton.

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COUNTY SCHOOLS

School board hears from parents about Indian Education deficiencies

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

VIRGINIA- ISD 2142 has some work to do to bring its Indian Education program up to snuff, according to an American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) report presented at the district’s March 22 school board meeting.

Committee chair Muriel Deegan was present via Zoom and member Hannah Chosa attended in person to describe the areas of concern, engage in discussion with board members and Superintendent Reggie Engebritson, and answer any questions.

The formal cover letter of the report notes that AIPAC issued a “vote of nonconcurrence” that indicates their findings that the district is out of compliance with multiple state standards for meeting the needs of American Indian students. The report outlines five areas of concern and recommendations for addressing them. Deegan opened the presentation.

“One of the things that is really important to us is for the

district to be in compliance with teaching American Indian standards within our classrooms,” she said. “The standards should have already been implemented in the classrooms through curriculum. Indian Education should not be purchasing curriculum, trainings, and materials, and Native American experts and culture need to be made available to teachers.”

Deegan said the committee recommended that Native experts and topics on culture should be included in teacher in-service training days.

Chosa took on the next area of concern regarding an unfilled cultural liaison position that lacks a completed job description.

“As far as we know, (the job description) should have been completed already,” she said. “We don’t know what the holdup is. We would like to see that job description completed. If the position isn’t filled, we would like you to consider bringing back the Indian Education Director position to guide the schools and teachers. It’s supposed to be someone who is in collaboration between the

school system and the tribes.”

Engebritson noted that the district had someone with the Bois Forte Band that they were partnering with, but that person left.

“So now we’re working on it – it’s a work in progress,” she said.

Deegan said the committee wants more transparency and accountability for funds and grants specifically earmarked for Indian Education and asked that the information be posted to the district’s website and regularly updated.

Board member Bob Larson asked if there were specific grants AIPAC wanted to know about. “I think that’s the point,” Deegan responded. “We’re not sure what grants were submitted or what was resubmitted. We would like to see a little bit more to keep track of our own money within our own budgets.”

Other concerns raised in the AIPAC report included a perceived need for more full-time academic support for Native students, and that Indian Education staff need to be properly trained before they’re hired and receive ongoing support to en-

sure that all Native students are receiving adequate and appropriate services in each building.

Engebritsen said that the district has been focused on improving communication this year, with staff holding regular meetings with Bois Forte Director of Career Development Travis Vake and Fond du Lac School Superintendent Jennifer Murray, but the information in the AIPAC report came as a bit of a surprise to her and the board. “We can’t fix what we don’t know,” Engebritson said. “This is supposed to be a collaboration, a partnership, and we don’t have all the resources. So, we reach out to try to get people to help us and we’ll continue to do that.”

Engebritson also expressed a minor concern about providing more student support, given the multiple layers of support and directed intervention plans the district already has in place. Native students in many cases may already be getting the support they need, just not from a designated Indian Education-funded staff member, and she said a more thorough assessment of the need would be a good first step.

The board voted to formally accept the report and has 60 days to develop a written response to the findings.

Teacher contract

After the board meeting, the *Timberjay* asked Engebritson for an update about negotiations for a new teacher contract. The initial tentative agreement between the district and EdMn Local 1046 negotiators last October was voted down, and the sides have been unable to reach a compromise acceptable to local members. After having used a state labor negotiator, both parties agreed to resume face-to-face negotiations, Engebritson said.

“We’re trying to find that balance between being fiscally responsible and supporting the people that we have,” Engebritson said. “We value them and we need them here to teach our kids. I feel like we’re making progress and hopefully we’re getting close. I think everyone would like a contract that we can agree on so that we can put this behind us and move on.”

Obituaries and Death Notices



John J. Mooty Jr.

John “Jack” Joseph Mooty Jr., 80, passed away on Sunday, March 20, 2022, at Garden Court Chateau Assisted Living in Grand Rapids. A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Memorials for Jack are preferred to the DNR Nongame Wildlife Fund, 500 Lafayette Rd., PO Box 25, St. Paul, MN 55155. Arrangements are with Rowe Funeral Home and Cremation Services of Grand Rapids.

Jack was born in 1941 in Carbondale, Penn., to John Sr. and Mary Mooty. He earned his master’s degree in biology at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo. He moved to Grand Rapids in 1967 and joined the Itasca County DNR’s Wildlife Management Program as a biologist, tracking the deer population in Itasca County by tramping through the woods and “counting the deer poop” as he laughingly described his work. Later, he joined the DNR Nongame Wild-

life Program where he researched the population of goshawks and loons, along with other studies. Jack also served with the United States National Guard in his younger years, as well as with the Peace Corps from 1988-1989 in Costa Rica.

Jack was a big game hunter, traveling to many countries including Africa, New Zealand and Mexico. At home, he hunted pheasants, grouse and deer. He cherished his many hunting dogs that served him well and faithfully for many years.

Jack and Pat Helmberger of Duluth met in 2005 and held a commitment ceremony in 2006 at the Unitarian Chapel in Grand Rapids. Both retired, they spent the spring planting and tending pollinator gardens at their home in Grand Rapids, canoeing and hiking through the summer. Winters were often spent in Big Bend National Park in Texas, exploring the desert and mountains of the area.

Jack loved the natural world and found spiritual renewal in it, but he worried about the planet’s health. One of his often-repeated thoughts was, “Everything wants to live, even the smallest seed in a sidewalk’s crack.”

Jack is survived by his loving daughter, Lisa Marie Mooty of Cohasset; devoted partner, Pat

Helmberger of Tower and her family; and many dear friends.

Evelyn A. Anderson

Evelyn Arlene Hamar Anderson, 84, of Eagles Nest Lake Township, died on Friday, March 25, 2022. A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 2 at Dougherty Funeral Home in Hibbing. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service at the funeral home. Private family interment will be at a later date. Arrangements are with Dougherty Funeral Home and Cremation Services in Hibbing.

She is survived by her loving husband, Larry Anderson; daughter, Rene (Wally) Gelecinskyj; grandchildren, Onia and Anders Gelecinskyj; sister, Carolyn (Sidney) Peterson; nephews, Kerry (Becky) Hecimovich, Terry (Lisa) Hamar and Greg Peterson; and other family members and friends.

Ryan N. Severson

Ryan Nicholas Severson, 50, of Waconia and Lake Vermilion, passed away unexpectedly at his lake home on Thursday, March 17, 2022. A celebration of life will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 2 at Faith Lutheran Church in Waconia. A celebration at Lake Vermilion will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, please consider planting a tree in Ryan’s honor at a place of your choosing.

He is survived by his wife, Susan Newberg Severson; daughter, Mia; parents, Doug (Diana) Severson and Sonja (Judd) Berthiaume; sisters, Rachel Alleva, Ashley (Pe-

ter) Olsen, Sarah Severson and Berthiaume; brothers, Judd (Shelly), Dan (Becki) and Dave (Anne); numerous nieces and nephews; in-laws, the Newbergs - Vydetta, Steven (Sandy), Charles and Lynn; nephews, Tyler Newberg and Eric Newberg; niece, Casey (Jake) Ferkul; best friend, Pete Buck and his family; multiple friends and colleagues; and family pet, Murphy.

Bruce A. Maki

Bruce Adolph “Bruno” Maki, 80, of Pike Township, passed away peacefully and gently on Thursday, March 24, 2022, at Essentia Health-Virginia surrounded by his family. A funeral service was held on Wednesday, March 30 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church with Pastor Donald Stauty officiating. Interment will be in Rauha Cemetery in Palo (White Township) at 11 a.m. on Monday, April 4. All friends and family are welcome.

Arrangements were entrusted to Cron-Sheehy Funeral Home in Eveleth.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara Wilburn Maki; daughters, Ann Sabart of Pike-Sandy and Amy Martinich of Eveleth; grandchildren, Michael Schug, Amanda Schug, Nicholas Siveny and Katie Maki; great-grandchildren, Hailey Adams and

Leo Siveny; sisters, Barbara (Bob) Curtiss, Darlene Saumer and Cathy (Chuck) Lamke; sister-in-law, Sue Blackwell; nieces, Christina Wilburn Blackard and Angela (Jason) Wilburn Jackson; nephews, Rob (Monica) Curtiss, Bruce (Rosie) Curtiss, Mark (Shelley) Curtiss, Jonathan Spengler and Jayson Saumer; and other extended family.

Steven R. Maki

Steven Robert Maki, 65, of Pike Township, passed away after a short but difficult battle with cancer on Wednesday, March 23, 2022, in the steady and loving presence of family. A time for gathering, grieving, sharing, and laughing took place at the Pike Town Hall on Thursday, March 31 with coffee an’ provided by the Pike-Sandy Women’s Club.

He is survived by his brother, Frank (Doreen) Maki; nieces, Cassandra (Shaun) Hainey and Kristine (Nick) Miller; nephew, Micky (Euan) Wroblewski; and dearly loved great-nieces and nephews, Deegan and

Rylee Miller and Corbet, Khepra, Sefira and Cephas Hainey; along with countless cousins, aunts, uncles, and other relatives.

William Palo

William “Bill” Palo, 83, of Ely, passed away on Sunday, March 27, 2022, at Essentia Health - St. Mary’s Medical Center in Duluth. Family arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

Frank J. Shusta

Frank J. Shusta, 92, a proud U.S. Navy veteran, passed away on Saturday, March 26, 2022, at the Boundary Waters Care Center in Ely. Family arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

Steve Peterson

Steve Peterson, 69, of Virginia and Lake Vermilion, died on Saturday, March 26, 2022, at his home with family by his side. Family arrangements are with Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

SAINT LOUIS COUNTY

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

BETTER WASTE SOLUTIONS

Area Solid Waste Facility

site hours

Northwoods Transfer Station

9384 Hwy 21 N., Ely/Babbitt

Winter Hours

Mon, Thu, Fri, Sat: 8am–3pm

Tue: 9:30am–3pm

Wed: 11am–5pm

County 77 Canister Site

2038 County Rd. 77, Greenwood Twp

Winter Hours

Thurs, Sun: noon–5pm

Embarrass Canister Site

7530 Koski Rd., Embarrass

Hours

Sat: 12:30–4:30pm

Thu: 10am–5pm

Household Hazardous Waste Facility

5345 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia

Hours

Tues and Sat: 8am–1pm

Cook Transfer Station

2134 S. Beatty Rd., Cook

Hours

Mon: 10am–6pm

Tues thru Sat: 9am–3:30pm

Soudan Canister Site

5160 Hwy 169, Soudan

Hours

Mon, Wed, Sat; Sun

8am–5pm

Aurora Transfer Station

5910 Hwy 135 N., Aurora

Hours

Mon, Thurs, Fri: 8am–4pm

Tue, Wed: 10am–4pm

Sat: 8am–noon

Regional Landfill

5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia

Hours

Mon–Fri: 8am–4:30pm

Sat: 8am–3:30pm

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th

St. Louis County Environmental Services Department

1-800-450-9278

Office hours 8-4:30 Monday through Friday

www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle

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:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSekca-81YPblNy-uSuV4-CsS3Vh1NhGQuMRR_AeNQbfD0_5RQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Coaches and umpires are also needed for the season. If you are interested, please email us at cookyouthbaseball@gmail.com.

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THURS-FRI: NOON-7 PM

Burgers, Chili,

Fish & Fries-\$8 (through Lent)

Meatless Soup: Tomato Basil

Take-Out 666-0500

206 1st St SW, Cook, MN

‘TIS THE SEASON

Watch for forest road closures during the thaw

REGIONAL — The Department of Natural Resources will begin temporarily closing some state forest roads and trails as seasonal melting makes them too soft to support vehicle traffic without causing damage. Depending on weather and local

site conditions, the temporary closures were expected to begin in mid-March. Closures could remain in effect until May.

“The annual spring thaw creates wet, unstable road and trail conditions,” said Matt

Huseby, roads program coordinator for the DNR Forestry Division. “Seasonal closures protect roads and trails from damage and costly repairs.”

After a lengthy winter, the warmer weather inspires people to head to Minnesota’s state

forests to enjoy the recreational opportunities they provide.

“Before heading out, people should check the DNR website for updates, obey the closures where they exist, and use good judgment wherever they ride or drive,” Huseby said. “If the road

cannot support your truck, car or off-highway vehicle (OHV), then it likely won’t support a tow vehicle to get you unstuck.”

For information on road and trail closures, visit the DNR’s road closure page at mndnr.gov/closures.



WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Do bears need a break?

High hunter harvests may be holding back recovery of the region’s black bear population

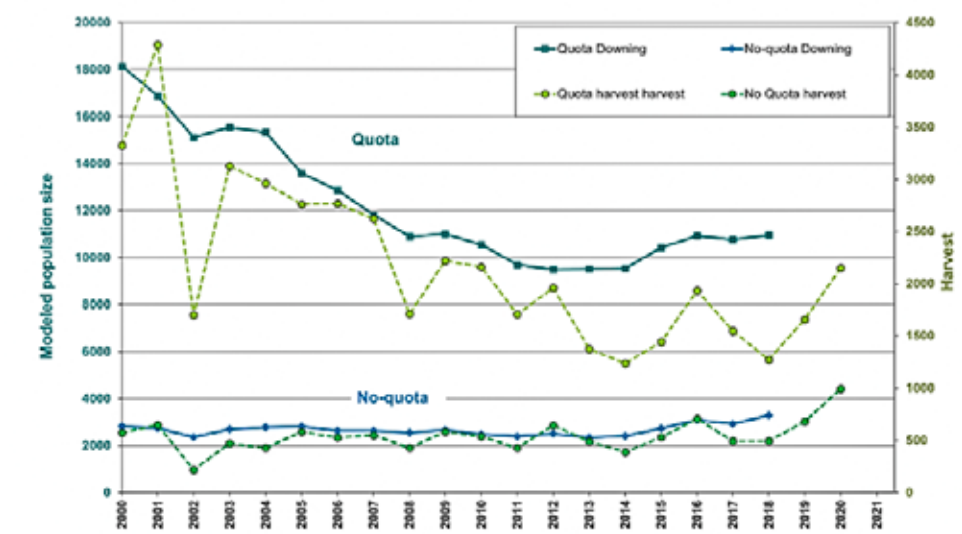
As I’ve written here before, there is reason to be concerned about the status of the black bear population here in the North Country, in part because the population here on the Canadian Shield isn’t like the population found elsewhere in Minnesota.

It’s obvious that the ability of a bear population, or any wildlife population, to sustain a given level of human hunting mortality is dependent on the ability of that species to replace those elements of the population lost to hunting or other sources of mortality each year. As top predators, bears have evolved for a very slow rate of reproduction, in order to prevent them from outstripping their habitat’s carrying capacity. In fact, bears exhibit some of the lowest reproductive rates of any terrestrial mammals, which means their ability to bounce back from downturns to their population is limited.

For bears, hunter harvest is the primary form of mortality. As a substantial body of scientific literature has documented, the ability of black bears to sustain themselves in the face of human harvest is limited, and is highly dependent on available foods. It’s long been known that bear populations on the Shield have more limited reproductive potential due to limited foods compared to more productive areas to our south. Many of the most favored bear foods found elsewhere in the eastern half of North America are rare or non-existent here and that impacts bears in several ways.

A 1981 study by two Canadian biologists, Fred Bunnell and David Tait, is still widely acknowledged to be among the most authoritative studies on bear population dynamics and it is worth reading by anyone with an interest in the subject. The study finds that the reproductive capacity of black

Fig. 19. Population trends during 2000s derived from two independent population models (Downing [top panel] and Allen [bottom panel]) for quota and no-quota zones, compared to respective harvests. Downing reconstruction-based estimates <2 years from the most recent harvest age data are unreliable (hence these curves terminate 2018; top panel). Downing curves were scaled (elevated to account for non-harvest mortality) to fall between the two curves in Fig. 18 (i.e., the actual scale of the population estimates is not empirically-based, but happens to approximately match the magnitude of the Allen estimates).



bear populations is highly connected to their nutritional condition. Bears that have access to abundant food reach breeding age earlier, have large litters and more frequent litters. According to Bunnell and Tait, bears in quality habitat, such as is typical in central Minnesota or much of the northeastern U.S., can sustain a higher level of harvest. That’s because bears there reach sexual maturity at an average of 4.5 years, give birth on an average of once every 2.1 years, and have an average litter size of 3.1 cubs. Based on such criteria, bears can sustain an annual mortality rate of approaching 20 percent. But that number drops significantly in locations, like far northeastern Minnesota, where natural bear foods are scarcer. Up here, bears without frequent access to human sources of food don’t reach breeding age until age five or six, they have smaller litters, and their litters are more widely spaced.

Black bear populations with these characteristics can sustain much lower levels of harvest, only about 13-15 percent according to Bunnell and Tait, and that assumes average conditions.

According to Andrew Tri, one of the

DNR’s top bear researchers, the current harvest level in the quota zone, which includes a large swath of central, northcentral, and northeastern Minnesota, is running around 15 percent, although DNR data suggests that percentage has averaged closer to 18 percent the past three seasons (see the chart above). Even at 15 percent, it’s distinctly on the high side of what is sustainable for bear populations in our area, and it certainly is not a recipe for bear population recovery, which is currently one of the DNR’s goals, at least publicly.

The DNR is supposed to be managing for bear recovery in large part due to prior DNR management decisions, which cut the state’s bear population nearly in half between 2000 and 2010. Back then, the DNR was issuing around 20,000 permits a year and annual harvests were averaging about 3,500 animals, most of that in the quota zone. Back in 2000, the DNR, using a variety of models, estimated the state’s bear population at between 20,000 and 25,000 animals. After a decade of high harvest, the state’s bear population had fallen

See BEARS...pg. 5B

WHITETAILS

WSI looks to finish about average

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Barring another major snow event, the 2021-22 winter season should wind up around average for much of the North Country, at least in terms of severity for whitetail deer.

As of Tuesday, the winter severity index stood at anywhere from 100-130 in northern St. Louis and Lake counties.

Variations in snow depths around the area account for most of the differences.

The WSI, which wildlife managers use as a guide to winter deer mortality, adds a point for every day with a below-zero temperature and another for every day with a snow depth of 15 inches or greater.

Winters with a WSI reading in excess of 120 are considered severe, but the current readings are fairly typical of winters in far northern Minnesota. The sustained mid-March warm spell across the region dropped snow levels in most areas below the 15-inch threshold. While the area saw a couple single digit below-zero nights earlier in the week, such temperatures provide no real challenge for whitetail deer, although they did add a couple points to the index. The most recent extended forecast shows no below-zero readings into the middle of April, which suggests the region may be finished with such temperatures for this winter season.

And with daytime temperatures forecasted to reach above freezing every day next week, the region’s snowpack is likely to continue to diminish.

DNR wildlife managers acknowledge that the WSI is only one of a number of factors that impact deer survival. The overall duration of winter and the timing of spring green-up, along with the quantity and quality of habitat and forage, are other factors that affect survival. Wolf density and food competition from other deer

Outdoors briefly

Learn about becoming an outdoors woman

REGIONAL — Have you heard of the DNR’s Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) program? Whether you’re trying an activity for the first time, or you consider yourself an expert, the BOW program will help you gain new skills and improve your techniques in a relaxed, fun and supportive atmosphere.

Interested? You can get monthly emails about upcoming BOW programs and stay connected to the BOW community. Signing up is easy on the DNR website.

PUBLIC SAFETY

WHITE OR SNOW ICE

FOR NEW, CLEAR ICE

Ice fishing or walking	4" 8"
Snowmobile or ATV	5-7" 12-14"
Car or small pickup	8-12" 20-24"
Medium pickup	12-15" 24-30"

Play it safe on spring ice

REGIONAL — North Country lakes may still be capped with plentiful ice, but those conditions can change quickly this time of year. That’s why it always makes sense to take extra care when traveling on lake ice this time of year, according to the DNR.

Spring ice — or “white ice” — is only half as strong as new, clear ice. And as snow eventually melts off area lakes, the intensifying sun can eat away spring ice surprisingly quickly. In a typical year, the ice could be out of most smaller lakes in the area by April 21, and the ice would be iffy well before final ice-out.

If you’re heading out on the ice anytime over the next few weeks, always have a means of self-rescue. That means wearing a life jacket or buoyant gear, carrying ice picks and a rope, and having a whistle. No one expects to fall through the ice, but planning for it can be the difference between tragedy and making it home at the end of the day.

Avoid bear problems this spring

REGIONAL — With bears emerging from hibernation in the coming weeks, the Department of Natural Resources is reminding homeowners to check their property for food sources that could attract bears.

As bears emerge from hibernation, their metabolism gradually ramps up and they will begin looking for food at a time when berries and green vegetation are scarce. Home and cabin owners should remove or secure attractants such as birdseed, garbage, livestock feed, or compost to reduce potential conflicts.

Black bears are usually shy and flee when encountered, but bears are potentially dangerous because of their size, strength and speed.

Avoid bear conflicts by following these tips:

- Avoid feeding birds from April 1 to Nov. 15. If you still wish to feed birds, hang birdfeeders ten feet up and four feet out from the nearest trees.
- Do not put out feed for wildlife (like corn, oats, pellets or molasses blocks).
- Do not leave food

from barbeques and picnics outdoors, especially overnight.

- Harvest garden produce as it matures, pick any fruit left on trees and collect any fallen fruit. Locate gardens away from forests and shrubs that bears may use for cover.
- Store pet food inside and feed pets inside. If pets must be fed outdoors, feed them only as much as they will eat.
- Store garbage in bear-resistant garbage cans or dumpsters. Standard rubber or plastic garbage cans are not bear-proof.
- Keep garbage inside a secure building until the morning of pickup.
- Properly rinse all recyclable containers with hot water to remove all remaining product.
- Store recyclable containers, such as pop cans, inside.

People should be cautious around bears and give them space. If bear problems persist after cleaning up food sources, contact a DNR area wildlife office for advice.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST from NOAA weather

Friday

41 25

Saturday

40 20

Sunday

39 22

Monday

40 22

Tuesday

43 25

Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.
03/21	55	20	0.00		03/21	55	19	0.00		03/21	51	22	0.00		03/21	48	34	0.00		03/21	54	28	0.00	
03/22	42	31	0.11		03/22	42	30	0.11		03/22	44	31	0.22		03/22	34	30	0.21	1.0"	03/22	43	30	0.20	
03/23	32	29	0.34	2.3"	03/23	32	28	0.47	1.8"	03/23	31	28	0.39	2.3"	03/23	34	28	0.64	4.0"	03/23	32	28	0.70	2.5"
03/24	33	27	0.03	0.4"	03/24	33	27	0.02		03/24	33	27	0.02	0.4"	03/24	46	27	0.00		03/24	33	26	0.04	0.2"
03/25	47	23	0.03	0.5"	03/25	46	22	0.02		03/25	45	24	0.02	0.5"	03/25	36	14	0.05	0.1"	03/25	47	21	0.00	
03/26	33	13	0.16	1.3"	03/26	33	12	0.11	2.0"	03/26	34	12	0.16	1.3"	03/26	19	7	0.00		03/26	32	11	0.27	2.5"
03/27	22	-6	0.00		03/27	20	-4	0.00		03/27	20	-3	0.00		03/27	19	-2	0.00		03/27	20	-4	0.00	
YTD Total			1.96	75.0"	YTD Total			2.50	49.8"	YTD Total			2.79	80.3"	YTD Total			NA	NA	YTD Total			3.13	60.9"

BEARS...Continued from page 4B

to between 10,000-15,000.

The DNR slashed the number of bear permits dramatically beginning in 2012 in an effort to reverse course, but progress toward a recovery has been very slow, and has very likely gone backward in the past couple years, when poor bear foods led to harvests close to what we saw back in the 2000s.

It should be noted that more of the state’s harvest is now coming from the state’s no-quota zone, which includes those parts of the state to the south and west of the quota zone, where bears are more of a management problem due to the presence of agriculture and greater incidence of human conflict in general. As permit availability, now around 3,500, plummeted in the quota zone, making permits much more difficult to obtain, more hunters have opted to try their luck elsewhere. The reduction in permits in the quota zone has led to a lower bear harvest to be sure, but nowhere near the reduction that might be expected given that permits were slashed from 20,000 to under 4,000. Bear hunter success rates have gone up as well, and that’s limited the beneficial impact of lower permit numbers. It’s also worth noting that hunters are now taking bears from a population that is much reduced. If you take 3,000 animals from a population of 20,000 bears, it’s the same in percentage terms as taking 1,500 bears from a population of 10,000.

Because wildlife population modeling is inexact, and because the DNR doesn’t model by bear management area, we don’t know if there’s

been any recovery of bear numbers in management areas 25 and 31, which, combined, encompass virtually all of the Shield country in Minnesota that sees any appreciable numbers of hunters. But there’s reason to believe that the harvest may still be outstripping the ability of the population to maintain itself here. Indeed, DNR officials acknowledge as much.

The situation today is probably even worse than we know. Given the recent trend of poorer food years, it’s not clear that the bear population on Minnesota’s Shield country can sustain much of a bear harvest at all. In years of successive poor foods, like we’ve seen in recent years, research from Montana suggests that black bear reproduction can fall to near zero. Research in Minnesota finds a similar pattern. Bears are among a number of species that have evolved with delayed implantation of embryos. They breed in the late spring or early summer, but the fertilized eggs don’t implant in a female bear’s womb until November or December. If the female didn’t put on enough weight during the previous summer, those eggs simply don’t implant.

Bear reproduction has likely fallen off sharply in our region during the past two years, and this coincides with some of the highest bear harvests we’ve had since the DNR reduced the permits. That’s one of the problems with managing black bear populations, particularly for recovery. It isn’t easy. When foods are scarce, bears are more susceptible to hunters’ baits, so that means the harvest goes up at a time

when reproduction is likely going to fall. In years of repeated poor foods, such as we’ve seen recently, the problem compounds.

And climate change may be a factor, here. We’ve seen a significant trend of more extreme temperature swings and greater variability in precipitation and it’s those extremes that have been impacting wild foods in our area. Early spring green-ups, followed by killing frosts in June, can wipe out berry crops. Droughts impact virtually everything. These are factors that have impacted natural foods the past 2-3 years and have undoubtedly affected bear reproduction. If the DNR isn’t reducing its permits to respond, the agency is putting the region’s bear population at even greater risk. The other alternative would be to prohibit or greatly restrict bear baiting in management areas where bears are struggling. That’s not as outlandish as it might sound. Twenty-eight states in the U.S. have bear seasons, and only 11, including Minnesota, allow hunting directly over baits. We’ve gotten used to the practice here, because it’s easy for hunters, but in most places it’s not allowed. And a few bear hunters in Minnesota don’t rely on baits even today.

While the DNR focuses much of its attention on hunters, there are other people out there who actually like to see bears in the wild. I’m one of them, and I know I see a lot fewer bears than I used to. How do the DNR’s black bear management efforts meet the wishes of folks who’d like to see a few more bears out there in the woods? Not very well it would seem.

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Ely Area Food Shelf March Campaign 2022

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Annual Meeting Notice

Lake Country Power will hold the annual membership meeting on Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at the Cohasset Service Center — located at 26039 Bear Ridge Drive, Cohasset, MN.

Registration begins at 4:00 p.m.

- Dinner with choice of baked chicken or ham
- Visit with members, employees and directors
- Live music by Bill and Kate Isles
- Service center tours
- Registration gifts and door prizes will be awarded

Annual Business Meeting begins at 5:30 p.m.

- Lake Country Power updates
- Great River Energy updates
- Announcement of director election and other business

Director election ballots will be mailed to LCP members only in District 2, and a special letter for Districts 4 and 8, between March 31 and April 5. Members may vote electronically, in person at the annual meeting, or by U.S. mail to Survey & Ballot Systems using the provided ballot envelope and postage-paid envelope. Online polls open at 8:00 a.m. CST, April 5. Ballots will include voting instructions.

www.lakecountrypower.coop

1-800-421-9959

Scenic Rivers
— Clinics —

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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Vaccine Scheduling

20 5th St SE
(218) 361-3297

Tower Medical
Vaccine Scheduling

415 N 2nd St, Suite 2
(218) 753-2405

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4/1

POSITION OPENING

Ely Public Schools

K-12 Band/Classroom Music Teacher
1.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Ely Public Schools is accepting applications for a 1.0 FTE K-12 Band/Classroom Music Teacher beginning the 2022-2023 school year; competitive salary and fringes as per the master agreement. Background check required.

Qualifications include:

- Current Minnesota teaching license in K-12 Instrumental and Classroom Music
- Teaching experience preferred
- Considerable knowledge of music, instruments, and music curriculum areas
- Considerable skill in classroom management and organization
- Excellent communication skills including verbal and written

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

A complete application must include the following:

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

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

Start date: August 30, 2022

Application review to begin: April 13, 2022; open until filled.

Published in the Timberjay, April 1 & 8, 2022

POSITION OPENING

Ely Public Schools

High School Science Teacher
1.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Ely Public Schools is accepting applications for a Grade 7-12 Science Teacher beginning the 2022-2023 school year; competitive salary and fringes as per the master agreement. Background check required.

Qualifications include:

- Current Minnesota 7-12 Life Science teaching license
- Teaching experience preferred
- Excellent communication skills including verbal and written

Responsibilities:

- Demonstrate knowledge of subject matter through effective teaching practices, with expectations of high student achievement.
- Assess student progress, modify instruction, and improve student learning.
- Communicate and collaborate with parents and the school community to foster individual student success and growth.
- Plan, organize, and teach competency-based science courses.
- Demonstrate effective classroom and equipment management.

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

A complete application must include the following:

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

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

Start date: August 30, 2022

Application review to begin: April 14, 2022; open until filled.

Published in the Timberjay, April 1 & 8, 2022

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- RN: oversee the health and safety of the camp community

Email for more information
cvspirit@campvoyageur.com
or apply online at
<https://voyageur.campintouch.com/ui/forms/application/staff/App>. tfn

Full-Time Elementary Teacher
The Nett Lake School District 707

Please email/mail the following:

- Letter of application and professional resume
- Completed "Certified Application" (on www.nettlakeschool.org/Job-Postings).
- 3 Letters of Recommendation
- Copy of Transcripts
- Copy of Teaching License

Apply To:

Peter Hardy
Superintendent/Principal, Nett Lake ISD #707
13090 Westley Drive, Nett Lake, MN 55772
phardy@isd707.org Phone 218-757-3102

Published in the Timberjay, April 1, 2022



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

Full-Time Cook
The Nett Lake School District 707

Qualifications: Serve Safe or attained within 6 months of employment. Must be able to lift 50 lbs.

Please email/mail the following:

- Letter of Interest and professional resume
- Completed "Certified Application" (on www.nettlakeschool.org/Job-Postings).
- 3 Letters of Recommendation

Apply To:

Peter Hardy, Superintendent/Principal
Nett Lake ISD #707
13090 Westley Drive, Nett Lake, MN 55772
phardy@isd707.org Phone 218-757-3102

Published in the Timberjay, April 1, 2022

PUBLIC NOTICES

LOCAL BOARD OF APPEAL & EQUALIZATION
LEIDING TOWNSHIPImportant Information Regarding Property Assessments
This may affect your 2023 property taxes

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Appeal and Equalization for Leiding Township shall meet on Tuesday, April 12, 2022 from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. at the Leiding Town Hall.

The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether taxable property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor, and 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 concerns. If you disagree with the valuation or classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may appear before the local board of appeal and equalization. The board will review your assessments and may make corrections as needed. Generally, you must appeal to the local board before appealing to the county board of appeal and equalization.

Marie Milan, Leiding Township Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, April 1, 2022

Answers

A	D	U	L	A	T	E	S	O	H	O	T	A	W	A	R	D	E	D
M	E	M	O	R	E	X	H	O	O	C	H	L	O	V	E	R	L	Y
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OPEN POSITIONS

10 Fifth Street SE Cook, MN 55723

Nursing

FT RN House Supervisor

Laboratory

FT Medical Lab Tech

Radiology

FT Radiologic Technologist

Care Center

FT & PT Nursing Assistant (Wage starting at \$17.36/hr - \$1,500 Sign-On Bonus)
FT & PT RN/LPN (\$4,000 Sign-On Bonus)

Activities

PT & Casual Activities Assistant

Environmental Services

Casual Laundry Aide

Casual Housekeeping & Laundry

TO APPLY:

www.cookhospital.org/join-our-team/

More Info? Contact Human Resources

218-666-6220

humanresources@cookhospital.org

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Bar legally
6 Decorator's theme
11 Floodgate
12 Apple music service
14 Maidens of myth
15 Nap
16 Doctrine
17 Varieties
19 Up to
20 Casual tops
22 — Paulo
23 Optimum
24 Passover repast
26 Heller and Conrad
28 Chips go-with
30 Small barrel
31 High-ranking angels
35 Nintendo princess
39 Neural transmitter
40 Snitch
42 Eye drop
43 Spasm
44 Croc's kin
46 GI's address
47 Runs off to wed
49 Transforms (into)
51 Safe and sound

	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	
11							12					13
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47			48				49		50			
51							52					
	53						54					

- 52 Dawn-of-mammals epoch
53 Ninnies
54 "— you!" (challenger's cry)
6 Identified incorrectly
7 Elevator name abbr.
8 Calendar
9 Foot part
10 Fixation
11 Tizzies
13 Mariners
18 British rule of India
21 Auto style
23 Sire
25 Shred
27 "— who?"
29 Sentence parts
31 Fills up
32 Driven out
33 Highly ornate
34 Perched
36 Figure skater, at times
37 Author du Maurier
38 Got up
41 Actress Marisa
44 Richard of "Chicago"
45 Crucifix
48 Young dog
50 HDTV brand

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

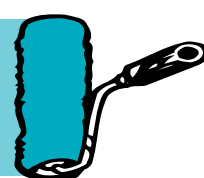
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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.

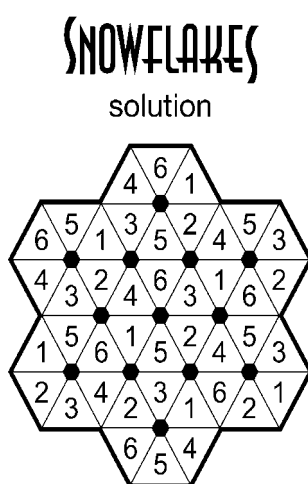
TEDA has authorized the sale of the property with the requirement that the lot be redeveloped for residential purposes. The sale of the property will be contingent upon the buyer agreeing to begin construction of a zoning-compliant residence within one year, with substantial completion within two years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



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