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the TIMBERJAY

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GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

Jeff Maus appointed interim treasurer on split vote



Incumbent Belinda Fazio gave no reason for abrupt resignation

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOODTWP- On a split vote, with Supervisors Mike Ralston and Paul Skubic voting against, the board appointed Jeff Maus as interim treasurer to serve out the remainder of Belinda Fazio's term.

Fazio had sent a brief letter of resignation on March 31 to the board which did not provide a reason for her departure. Chair Sue Drobac, at the April 12 regular meeting, nominated Maus for the opening. Ralston asked about his qualifications for the post, and Maus said he had run his own business for

over 20 years.

Skubic asked if Maus still had an open claim against the township. Maus does have a current complaint filed with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry regarding a pension credit issue from last year.

Ralston said his personal opinion was that Maus shouldn't

be appointed as an officer of the township on account of the claims that he had been filed.

Drobac said the claims in question were against the fire department, not the town board.

Maus had filed several unfair labor practice complaints

See...VOTE pg. 11

A SOUND EDUCATION

Science and Art



Ely school music students 'dissect' a piano

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY - Some Washington Elementary school students combined science and art last week in Mike Rouse's music class. Students in Kindergarten through fourth grade gathered on the stage in the auditorium for a piano dissection.

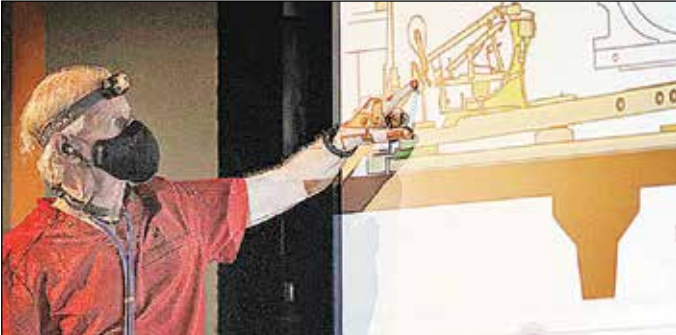
"Music class for the students is always an adventure," Rouse said. "Besides singing, listening, and playing various instruments, the students have been learning to read music. This entails many skills, including reading rhythms, recognizing the notes of the treble staff, learning and applying the Italian terms for tempo and dynamics and so on," he said. "They are looking at and listening to music and

See...MUSIC pg. 12



Ely schools music teacher Mike Rouse combined science and art with Washington Elementary third-grade students last week as they explored the parts of a piano.

photos by K. Vandervort



CITY OF TOWER

Ambulance issues dominate agenda

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER- The city of Tower is willing to explore possible regionalization of the city's ambulance service, as long as townships elsewhere in the service's coverage area agree to take part in an analysis of how such an approach might work.

That was just one of several ambulance-related developments to come out of Monday's regular monthly meeting of the city council here. The council appointed Councilor Kevin Norby to take part in possible discussions on alternative futures for the ambulance service, which is facing a range of financial concerns as well as demands by some in the coverage area to raise the level of care to advanced life support, or ALS. Currently, the service provides basic life support.

A possible change in the governance of the ambulance service came out of discussions, raised initially by the Eagles Nest Township representative, at the April 4 meeting of the Tower Ambulance Commission. "It was to take a look as a bigger community, at what it would take to make the Tower Ambulance Service bigger and better," said Norby. "We need to create a group to look at this more

See...TOWER pg. 9

More in Tower

City to seek funding for Marina Drive utility extension. Page 9

NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH

Wall of Heroes honors 'gift of life' through organ donation

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

DULUTH - When Vickie Hackey's son died unexpectedly at age 29 from a brain aneurysm in December 2006, organ donation was not something the family was considering.

Tim Pepworth, of Tower, suffered the aneurysm while

Christmas shopping with his mother in Duluth. The doctors put Tim into an induced coma and he survived for 17 days, but never regained consciousness.

"When the doctors first asked us about organ donation, my first thought was no," said Vickie. "But his friends told me that Tim had talked about organ donation with them, and they all

had decided it was something they would wish to do."

"So, we made the decision to go ahead and donate," she said. "While our hearts had been broken with his passing, we find comfort in knowing some of his lives on in those he gave the most precious gift of life to."

The difficult decisions of Vickie and others like her are



now being honored in Essentia Health's new "Wall of Heroes" exhibit being installed in the

skywalk to Essentia's First Street Building in Duluth, and viewable online at essentiaheroes.org.

"This wall is for anyone who has donated organs, or had organs donated to them," said Vickie. "It is giving honor to those who donate, and to those who have received an organ donation."

See...WALL pg. 10



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Community notices

Cook Timber Days set for June 10-12

COOK - The Timber Days committee announced the Cook Annual Timber Days festival is being planned for June 10-12. Dozens of food and craft vendors will again be in Cook all weekend as well as favorite shows and events enjoyed during Timber Days 2021. New entertainment is also being added. The spectacular fireworks show will be on Saturday night, June 11 and Timber Days will culminate with a huge parade on Sunday, June 12.

Mesabi Community Band concert on Thursday, April 28 at 7 p.m.

EVELETH - The Mesabi Community Band, under the direction of Larry Baker and Bill Lavato, will present “A Spring Renewal Concert,” on Thursday, April 28 at 7 p.m. at the Eveleth City Auditorium. The band is in its 49th year. The concert will feature selections including marches: Americans We, The Klaxon, and The Minnesota March. Additional selections will include Procession of the Nobles, Yorkshire Ballad, October, West Side Story, and others. Donations will be accepted for Ukrainian refugees in Poland. A band member’s son teaches at the American School in Warsaw, Poland, and is working with local relief agencies to distribute funds where needed. The band would like to thank the city of Eveleth for their support in the use of the fantastic venue for the concert.

Law enforcement career expo set for April 20 at FDLTCC

CLOQUET - Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) is excited to host the 2022 Law Enforcement Career Expo and Campus Visit Day from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, April 20, in the Lester Jack Briggs Cultural Center on campus. During the event, attendees can meet with representatives from a variety of local, county, state, and federal agencies to learn about current and future job openings in the criminal justice field and the type of training and background applicants should possess. The event is open to the public and admission is free. “The Law Enforcement Expo is back!” said FDLTCC Law Enforcement program coordinator, Wade Lamirande. “After a two-year hiatus, we will welcome approximately 50 law enforcement and criminal justice representatives to our campus. The Expo is a great opportunity for our students, or anyone interested in the law enforcement or criminal justice fields to meet with perspective employers. Currently, there is a great demand and scholarship opportunities. Interested students can earn their qualifications right here at FDLTCC.”

For prospective college students and people who are considering a career change into the field of law enforcement, the expo is an excellent opportunity to learn more about career employment opportunities and where to receive the necessary training.

Representatives from the Law Enforcement program at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College will highlight and explain the classroom training and skills training components of the popular degree programs at the college. Attendees will also have the opportunity to tour the beautiful FDLTCC campus during the event.

For more information, contact Cassandra Nicholson via email at cnicholson@fdltcc.edu or visit <https://fdltcc.edu/event/law-enforcement-career-expo-campus-visit-day/>.



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MT. IRON- Learn more about the 4-H Engineering Design Challenge (EDC) on Saturday, April 23 during Earth Fest. We will be hosting the experience in the Merritt Elementary School cafeteria in Mt Iron. Children in grades 3 - 8 are invited to this free event from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided. Pre-registration is requested by Thursday, April 21. Register at: <https://z.umn.edu/Earth-FestEDC>.

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LIVING WITH WILD FIRES

Pagami Creek Fire anniversary events continue

ELY - A series of events here marking the 10th anniversary of the Pagami Creek Fire continues next week.

On Wednesday and Thursday, April 20-21, Ely’s Historic State Theater will host “Pagami Creek Fire Ten Years On: What We’ve Learned.” This two-day symposium will feature discussions on lessons learned from the Pagami Creek Fire, and will include visits to the 2021 Greenwood Lake fire site.

This event is open to the public, but may be of greatest interest to professional natural resource managers, and is organized by the UMN Sustainable Forests Education Co-operative (SFEC). There is a fee for symposium participation. For more information and registration, see SFEC’s Upcoming Event page: [\[https://sfec.cfans.umn.edu/upcoming-events\]](https://sfec.cfans.umn.edu/upcoming-events)

Also, next Thursday, a screening of a local 16-minute fire documentary, “Oshkigin Spirit of Fire,” and a panel discussion will be held at Ely’s Historic State Theater from 6-8 p.m. The event is hosted by Dovetail Partners.

For thousands of years in the Great Lakes region, Native American used fire intentionally to manage the ecosystems they lived in. The film highlights this deep recip-



rocal relationship with the land and the role fire play in that relationship.

The story is told by two Ojibwe wildland fire practitioners, Fond du Lac tribal elder Vern Northrup, and Gezhiibideg Damon Panek, tribal band member of the White Earth Nation, and Lane Johnson, a research forester with the University of Minnesota’s Cloquet Forestry Center, a tree-ring fire history enthusiast, and ardent supporter of prescribed fire.

Following the film, a discussion will be held with panelists from tribal nations within the 1842 and 1854

Treaty areas, and will focus on the value of Indigenous perspectives in transforming our relationship with fire and how we, as humans, relate to the whole community of life that we are part of.

This spring, Saturday morning walking trips with Bill Tefft, Ely Naturalist, will include tours of area wildland fire sites, prescribed fire sites and more. Everyone is welcome. Get details at Elyfieldnaturalists.wordpress.com.

LIVE MUSIC

Lyric Center for the Arts to hold concerts on April 15, 20 and 21

VIRGINIA - With spring weather slowly approaching, The Lyric Center for the Arts in Virginia is celebrating the season with three unique concert experiences that are sure to entertain those patiently waiting for warm weather.

Bemidji String Quartet on April 15

Festivities kick off on Friday, April 15 at 6 p.m. in the Lyric Center Annex, with a free performance concentrating on the works of Mozart and Grieg presented by The Bemidji String Quartet. The ensemble features Eric Olson on violin, Timothy Pinkerton on violin, Pedro Oviedo on viola, and Magdalena Sas on Cello. Olson is a 2022 recipient of a Creative Support for Individuals grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board.

This activity is made possible due to voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, a legislative appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature, and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Free-will donations are encouraged to support Lyric Youth Arts Programs.

The No Notes on April 20

Following the Easter holiday, on Wednesday, April 20 from 7-9 p.m. in the Lyric Center Annex, the No Notes will feature their renditions of hits from the 50s, 60s, and 70s, along with a little country music in the mix. The group features Butch Panula of Britt on bass, vocals and electric drums, Ken Voight of Mt. Iron on lead guitar and vocals, and John Elofson of Virginia playing rhythm guitar and also singing vocals. Tickets are \$13 in advance at www.lyriccenteronline.org, or \$15 at the door. The concert will have an intermission between sets.

Mel Annala on April 21

To round things out, Iron Range musician Mel Annala will perform at the Lyric Center Annex on Thursday, April 21 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$15 and available at www.lyriccenteronline.org and at the door. Annala has been busy putting



Concerts will feature the Bemidji String Quartet, Mel Annala (above) and the No Notes (below).



on thousands of miles as he traveled the Northland over the past several years from Eveleth to Ely and Effie, Bigfork to Grand Rapids, up the North Shore to Two Harbors, Castle Danger and beyond, the Twin Ports to Cloquet, Moose Lake and Barnum, and Northern Wisconsin, just to name a few stops on the way. From beginning to find a few chords on the guitar, a gift from his brother at the age twelve, to the start of a solo musical endeavor in his mid-fifties, he says it’s been a great adventure. After scaling back his performances in 2019 to make room for family activities, he will now be performing at a limited number of venues.

Annala has traveled the Northland since 2006, sharing his music at resorts, local bar and grill venues, fairs, coffee houses, private events, house concerts and, like he says “anywhere folks would like to hear me play.”

Annala says that recording his “In Your Eyes” CD in 2012 was just one high point. “It has been really

gratifying to see folks actually taking some of my music home with them.” The album is still available on Amazon and other outlets. It received many positive reviews, including this from international singer/songwriter Pete Morton from London, England, “Mel Annala has put together a solid collection of songs we all know and love and he has a fine voice to carry them to your heart.”

Beer, wine and seltzers will be available for purchase, along with soft drinks for both the No Notes and Annala performances.

The Lyric Center for the Arts, a subsidiary of the Laurentian Arts and Culture Alliance, is a non-profit corporation. Its mission is to provide artistic and educational opportunities for children and adults across the Iron Range. For more information or to purchase tickets by phone, call 218-741-5577 between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., Thursday through Saturday, or stop by the Lyric at 510 Chestnut St. in Virginia.

ELY SCHOOLS

Staff reductions continue amid budget concerns

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY—School board members here received some good news and bad news Monday night concerning ISD 696 budget numbers for the rest of this year and looking ahead to next year.

For the fifth consecutive month, school enrollment figures show a slight but gradual rebound, but for the third time in three meetings, board members were asked to approve more school staff reductions.

In one of the briefest regular school board meetings in recent memory at just 25 minutes, Interim Superintendent John Klarich did not add any new information to the district’s budget woes. He said he is meeting regularly with the district’s business

Enrollment trend shows slight increase continuing

manager, Spencer Aune. “We’re tracking everything and we’ll probably have a presentation at the next meeting (April 25),” he said. “We’ll get an update on this year’s budget, but for next year’s budget, the (state) legislature is still in session. They have \$9 billion, let’s be honest. Education is trying to make an inroad there and get some things straightened out, but nothing is finalized yet.”

Klarich talked in generalities about the district’s overall budget picture for next year, adding, “We’ll get a helping hand which helps us in the long run,” he said.

As part of the consent agenda, and with no discussion, school board members approved the reduction “of the following

temporary AFSCME positions due to budgetary constraints effective June 3, 2022: Mary Schwinghamer, nurse; and Justin Olson, custodian.

School board members also approved the termination of Cameo Gillson from the para-professional position, effective May 13, 2022, and adopted three resolutions “relating to the termination and non-renewal of the teaching contracts” of probationary teachers Brenda Check-Olson, Matthew Koch and Anja Nienow.

School enrollment for the 2021-2022 school year has shown a steady incline since last fall. On Sept. 9, enrollment was recorded at 530 students. Just a month later,

as COVID-19 public health protocols were mandated and some parents protested by removing their children from school, enrollment plummeted to 504 students on Oct. 5. In November, student numbers dipped to 501. Since then, student enrollment has ticked up: Dec. 7, 502 students; Jan. 3, 504 students; Feb. 7, 510 students; March 7, 511 students; and April 4, 513 students.

State aid for schools is determined by school enrollment and plays a big part in the district’s overall budget picture.

Coaching legend retires

School board members this week accepted a resignation letter from Paula Anderson, longtime

head Nordic ski coach for Ely schools, who announced her retirement.

Athletic Director Tom Coombe said, “I remember being in this room in the late 1990s, Paula was part of a group to help convince the (school) board to sanction Nordic skiing as a varsity sport.”

The Ely school Nordic ski program has been operated by the Nordic Ski Club, and not ISD 696, since its inception. The school district took on paying the coaches two or three years ago, according to Coombe.

“What (Paula) has done with

See **SCHOOLS...**pg. 5

LOCAL BUSINESS

Quilt shop has its own niche in the North Country

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- As an 18-year-old newlywed living on a ranch farm in northern Missouri, Susan Covey decided to give quilting a try. She’d never made one before, but her grandmothers were both quilters and she got a helping hand finishing her first attempt from her father.

Fast forward to today, and Covey operates the popular Cabin Quilting shop in Cook, the only such store for miles and miles around that caters to the quilting needs of locals and tourists alike.

And for that, her customers have pigs to thank. Seriously. But more on that in a bit.



Cabin Quilting owner Susan Covey stands at her long arm quilting machine in the back room of her Cook shop. photos by D. Colburn

then I got very popular and had to get a bigger machine so I could handle big queens and kings. I had gone for two-and-a-half years to a friend’s basement because I didn’t have room at my place for it, and then I told my husband that I wanted to build a shop at home.”

He was skeptical that anyone would want to drive down a township road to a hog farm for quilting, but they put up a 24 x 32 building.

“And they came,” Covey

said. “They came in cars. They came after work. They came on Saturdays, bringing me quilts for the long arm. I paid for that building my first year.”

Around 2000, the couple bought a place on Elephant Lake, and through regular trips to the North Country Covey became familiar with the area.

Then in 2010, Covey unfortunately discovered that her love of quilting would be more enduring than her marriage. Her

husband said he wanted a divorce, and as they owned two properties, Covey had a choice to make. Cue the pigs.

“When I wasn’t married anymore, I had my choice between smelling hog poo or smelling pine trees, and I chose the pine trees, hands down, pine trees,” Covey said emphatically, with a laugh.

A major issue with the move was finding a place that could accommodate her long arm quilt

machine, which is about 15 feet long. Covey wasn’t thinking about starting a quilt shop at the time, but she found a suitable building on the southwest corner of Hwy. 53 and 1st St. SW.

“I was just looking for a place for that,” Covey said, gesturing toward the quilt machine, “and after I found it I said I guess I’m going to have to do something with the rest of the place.”

She closed on the building in November 2010, then headed back south to pack while carpenters got started on extensive renovations. She was back in January to paint and varnish, completed the last of her move to Elephant Lake in February, and opened her doors to the public on March 31.

Cabin Quilting drew immediate attention and patronage from North Country neighbors.

“We have wonderful quilting guilds in Tower and in Ely,” Covey said. “They’re very good to me.

But “local” really means “regional” for regulars, as Covey’s nearest competitors aren’t near at all.

“I am now the only shop between Cloquet and Duluth and International Falls,” she said. “There’s nothing short of Floodwood to the west of me and

See **QUILTS...**pg. 5

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OPINION

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e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

Editorial

Ambulance solutions

As paid staff costs rise, new funding models are need for area services

Last week’s healthy discussion by the Tower Ambulance Commission on possible changes in the funding model for the city’s ambulance service was welcome and we hope that it leads to further analysis. Small town ambulance services are struggling everywhere, which suggests that the current funding model in place in much of the region is outdated.

It’s been a long time since ambulance services in the area have been able to survive financially solely on the revenues generated from ambulance calls. Most now rely on a more diverse funding stream to finance operations and cover the cost of ambulance replacement. The rising costs of new vehicles, fuel, and supplies, suggest that the financial demands of operating such a system will only rise this year.

Last week, the ambulance commission discussed the possible creation of an ambulance district through a joint powers board. Others have raised the possibility of a larger district, that might encompass a number of neighboring services. It’s not as if Tower’s ambulance service is the only one in the area facing challenges, after all.

We recognize that the Tower service has baggage that continues to frustrate its efforts to move forward. Unwise financial decisions a few years ago, which have saddled the service with higher-than-typical staffing costs, continue to be a major drag. Concerns by Greenwood officials about indemnification language in the ambulance replacement fund contract, along with the city’s failure to meet its obligations under the current ambulance replacement fund contract are certainly muddying the waters. However, these are not issues that should hamper the ability of reasonable local officials to find a path forward.

If residents in the Tower Ambulance service area wish to see a continuation of the existing service, or the upgrade of the existing service to advanced life support capabilities, it will require a different approach that could change the relationship between the service and the area townships. In a joint powers model, for example, all the parties would share responsibility and liability for the ambulance service they would oversee. A new funding model, which would likely include a modest tax levy,

could be designed to cover the cost of replacing ambulances as well as fund ALS service.

Greenwood officials ordered their own feasibility study of a regional service this week, but that’s work that should be overseen by a broader entity, like the ambulance commission. A single township, without any authority over the existing ambulance service, is hardly in a position to implement any change. A regional proposal, with buy-in from multiple jurisdictions and stakeholders, is the approach that will ensure credibility.

While there is certainly interest in upgrading the Tower Ambulance Service to ALS capability, residents need to recognize that it wouldn’t come for free. Revenue from ambulance calls barely covers the cost of basic life support service and can no longer fund ambulance replacement. Realistically, upgrading to full-time ALS, as some have advocated, would more than double the current staffing costs of the ambulance service. Paramedics are in high demand around the country and maintaining a reliable crew of them will entail full-time jobs with benefits. Communities could make that more financially viable by looking beyond emergency medical care. A regional emergency services system could entail both ambulance and fire, and possibly even police.

We’ve been fortunate in this area to have dedicated folks who have made it possible in the past to operate ambulance services in places like Tower without a significant levy. In other sparsely populated parts of the country, such services are heavily-supported by local taxes.

That shouldn’t be a surprise. We don’t expect fire protection and police to pay for itself. We used to get by when it came to ambulance services because insurance, whether public or private, provided a decent revenue stream and because we had volunteers willing to help when the call came. The transition to a paid staffing model— a reflection of the fact that volunteers are tough to find these days— has rendered that funding stream insufficient to cover costs. A new staffing model, whether it provides a BLS or ALS service, requires a new funding model. It appears members of the Ambulance Commission are recognizing that fact. Hopefully, they’ll roll up their sleeves and start to explore the options.



Letters from Readers

I fell for the woodchuck story hook, line, and cheese grater

You had me cold for almost 24 hours. I read it Monday afternoon and truly believed it until my morning coffee on Tuesday, when I realized the publication date was April 1 - and read the final line, buried in the crease.

Truly top notch work.

Thank you.

Dave Porter
Minneapolis

Time to rethink Ely’s community center

Recently there was a large crane in front of the Ely Community Center building being used for repairing the roof. This a reminder that the building has been vacated for about eight years. The center fits the definition of a white elephant, “A costly possession that its owner cannot dispose of and whose cost, particularly for maintenance, is expensive.”

Demolishing the building is not a good alternative because the building has a steel interior frame, and its height requires special equipment and it cannot be done with a bulldozer. It was rumored to have cost \$654,000 to demolish the much smaller JFK building.

In its present condition, the community center has no value, but by using the present structure for residential units for condominiums or rentals, the existing structure becomes a valuable component, with its preexisting foundation, outside walls, roof, and land, perhaps totaling as much as \$1.5 million to replicate. Add that amount to an estimated \$3.5 million needed to restore the outside walls and remodel the interior and you have an appraisal of about \$5 million which would provide the basis for a construction loan.

(U.S. Bank reportedly provided equity investors the construction loan for a restoration project.)

Nevertheless, by preserving the historical character of the building, bank financing combined with tax benefits and preservation grants can create sufficient financing.

Reconfiguring the interior to

take advantage of, and adopting to, its existing layout, an estimated 20 units consisting of studios, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units along with amenities like a conference room, solarium, and a small library where the old library was with its Kasota stone fireplace.

Each residential unit would have an independent air conditioning and heating source. Water and electricity would be centralized. The roof is an ideal location for generating solar electricity including solar hot water. Solar would produce a meaningful and long-term reduction in utility costs. Solar installations and operating costs have significantly declined in recent years and solar has become more efficient.

There appear to be no components of the building that local personnel cannot do, except for the elevator and solar. Remember, approximately 70 percent of the total cost goes to labor which assuredly would benefit our local payrolls.

The restoration of the community center would generate a significant long-term (40 years?) stable tax base for Ely.

Gerry Snyder
Ely
Former Finance Officer for the New York State Urban Development Corporation and a consultant to The American Institute of Architects.

City of Tower is failing its ambulance service

Last week, the *Timberjay’s* coverage of the TAAS Commission meeting stated that: “Greenwood resident Lee Peterson, a frequent ambulance service critic, then asked why the ambulance service had not presented a business plan to the commission, something it had planned to do last year. Peterson was told there was to be no public comment at the meeting, and at that point, both Peterson and Stoehr left.”

First, I want to clarify that I have no problems with the ambulance service and the responders. Far from it. I understand their issues and dedication. My granddaughter is a responder in a township near Duluth. I am very proud of her.

Second, let’s clarify that it is the city that is directed by the Ambulance Vehicle Replacement Aid Agreement to provide a busi-

ness plan to the commission for review. Exact wording from the agreement is: “By the 3rd quarterly meeting of the Ambulance Commission, the city shall present a draft business plan for the ambulance service.” The city failed to provide this last July, and therefore, there isn’t even an agreement for 2022. The 2021 agreement is obviously expired. The “business plan” is a tool for use by the commission basically to help decide if the entities served by the TAAS should make a voluntary per capita contribution to the Ambulance Vehicle Replacement Fund, and if so, how much.

Third, yes, I was told that there is “no public input at the meeting.” That is unusual and unfortunate. “Public Input” is not even on the agenda of TAAS Commission meetings. Every other type of meeting in Tower has “Public Input” on their agendas. Strange. But not surprising to me.

The *Timberjay* article could’ve contained very relevant information, such as the fact that as of the end of March, the Ambulance Service Fund, which contains the money that the ambulances earn when they go out on calls, had a balance of only \$3,147. That’s where all of the operations, including wages are paid from. It would also have been worth reporting that the fund is in arrears to the tune of \$3,789 for missed transfer mileage payments to the Ambulance Vehicle Replacement Fund. \$3,394 is leftover debt from 2021.

Yes, I have problems with how the city runs the Tower Area Ambulance Service.

Lee Peterson
Greenwood Twp

We welcome your letters

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

We ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

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

Thoughts on my recent trip to Great Britain - Part I

On Friday, March 25, I was very fortunate to travel from Minneapolis to Great Britain with my Soudan friend and travel expert, Mary Batinich. Jill Wagoner, also from Soudan, joined in and the group happily grew from two to more with others joining us across the Atlantic. The purpose of the trip was simply to



SCARLET STONE

Wales.

“nip” across the pond (Mary’s expression) for leisure, but also for Mary and some of us members of the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center’s (LVCC) Fundraising Committee to meet with a distinguished male vocal choir (Cor Meibion Rhos) from the mining village of Rhosllannerchrugog (Rhos) in northeast

Singing has always been part of the Welsh people’s identity because it allowed them to escape the labor and danger of the mines through the joy of singing. Also, for centuries, their English suppressors would not allow the Welsh to use sophisticated musical instruments so their voices became their orchestras. To accompany their beautiful songs of six to eight-part harmony, they developed and used small harps.

Known as the “Land of Song”, Welsh choral and folk singing took place in churches,

parties, schools and was prevalent in the pubs, too...as we witnessed!

The Rhos Choir was formed in 1891 and has been at the forefront of male vocal singing, winning numerous awards and accolades while touring extensively. Mary has arranged and managed three tours to the U.S. for the choir, with the last being over a decade ago when they performed on Garrison Keillor’s *Prairie Home Companion*. Keillor later said the Rhos choir was one of the top ten acts in his twenty-five years. A year or so

ago, Keillor reached out to Mary saying he would love to sing with the choir once more. Mary then contacted the choir and asked if they would like to come to the U.S. again. They said “yes they would,” but then COVID hit and plans were put on hold. Because the popular personality Keillor has had health issues, he may not be able to be part of an upcoming tour, projected to be in the summer of 2024, but he is one of choir’s most enthusiastic

See TRAVELS...pg. 5

Letters from Readers

How did Stauber come to rely on lying?

Last week’s editorial in the last Timberjay brought to me a question? How long can a person live in an altered reality without a mental disorder resulting?

Our Eighth District congressman was a Duluth policeman. Where or when did his mind flip from being a cop to an alternative reality liar, over and over again. And he isn’t the only one stricken with the “Big Lie.”

**Skip Dickinson
Britt**

Both sides have ideas worth supporting

When I announced my run for the Minnesota State Senate, I promised I would work in a no-nonsense way to deliver for the Northland rather than assume either side has the perfect answer to every problem.

With that in mind, there are two key issues being debated in the legislature where I agree and disagree with both sides. The first is on education funding and the second is on social security taxes.

The best investment we can make in our communities is in our young people because they are our future families, workforce, and community leaders. Yet our schools across the Northland are facing difficult financial constraints, and we’re struggling to recruit the teachers, counselors, and special education professionals we need which in turn keep our classroom sizes too big.

Yet despite these struggles, we see in school district after school district across the Northland where the two party’s priorities lie. In the DFL plan, the Ely School District would receive \$370,934 and the St. Louis County District 2142 would receive \$1,466,579 compared to \$0 for both in the Republican plan.

The injection of state funding for our schools not only supports our student’s futures, but it also reduces the stress of property taxes for local residents, especially those on fixed incomes.

Speaking of those on fixed income, the other issue is on the taxation of Social Security. No senior on a fixed income should be double taxed for something they’ve already paid into. Those that built our communities to

what they are today deserve to retire in dignity and enjoy their golden years right here in northern Minnesota, rather than moving to a state that doesn’t tax social security.

All in all, we should support the youngest and wisest among us by taking the DFL plan to invest in our local schools, and the Republican plan to relieve our seniors. With historic budget surpluses, we can do both and make our communities stronger for it.

We need a state Senator who isn’t just one-sided. One that is thoughtful about our policy choices and won’t just follow a herd off a cliff. If I’m lucky enough to earn your vote in November, I promise you can rely on me to take a no-nonsense approach in just delivering for our communities.

**Grant Hauschild
Candidate for
State Senate District 3
Hermantown**

Religionism is on par with other nasty “isms”

Religionism aligns with racism, sexism and classism for rank and privilege in condition

and opportunity. White supremacy is to racism, male chauvinism to sexism, better sort to classism, what religious arrogance is to religionism. Religionism’s “pecking order” hierarchy seeks to impose its belief agenda over those considered inferiors.

“Isms” use power to deny rights and privileges of Others. White, European, Christian, male and believers have historically claimed higher station to Black, Indigenous, Jew, women and heathens, respectively. The latter suffered enslavement, displacement and genocide, Holocaust, rape, abuse and torture by the former.

Christian and Corporate fundamentalism merge in magic, market and myth to foist their respective authoritarian interests on society. Us against them, ingroup v. outgroup, believer and nonbeliever impose unscientific boundaries to establish artificial barriers to defy the whole of natural existence. Abortion and homophobia, banning and burning books, climate denial and property interests, court appointments and voter suppression form arbitrary boundaries, borders or walls.

Truth, justice, peace, love and human dignity grant no boundary; respectively, deceit, oppression, war, demonizing and dehumanization stem from socially invented boundaries and divisions. Nature’s life-support system, without boundary, illustrates spherical thinking as opposed to the sharp edges of pigeonholing.

There is no inherent virtue in belief or opinion, uninformed. Categorical thinking sees groupings even where none exist. To think otherwise is an act of mental fuzziness that takes false comfort in perverse predisposition. Virtue resides in how we see, relate to and treat one another, not in belief.

Religionism consorting with racism, sexism and classism forms a wicked brew of who and what are included or excluded in people, plan, project and policy. Civil and civic life diminishes, wherever and whenever, human differences are seen as deficiencies. Seeing ourselves in others as fellow human beings opens the door to our better angels.

**Harold Honkola
Stillwater**

TRAVELS...Continued from page 4

fans. The choir would have several performances in various locations as part of ongoing fundraising efforts for the LVCC in Tower and for their own expenses. I am thrilled to be part of this LVCC adventure and have been a singer, performer, graphic artist and most recently assisting with fundraising for the LVCC since I moved to Soudan in 2017.

On with the trip! The three of us overnights in Minneapolis, then flew to Philadelphia, on to Heathrow Airport in London, then took a flight to Manchester, England. It was here we were met by Mary’s Scottish red-headed friend, Kevin Shaw, who drives coaches and vans for BARC transportation company located in Peebles, Scotland. He has driven for other trips Mary has hosted to Great Britain, the last being a LVCC tour to Roman and Celtic Britain. Accompanying Kevin was a young family-friend of Mary’s, Sofia Furrh of Dallas, who is a student of English Literature at the University of Glasgow and she was excited to enrich herself in the company of older characters. It was super having this young,

vibrant and intelligent student with us. We proceeded to Chester to meet another travel partner, Debbie Prutsman, who is a vocalist/actress and teacher from Los Angeles and was featured at a Midsummer Concert here in Tower a few years ago. Deb’s mother grew up with Mary in northern Itasca County in Minnesota.

We were all experiencing some heavy jet lag, with none of us catching much sleep on the seven-hour flight across the Atlantic. As we passed by the green, sheep-dotted rolling hills at the height of daffodil bloom and lambing season... I felt as if I were in a vintage illustrated children’s book. Scenes of charming stone walls from centuries ago when fields were cleared for grazing and farming held the countryside between villages that were bordered with hedgerows and ivy-covered trees. I was fighting back the desire to nod off for an hour but didn’t want to miss any of the amazing scenery. Delightful cottages and farms seemed painted into a long series of picturesque settings. We traveled along narrow curvy roads and arrived in Chester where we walked the worn brick lane

to a cafe near a small open canal. My artist’s senses were on major overload.... and still are. Following lunch and meet-n-greets, Kevin drove us to meet Mary’s longtime friends, the Brookshaw family, who own and operate the Plassey Holiday Park, Retail Village and Golf Course in the picturesque River Dee valley near Wrexham in North Wales. Most of the group stayed with matriarch Della Brookshaw at her exquisite home, the Whey House, that she and her late husband Tony built to match the style and appearance of the century-old manor house.

Over sixty years, they developed the entire Plassey Park on what started out to be lovely property with just a large manor house and a crumbling farm. Driver Kevin and I stayed nearby with daughter Jane Brookshaw, who lives in the small village of Overton on the English border. Jane is an established artist for Dunoon English fine bone china with many award-winning designs over her twenty-five year career with them. She also sells paintings at local galleries. That being established, you can bet we all later came

home with many lovely coffee and tea mugs with Jane’s designs, ranging from brightly illustrated fashionista-ladies to whimsical sheep and Scottish bagpipers. I thoroughly enjoyed staying at Jane’s and seeing her lovely home and illustrating/painting studio that fills the upper third floor, not to mention she had a nice cat that filled my kitty-momma void.

We had arranged to be at the Rhos choir’s rehearsal on Monday, March 28 at a large hall in Rhos. Before leaving for the rehearsal, we enjoyed a beautiful dinner with the Brookshaw family at their restaurant, the Black Sheep, at the Plassey, which is a brilliantly renovated cow barn. Following dinner many of us traveled to the rehearsal in Kevin’s van and enjoyed listening to his heavy Scottish brogue. Mary warmly greeted the director and choir members, many of whom she already knew, and introductions were made. We sat on the side of the room and listened to their practice and when they were finished Mary took the podium and spoke to the members about the plan to have them return to the United States again

to tour and sing. Following her talk, in a sharing of music and fun, I performed the satirical-novelty song, “Lime Jell-O Marshmallow Cottage Cheese Surprise,” by William Bolcom and Joan Morris, that has been a popular piece on Prairie Home Companion. Then Debbie performed the song, “Memory,” from her appearances in the musical, Cats. Before we departed the practice room, Mary requested the choir to please sing a favorite of hers, the Welsh National Anthem, (Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau which in English means Land of My Fathers). The singers gladly rose from their chairs and proudly sang it for us and as the basses rumbled their deep, full melodic notes I felt chills move through me from the richness of sound, opportunity and gratitude for being there. In their standard routine we all walked next door to the Hafod Social Club to share a pint or two of

Guinness and plan their upcoming trip. We listened to pub songs sung by the choir including the song that made us all explode with laughter, “Goodbye My Mother-In-Law.” The lyrics containing humor such as “I’ll come back to you someday, when you’re in a box and far away... goodbye my mother-in-law goodbye.... I’ve had enough of your bloody old jaw... goodbye my mother-in-law goodbye.” This was a high point of our trip and I was able to capture several memorable song videos on my iPhone. We returned to the Brookshaws’ to rest and bolster our strength for more rich and full days of traveling to Bodnant Gardens, Ruthin Castle, the Lake District, Glasgow, Highlands and Edinburgh over the next week. In upcoming columns I will have more stories to share about this wonderful adventure.

SCHOOLS...Continued from page 3

the program through the years is nothing short of amazing,” he said. “This is not a sport with enrollment divisions like other sports. We’re in with Burnsville, Apple Valley, Eden Prairie, and all the biggest schools in the state.”

The Ely Timberwolves Nordic ski team is well known across the state.

QUILTS...Continued from page 3

there’s nothing to the east of me unless you’re going up the North Shore.”

As one would expect, business ebbs and flows with the seasons, picking up significantly going into the summer.

“I’m talking about people that regularly quilt who are coming back from Arizona, Florida and Texas in the summertime,” Covey said. “And tourists. I do a very huge tourist trade.”

Shop Hop

Business is picking up a little earlier this year as Covey is participating in the All Minnesota Shop Hop, a two-month promotion in April and May that offers incentives and prizes for quilters who get out and travel around the state to collect stamps for their event passports while

picking up new fabrics, new ideas, and meeting and mingling with new friends. There’s even a special edition set of fabrics exclusive to the event. Covey isn’t a stranger to shop hops, as she participated in the Quilt Minnesota shop last summer, which is more condensed in time and a bit more hectic.

“People found out where I was and I had buses,” Covey said. “You have no idea what a rush 45 ladies on a bus is when they’ve got an hour and 15 minutes to cruise your shop.”

The All Minnesota Shop Hop, a format that’s duplicated in numerous other states, gives quilters more than twice the amount of time as Quilt Minnesota to visit shops in four defined regions of the state.

We’ve had at least one state individual champion. We’ve had a state team champion. We’ve had top five finishes in both boys and girls at state in the one enrollment division,” he said.

“What Paula has done with that program, and she will tell you she didn’t do it all herself, but she was the

spearhead for a couple of decades, plus. We are losing a legend in the world of high school Nordic skiing,” Coombe added.

With Anderson’s retirement, the school district will post the position for a replacement Nordic ski coach to carry the torch for the program.

long arm machine. While there are bigger stores and people can also shop online these days, Covey has a wide array of fabrics from vintage styles that appeal to traditional quilters to ones with flashy colors and splashy patterns for those into more modern design. The shop is just the right size for her to be able to give each person the attention they need, and in turn to make her happy that the smell of pines brought her to Cook and Elephant Lake.

“It’s been an interesting 11 years,” she said. “This place is a fun zoo. I love my job. I love helping people. I love helping people create. I love working with color and texture. That’s just kind of what happens here.”

To find out more, call (218) 666-3146.



**the
TIMBERJAY**

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Call the Tower office at (218) 753-2950.**

Week of April 18

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

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



Vermilion Country School 3rd Quarter Honor Roll

A Honor Roll
Brandy Strange
Libbie Shaffer
Bryce Williamson
Bailey Pratt
Caleb Ramponi
Siri Salmela
Brandon Strange
Haedyn Miller
Alyssa Costello
Mahlia Schuster
Owen Stellmach

B Honor Roll
Ally Heglin
Jase Swan
Brody Anderson
Ryan Fenske
Anna Chavez
Abbi Zapata

TSHS to meet on Wednesday, April 20 in Soudan

SOUDAN-The Tower-Soudan Historical Society will hold its regularly scheduled board meeting on Wednesday, April 20 at 1:30 p.m. at Breitung Community Center. The meeting is open to the public, and guests are welcome. 2022 membership dues (\$10 single; \$20 family) may be paid at the meeting or mailed to TSHS, PO Box 465, Tower MN 55790.

Membership supports the TSHS goals and allows the society to continue its vision, mission, and projects.



Easter egg hunt set for April 16 at Tower/Herb Lamppa Civic Center

TOWER- The Tower Fire Department is hosting a free Easter Egg Hunt event on Saturday, April 16 at 10 a.m. sharp at

the Tower/Herb Lamppa Civic Center. Over 1,000 eggs, with candy and prizes inside, will be placed for children to find. Food will be provided. The event is being funded by the Tower Firemen's Relief Association.

All area children and their families are invited to attend.

St. James Presbyterian Church has traditionally sponsored this event, but this year the fire department stepped in to continue this community tradition.

Ecumenical Good Friday Worship in Tower

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Ministerial Group and the Tower-Soudan Area Singers invite the community to attend a "Service of Darkness" by Hal Hopson

on Friday, April 15 at 7 p.m. at St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower. This Tenebrae service is appropriate for Good Friday as it takes us through the final hours of Christ's life through song, scriptures, readings, and prayer. Candles are extinguished throughout the service to portray the diminishing light of the world as Christ died on the cross. We invite you, all our communities, neighbors, and friends, to join us on Friday, April 15 for this moving Good Friday service. The offering will be donated to support the Tower Area Food Shelf.

St. Martin's Catholic Church Easter Schedule

Holy Thursday, April 14 – Service at St. Mary's in Cook at 5:30 p.m.

Good Friday, April 15 – Services at Holy Cross in Orr at 3 p.m. and St. Martin's in Tower at 6 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 16 – Service at St. Mary's at 8 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 17 – Services at Holy Cross at 8 a.m. and St. Martin's at 10:30 a.m.

Rob Mattson to play at St. Paul's Lutheran Easter Service

SOUDAN- St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Soudan is holding their Easter Sunday Service at 8:30 a.m. There will be special music with Rob Mattson.

Ukrainian Easter Egg painting class on April 18 in Soudan

SOUDAN- The Lake Vermilion Cultural Center is hosting a Ukrainian Easter Egg painting class on Monday, April 18. The class will be held at the Vermilion Park Inn in Soudan. Cost of the class is \$25 which includes a soup and sandwich lunch which begins at 12 noon. The class itself runs from 1 – 5 p.m., and all materials will be provided. All proceeds will benefit the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center. Class size is limited to 15, and pre-registration is required by emailing

Mary Batinich at malexbat@gmail.com.

The class is being taught by John and Denise Lindquist. The couple first learned the art of Ukrainian egg decorations when they took a community education class in 1985 from Lucy Karcok, whose eggs are displayed at the Smithsonian. Lucy has also been featured in several articles of the "Ukrainian Weekly." Since then, the Lindquists have enjoyed sharing how to make these beautiful eggs, called pysanky in

Ukrainian, with friends, family, and many others.

Pysanky have been part of the culture of the Ukrainian people dating back to pre-Christianity. The peasants believed there was great power embodied in the egg, so they decorated them in the spring to celebrate the renewal of nature and life. Geometrically decorated eggs with stylized animals were given to symbolize protection, health, fertility, love, bountiful harvest, prosperity, etc. Once Christiani-

ty arrived, symbols of the church and love of God were incorporated. The dyes were derived from nature and a wax resist process was used where melted beeswax was applied to the egg using a kistka (copper cone for scooping beeswax which was wired to a dowel and heated by a candle flame). If protected from sunlight, small children and animals, the eggs will keep for years.

VERMILION COUNTRY SCHOOL

Why school choice is important...

Education is not one size fits all. Charter schools offer choices in the public school system to make sure every child has a chance to enjoy an effective public education at a school that puts their unique needs first. In fact, 44 states have 7,700 charter schools



something new. We desire an enrollment of less than 60 students to offer a more personalized instructional approach. In our current student population, VCS will graduate students into the military and to college options. We have PSEO students, where we pay for college tuition in their final two years of high school. VCS will have our first student entering PSEO Eveleth Campus next year in an AAS Technical Program. Our students have career goals to be a plumber, a computer sci-

ence major, a civil engineer, an HVAC technician, an electrician, a small business owner, and several who will pursue nursing.

enjoying a very small school setting while others struggled in their assigned school district and need

ence major, a civil engineer, an HVAC technician, an electrician, a small business owner, and several who will pursue nursing.

Sometimes the best advocates for the school are our students. Here are two student testimonials – one for the personalized learning approach and one for our focus on learning about nature and the assets the Northland offers.

I have learned more at this school than I have at any other school. The people here helped me gain a lot of motivation to push forward and work hard, unlike other schools I have attended. This school was by far the best. Thanks to this school there are a lot more opportunities open for me. While at this school, I have realized I need to open my eyes and get outside of my comfort zone, because if I don't, I'll never achieve my dreams. Thanks to this school and the people who work here, I am able to graduate at the top, and be able to move on from all of this. When I leave here I will remember the people who helped me, and I will use what they have taught me to further my education in different areas, like chemistry or computer science. Thanks to this school, I can achieve my goals in life.

Owen Stellmach, Class of 2022

Everyday we go outside as part of the environmental education at VCS. During that time I observe my surroundings in nature. Over time I get to notice the changes in the forest. Like when the leaves started to change colors and fall off the trees. Or when the snow started melting and the changes that come with spring. I think this time is important because it helps me feel more connected to my surroundings and nature.

Brandon Strange, Class of 2024

In the next seven weeks, our students will take the state accountability tests (MCA); they just finished the ACT test and will finish tests that measure academic growth in math, reading and science. However they will also spend time with the DNR at a fish hatchery, spend two days learning how to portage and paddle canoes at Lake One, take several area hikes, and learn how to identify trees. VCS will host a Pow Wow in May, and other area high school Indian Ed students will join our students at our site. These experiences help us stand out as a unique option for students in this region.

Mary McGrane is the School Director/Administrator at Vermilion Country School.

Changes moving ahead for Gundersen Trust

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- The Gundersen Trust Board met with Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation (DSACF) Development Officer Mark Danielson on April 6 to iron out the details of an agreement that will turn the Gundersen Trust monies into a permanent community endowment fund administered by DSACF that will provide an annual return to the city.

"This will be a fresh start," said Danielson.

The board has renamed the fund the Gundersen Endowment Fund.

A community foundation approach creates a stable source of investment profits, guaranteeing a specific return on the funds invested, mostly between four and five percent. Any income earned in a year above that amount gets reinvested in the principal and helps create a cushion for years if the market is poor. The foundation manages over \$100 million in assets in a total of about 450 individual funds. The foundation would charge a 0.55-percent annual fee on the total amount in the

fund. DSACF is also hiring a new investment manager, and that charge will total 0.1 percent. Moving the money to a community foundation removes any local responsibility for attorney and audit oversight.

One detail that needs to be addressed in the final fund agreement is that the city borrowed money from the trust and still has \$196,000 outstanding to be repaid by 2036. While the city is paying interest, it is lower than the expected return on the money that will be managed by the DSACF.

Gundersen Trust Board members discussed asking the city to consider repaying the loan faster, using the income it will be receiving from the new fund.

"This would grow the endowment faster," said board member Dena Suihkonen.

Estimated annual payments to the city on the entire endowment account are \$40,000, with 75 percent earmarked to the city's general fund, and 25 percent to be distributed as grants to local non-profits, with the awards to be decided by a new Gundersen Fund Committee. It is expected the committee will grant funds to organizations that help provide

recreational, educational, environmental/conservation, artistic, and human services to the community, as set forth in the foundation agreement.

This is a more flexible agreement than the one currently in place, which specifies 75 percent of any income above the rate of inflation (CPI) to the city, and the remainder for recreation in the city's forest lands and community education.

Davidson was not sure how the foundation would like to deal with the loan issue. But after the meeting, he researched the issue and told the city it would not be a problem to hold the loan as part of the fund's portfolio of investments.

Once the details of the fund agreement are settled, the city must petition the court to have the money moved from the trust fund to the community foundation. The Gundersen Trust Board is working with attorney Bradley Hanson, of Quinlivan and Hughes, who specializes in this area. The change will also require approval from the IRS and the Minnesota Attorney General.

While there is no guarantee the move to the foundation will be approved, the attorney expects

a positive outcome since the actions fit with the original creation of the trust.

The balance of the trust fund at the end of March was \$983,738. The board owes about \$2,780 in attorney fees from last fall. The trust has received a little less than \$25 in interest payments on its CDs and money market accounts, along with \$2,272 in interest from the city of Tower's loan repayment. Additional attorney fees will be incurred when the city petitions the court to make the change to the DSACF.

The trust has struggled in recent years with balancing minimal returns from low-interest government-backed investments against annual attorney and accounting fees. There has been little to no money available to support the city, which was the goal when the trust was established about 30 years ago. Board members also felt they did not have the required expertise and financial experience to determine the best investment options. Additionally, questions were raised about the trust's non-profit status because of decisions made by the city's attorneys and auditing firms after the trust was created.

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LIVING HISTORY



The fourth-grade class at Ely’s Washington Elementary School dressed up as their favorite Wax Museum personalities on Tuesday and gathered for a group picture. Students chose a famous person, current or from history, to research and prepared a speech on their life. submitted photo

AROUND TOWN

Chamber of Commerce honors community members

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – Community members here were honored last week by the Ely Chamber of Commerce for their dedication, community spirit, customer service, and volunteer efforts that have contributed to making Ely a better place to live.

The Good Neighbor Business Award went to Frandsen Bank and Trust. The Jackpine Bob Cary Community Spirit Award recipient was Lori Schmidt. Tom Omerza was the Volunteer of Year. Chris Riikola was honored for Excellence in Customer Service.

Good Neighbor

The Good Neighbor Award was presented to Frandsen Bank and Trust.

“Each year the Ely Chamber of Commerce reviews submissions from residents for our annual awards,” said Executive Director Eva Sebesta. “The submission selected for this year’s award winner was provided by Brian Strom from Brainstorm Bakery, also known as Crapola.”

“Frandsen Bank and Trust provides fantastic service to individuals and businesses,” Strom said. “They transformed the bank building during its recent remodel. They provided free rent to the Ely Food Shelf while it was in the building. They provided the opportunity for an area dentist to expand their practice in the building. They provided affordable rent to a local artist so they could have an in-town studio.”

Frandsen Bank & Trust was founded in 1982 with the purchase of a bank in Luck, Wis., by entrepreneur Dennis Frandsen. Today

they have over 35 bank locations in communities throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota, and they are continuing to grow.

“Frandsen Bank provides a true community banking experience by forming meaningful relationships with their customers, both large and small,” Sebesta said. “Frandsen Bank is regularly named a Community Champion by the Minnesota Bankers’ Association, and in 2019, Forbes named them a Best-in-State Bank. They have been named a Top Workplace in Minnesota the past four years and a Top Workplace USA the past two years.”

The Frandsen Forward grant program has awarded \$60,000 in grants to high schools and communities across Minnesota, and their Frandsen Community Excellence Scholarship has awarded \$50,000 in scholarships to high school seniors in 2021 and 2022.

“In the Ely area, Frandsen Bank is proud to support local non-profits, community groups and Ely Memorial High School and elementary through donations and volunteer service. Congratulations to Frandsen Bank and Trust, this year’s Good Neighbor Business Award recipient,” Sebesta said.

Community Spirit

The 2022 Jackpine Bob Cary Community Spirit Award recipient is Lori Schmidt of the International Wolf Center.

“Recipients of this award are enthusiastic promoters of Ely and all it has to offer,” Sebesta said, “and are involved in projects and activities that significantly contribute to the quality of life in the community and in the promotion of Ely as

a great place to visit.”

Schmidt started working at the International Wolf Center in 1989 and is responsible for the care and well-being of a live pack of wolves. In 1990, Schmidt became a professor at Vermilion Community College and shared her knowledge of the outdoors with thousands of students. For more than 20 years, she has worked to coordinate between VCC and other agencies to broaden her students’ professional experience and provide hands-on labor to resource professionals throughout the state. Under Schmidt’s mentorship the VCC Wildlife Club has engaged in substantial wildlife field work including wildlife surveys, prescribed fire, fire suppression, waterfowl bag checks and disease monitoring for the DNR in Tower and Ely.

“Lori has significantly contributed to the quality of life in the community by tirelessly researching the natural world that surrounds the town,” Sebesta said.

The award is named after area author, artist, photographer, wilderness guide and ski racer Jackpine Bob Cary, who epitomized the spirit that is still alive in Ely today.

Volunteer of the Year

The 2022 Volunteer of Year is Tom Omerza.

“Ely has a long history of volunteerism. It is one of the many great qualities that makes Ely such a unique and wonderful place to live, work and play,” she said. “When I think of this year’s recipient of the Volunteer of the Year Award, he embraces that sense of being a volunteer and understands what it means not only for themselves and their family, but also for the entire community.”

Omerza’s career in volunteering is where his heart is: with his children and sports, according to Sebesta.

“Where the two cross most often is basketball. I cannot even begin to tell you the countless hours he has spent in the gym coaching, or at the concession stand ‘getting it ready’. He has coached boys’ and girls’ basketball on some level for many years. He is currently the girls basketball JV coach. He also coached many boys and girls pacesetter teams and summer teams. More importantly he serves on the HOOP Club Board and is active on his watch,” she said.

Since basketball is not year-round, Omerza covers the bases for Little League Baseball.

“For those of you who follow Ely Little League, he was a part of the Dodgers Dynasty back in the day,” she said.

Omerza helped form the softball league in Ely and joined in with other Range cities. He also coached the first team. He scores points for the Touchdown Club.

“The project that most people are unaware of is the re-seeding of the football field,” Sebesta said. “He wanted it to be perfect for the football players. It was a complicated process, so he mowed the lawn at specific times, put up barriers and made sure it was just right. The grass is still doing great and although it was six years ago, he still checks on it.”

Omerza also participates in the Ely Track Club. He no longer has children who are involved in track, but every Fourth of July he dons the ‘Timberwolf’ costume and sells water to

raise money for the club.

And in between his volunteer efforts, Omerza also serves on the Ely School Board. “Some will say being a locally-elected official is not a volunteer position, but I tend to disagree. The stipend is low, the emotional stakes are high and you only put your name on the ballot because you care so much,” Sebesta said.

Customer Service

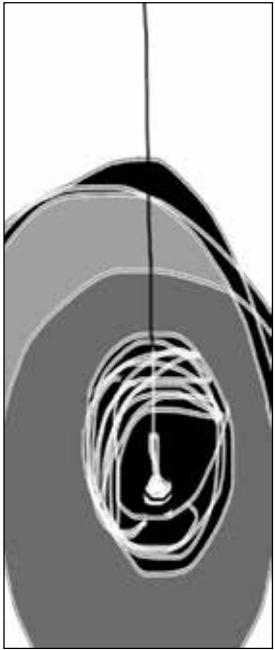
The 2022 Excellence in Customer Service award recipient is Chris Riikola. He was recognized on behalf of Zupancich Brothers Inc. and Northland Market.

“When thinking of ‘excellent customer service’, many thoughts come to mind,” said Jim Zupancich, “and Chris Riikola is always at the forefront. Throughout his years at Northland Market and now at Zup’s, his strong work ethic and strong commitment to customers has not gone unnoticed. Chris comes to work every day with a smile on his face and represents himself and our company with genuine compassion. He is always the first person willing to help customers, his fellow coworkers, and will go above and beyond in any way he can.”

Zupancich continued, “It has been a true pleasure witnessing and experiencing Chris’s strong commitment to those in our community. There have been many customers who have made it a point to recognize Chris’s hard work and friendly demeanor and it is a pleasure to join the Chamber of Commerce and local community in doing the same. His dedication to our community has made Ely a brighter place and we are honored to support him in receiving this award.”

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2022



Ice yet on the lakes
three feet to melt before spring
a ways to the fish

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 canceled.
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

“Springtime is coming, honest.” Those encouraging words came from Kenzie Cannon at Ely Flower and Seed last week as she transplanted seedlings in the business’s many greenhouses. “We have lots of things all ready to go as soon as the snow melts and things start warming up,” she said. The garden center is open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily for those who want to enjoy the sights and smells of spring while waiting to plant.

photo by K. Vandervort



ECR online auction ends Monday

ELY – The 44th annual Ely Community Resource (ECR) online auction, “A Celebration of Artful Living in Ely,” concludes at noon on Monday, April 18.

ECR programs partner with Ely Schools to provide academic support in school and after school, enrichment programs that address science and the environment, elementary reading and gardening programs, and college awareness, exploration, and preparation. ECR also partners with the city of Ely to provide recreation opportunities year-round.

“Ely Community Resource youth programs have been supported by Ely’s talented painters, quilters, potters, bakers, photographers, knitters, seamstresses, furniture makers, jewelry makers, and every type of crafter throughout the years,” said

Executive Director Julie Hignell.

“Other important partnerships have developed along with our participation in Ely Community Care Team efforts. Those organizations, as well as area churches, have helped us provide for basic needs our youth and families have. In 2022 we will be expanding our mentoring program in response to increased requests. Distance learning and the accompanying isolation have been tough on young people. We’re so grateful for our compassionate community.”

For more information and to participate in the 2022 online auction, go to <https://www.32auctions.com/ECR2022>.

“Our auction is our biggest fundraiser and we are indebted to our generous donors and to all of you who participate,” she said.

Council hears plans for Voyageurs boat disinfections

ORR – Voyageurs National Park Superintendent Bob DeGross was at the Orr City Council meeting on Monday to describe plans to deal with a possible infestation of zebra mussels in Rainy Lake.

A single adult zebra mussel was found in 2020, and last July larvae was discovered in the lake. The juveniles indicate a reproducing population is present.

“To prevent the zebra mussels from leading up to other lakes and watersheds associated with the park, what we’re going to be doing to is require all vessels that portage from Rainy up to Namakan (to be decontaminated) with high pressure, heated water,” DeGross said.

There will be no charge for the process, which will likely take a half-hour per boat to complete, DeGross said. Additional personnel and equipment are being considered to help speed the process, but could be difficult to come by.

“We’re trying to get the staff to do the service out there so it’s not as much of a burden to the concession operator,” DeGross said. “They’re going to be helping out as much as they can.”

“We’re hoping that in early May, and definitely before they open their operations, that we’ll get more details out in terms of what the hours of operation for the portage are,” DeGross added. “It might be limited if staffing is challenged, and we have been seeing a challenge trying to pick up our seasonal staff.”

GRAND OPENING



A little snow, a little cold, and a lot of wind wasn’t about to stop last Thursday’s formal grand opening of Rose Cottage Baking Co. in Cook. Owner Rebekah Hodge Olson stepped away from a packed house to cut the ceremonial ribbon held by daughters Maria King, left, and Victoria Fickes, assisted by baby Amelia.

photo by D. Colburn

The Lost Forty to perform free concert in Cook on April 28

COOK- Two centuries of Irish musical influence on the underexplored folk traditions of the north woods will be on display when the internationally-known duo The Lost Forty brings their lively musical talents to Cook on Thursday, April 28 for a 4:30 p.m. free concert at Cook Community Center, sponsored by the Cook Public Library.

Comprised of Bemidji native Brian Miller and Wisconsinite Randy Josa, The Lost Forty performs the fascinating folk music that once rang out across the Great Lakes region in the days when pine was king. Their show includes rich regional history, colorful stories and beautifully interwoven accompaniment on bouzouki and guitar.

Miller and Josa are both renowned in the Irish traditional music world for their work with numerous artists in the U.S. and Ireland, including groups Bua and Myserk. Miller is a recipient of the Parsons Fund Award from the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and has been awarded several grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board for his revival of regional folk music. Gosa’s versatile musicianship has been described by critic Alex Monaghan of Folk World as “driving, percussive, lyrical, gentle, dominant by turns.” As a duo, they mix passion for north woods history and folklore with a finely honed approach to song arrangement to bring old music to life.

They have performed at the University of Chicago Folk Festival, Milwaukee Irish Fest and over 100 venues Minnesota.



North Woods student art by Lilly Voges, top left, Autumn Swanson, bottom left, and Olivia Udovich is on exhibit at the NWFA Gallery. submitted photos

Reception for NWFA North Woods Student Art Showcase is April 20

COOK- An upcoming reception on April 20 at Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook will celebrate student artists from North Woods School whose work is currently on display at the gallery.

Works entered in the Section 7A Visual Arts Festival Competition on April 4 at Moose Lake are featured in the exhibit in the gallery’s Wolfe Den, including a print by senior Olivia Udovich, “Serenity Through My Eyes,” that received “Best of Show” honors. The Student Art Showcase continues through Friday, April 22.

The reception from 4 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 20, will be at the NWFA Gallery at 210 S River St. in Cook.

The exhibition is available for viewing during the normal gallery operating hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Thursdays, and Fridays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

To learn more about classes, concerts, and special events sponsored by NWFA, including the annual photo contest that is now accepting entries, go to www.nwfamn.org, email nwfamn.org@gmail.com, or visit the NWFA Facebook page.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Catholic Easter services continue

REGIONAL- St. Martin’s, St. Mary’s, and Holy Cross Catholic Holy Week activities continue this week through Easter Sunday.

► Holy Thursday, April 14 - Services at St. Mary’s, Cook, at 6 p.m.

► Good Friday, April 15 - Services at Holy Cross, Orr, at 3 p.m. and at St. Martin’s, Tower, at 6:30 p.m.

► Holy Saturday, April 14 - Easter Vigil Services at St. Mary’s, Cook, at 8:30 p.m.

► Easter Sunday, April 15 - Easter Mass at Holy Cross, Orr, at 8 a.m. and Easter Mass at St. Martin’s, Tower, at 11 a.m.

Call Maryann at 218-410-7830 with any questions.

Grizzlies duo named to robotics academic team

FIELD TWP- North Woods junior Kohen Briggs and freshman Alex Burckhardt were named to the Northern Minnesota Robotic Conference 2022 All-Academic Team.

Briggs and Burckhardt earned the honor as members of the Iron Mosquitoes robotics team at Northeast Range School in Babbitt.

The 31-team conference tabbed 81 students from 15 teams for academic honors, based on a

current grade point average of 3.5.

Trinity sets Holy Week observances

COOK- Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook has announced its Holy Week service schedule.

Maundy Thursday First Communion is at 6:30 p.m. on April 14. The Good Friday Tenebrae Service is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on April 15.

Services for Easter Sunday will be at 9:30 a.m.

Worship services are also viewable on the church’s Facebook page and YouTube channel.

NORTH WOODS SCHOOL

Regular attendance essential for school and work success

FIELD TWP- The entire world is dealing with a multitude of issues post-pandemic that have affected everything from supply chains to fuel prices to workforce shortages and beyond. We see it at school as well.

In my last article I highlighted our frustration with cellular phones in school. I truly feel that after two years of being locked down and glued to a screen that many youths and adults have gone down the rabbit hole of technology addiction.

Another casualty of the pandemic is attendance. School attendance issues did not just start this year, but we have seen more kids missing more school. When schools closed in March 2020, everyone went virtual. All in-person classes were canceled and for the remainder of the year we were forced to do school on a computer screen.

The following school year, 2020-21, school at North Woods was in-person, but the state required us to also offer virtual classes, forever known as “distance learning” classes. Let’s be honest: We did the best we could do, but this was not the same as being in regular school.

Under those circumstances, there were students who did not set foot in a school building for fifteen months. During this same time, many businesses and government offices were also shut down and employees were working virtually. Adults were home with their kids. Many families took vacations that they have dreamed about for years.

COVID protocols meant that kids and workers were “contact traced” out of their normal environment for 15 days. Fears of contracting COVID led to many choosing to stay in a closed environment, and for some, the fear of contracting the virus is still a reality. Many folks became used to different expectations.

Student mental health has suffered, and adult mental health has, too. It seems that actually having to be somewhere at a specific time has become... optional? Now we are working hard to get “normal” back.

Statistics show that the single biggest indicator of success in school is consistent attendance. Some kids can be successful while missing school, but most need to be here when new material is presented, and new skills are being worked on. Simply put, a lot of our kids fall behind when they are not here and catching up is hard.

School attendance is required until age 17, and excused absences (besides a school activity) are actually limited to illness and family emergencies. The school does not have to excuse anything else. Or do we? Yes. We are flex-



JOHN VUKMANICH

ible and try to accommodate our families. Maybe it has become too flexible, but then again, it is parents and families who are ultimately responsible for getting their kids to school. We have only so much leverage.

Our procedure when a student is absent is to call families to try to find out what’s happening. Sometimes parents need help. Sometimes kids are struggling with mental health, so getting some mental health support for the family is paramount. We send attendance letters, a first letter at three unexcused absences and a second at seven. If the student continues to miss, we utilize our School Resource Officer to make a connection and represent the legal aspect of school attendance. We have relationships with both St. Louis County and Bois Forte social workers. For younger kids in elementary school, we typically refer the situation to the aforementioned resources as an “educational neglect” referral.

For 7-12 grade kids, the procedure is not as cut and dried. I have been in

the school administration game for 15 years and have yet to see a model in our region that effectively leverages high school kids back into school. I have had numerous conversations over the years with county attorneys, probation officers, and even judges. St. Louis County partners with our district’s School Resource Officer program and our Check and Connect program, resources we are very appreciative of.

We use these resources first, along with the relationships that we have with our kids first and foremost. Positive relationships with our kids and families are very important, and once the legal system becomes involved, it can affect that relationship. We still could use stronger resources for attendance though, as it is tough to address an “out-of-school” problem with an “in-school” resource. The law is the law, and it should be upheld.

We keep plugging away, though. The majority of our kids get here, and we are glad they are with us at school, where kids should be. The reality for our students’ futures is that they will eventually be seeking employment and they will need to be dependable in order to earn a paycheck. We need to keep on working to instill timeliness and dependability in our young people, because showing up on time is half the battle.

Read us online at
www.timberjay.com
check out our e-edition

CORONAVIRUS

Is a new COVID-19 wave headed for Minnesota?

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

Experts unsure, but conditions ripe to support new variants

REGIONAL- There have been fewer COVID cases reported in the North Country in the past month than the count for Ely in a single week in early February, and while the state continues to average around 600 new cases a day, it’s a far cry from the days of January and 13,000-plus daily case counts.

So is the COVID pandemic finally behind us, or could it still be ahead of us?

Two years ago, in April 2020, President Donald Trump predicted COVID pandemic deaths would total about 60,000, and senior advisor Jared Kushner declared that “We’re on the other side of the medical aspect of this, and I think we’ve achieved all the different milestones that are needed, so the federal government rose to the challenge and this is a great success story.”

What followed was the pandemic’s first massive peak that November and December, and as Trump left office in January 2021 the country had just suffered its highest COVID death counts to that point, a combined total from December and January of

nearly 160,000 deaths.

But vaccines had been developed and were being administered, the coronavirus peak had subsided, and by mid-summer 2021 it was President Joe Biden’s turn to declare a victory of sorts in a July 4 address.

“While the virus hasn’t been vanquished, we know this: It no longer controls our lives. It no longer paralyzes our nation. Today, we’re closer than ever to declaring our independence from a deadly virus,” Biden said.

Two months later, daily case counts in the U.S. were more than 11 times higher than on July 1, averaging 163,000 cases a day as the Delta wave swept across the country, and the short but huge Omicron wave hit an incredible cases-per-day average of just over 800,000. More than 385,000 people have lost their lives to COVID since Biden’s July 4 speech, bringing the U.S. pandemic total just shy of one million deaths.

Michael Osterholm, the University of Minnesota infectious disease expert who has been tapped by national media for his

expert analysis throughout the pandemic, wasn’t among those touting an early end to the pandemic. A year ago, as the numbers were coming down, he believed the worst days of the pandemic could well be ahead. Osterholm and writer Mark Olshaker addressed the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic in a recent article in Foreign Affairs.

“Trying to map out the future course of this disease requires humility,” they wrote. “Governments and international institutions must recognize that they cannot have all the answers and prepare for the unknown. The variants of the virus were simply not behaving according to the accepted pandemic model, which was based primarily on the experience of influenza. Nobody can say with any certainty when and how the pandemic will end.”

The threat of BA.2

The Omicron variant had such a large and rapid impact in part because it was more infectious than its predecessor Delta. Now, an even more infectious subvariant of Omicron, dubbed BA.2, has a solid

foothold in Minnesota as elsewhere it is driving case loads slowly upward again.

Northeast U.S. states from Maine to New Jersey have seen average daily case rates increase as much as 64 percent in the past two weeks, with BA.2 accounting for more than 84 percent of new cases, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Genomic testing by the Minnesota Department of Health laboratory has determined that BA.2 is the dominant strain here, also confirmed by wastewater analysis in the seven-county Twin Cities metro area. The subvariant is responsible for halting the Omicron decline at a level seen early last August, as the Delta wave began creeping into the state, and for a small but noticeable uptick in daily case counts.

While regular COVID testing doesn’t identify what variant caused a particular case, recent history in the North Country zip codes monitored by the *Timberjay* is somewhat like that of the state.

Only 19 cases have been reported across the past four weeks in the

region, but 12 of them, 63 percent, have been in the past two weeks, consistent with the slight upturn in cases statewide.

Hospitalizations and deaths, as they have elsewhere, have remained low. Health officials have expressed cautious optimism that BA.2 will not turn into another serious pandemic wave. However, that optimism is tempered by several realities that could give BA.2 or another COVID variant the fuel to spark another round of the pandemic.

A third of Minnesotans have not received either a two-dose regimen of Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. With what is known about the decline in vaccine efficacy over time, another concerning number is that less than half of the state’s eligible population has received the recommended booster shots to increase their immunity.

Data on Minnesotans who have gotten COVID-19 after being fully vaccinated, called breakthrough cases, indicate that breakthrough cases represented

roughly 40 percent of all new cases diagnosed during the Delta and Omicron waves, which was due in part to the decline in vaccine effectiveness over time. But the data also continues to show that hospitalization and death rates from COVID infections are significantly lower among those who have been vaccinated.

So, while the overall numbers are far from where they were, the pandemic hasn’t gone away. COVID remains a risk, particularly for those who are unvaccinated, those who haven’t had boosters, those with compromised immune systems or other underlying health conditions, and those who are older.

And the ability the virus has to mutate, coupled with over half of the world’s population being unvaccinated has Osterholm still concerned about the future.

“The continuing spread of the virus could lead to the emergence of variants that might be even more transmissible than Omicron, at least as virulent as Delta, and even more capable of evading the immunity provided by vaccines or prior infection,” he said.

CITY OF TOWER

Tower to seek funding for Marina Drive utility extension

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER—The city council here will seek a roughly two-million-dollar federal funding package to extend sewer and water to Marina Drive as well as address a number of utility issues on South Third St.

The city will let the Tower-Breitung Wastewater Board make its own application for a fourth treatment pond to address the capacity limitations in the three existing ponds.

Mayor Dave Setterberg said he had consulted with Sen. Amy Klobuchar’s office and had been informed that the “sweet spot” for local projects in Washington was around \$1.5-\$2 million.

The federal funding

could provide up to 80 percent of the project costs, although Setterberg said he was optimistic that the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation funds could help fill much of the remaining funding gap. The IRRR had considered funding a sewer extension to Marina Drive, which could connect the planned new RV park, the Your Boat Club marina, the Marjo Motel and accompanying property, the county public works garage, and the True Value store to the municipal system. The Tower Economic Development Authority also owns five acres along Marina Drive, purchased in 2020, as a potential site for a new hotel.

City officials offered

few details on the South Third St. project or any current cost estimates.

In other business, the council gave the first reading to a change in the city’s zoning ordinance, advocated by council member Kevin Norby, that could clarify the rules surrounding the construction of garages on lots without an accompanying residential structure. The change would allow for the construction of garages in all residential classifications on adjacent lots as long as the adjacent lots are re-platted as one lot.

Norby said the ordinance, which was discussed but never recommended by the city’s planning and zoning commission, would help to reduce blight by making it possible for

homeowners to create more indoor storage space. At the same time, he said the intent of the change was to ensure that vacant lots in town don’t become used solely for storage. The ordinance would also require that a lot used by an adjacent homeowner for construction of a garage, be connected to utilities to facilitate the possible future construction of a residence on the lot.

In other action, the council:

- Rejected the lone bid, from C&C Winger for \$500, for the purchase of the city’s old grader. The city had put a minimum bid of \$5,000 on the equipment. The council opted to readvertise the grader with a \$4,000 minimum bid.
- Heard an update

but took no action on the pending transfer of the Gundersen Trust to the Duluth-Superior Area Community Fund.

➤ Referred a request from Dave Mesojedec to purchase 2.5 acres of city-owned land just off Pike Bay, on the south side of Hoodoo Point Road, to the ad hoc forestry committee for consideration. Mesojedec said he is interested in building a garage and a well on the property.

➤ Approved the low bid of \$146,562 from Mesabi Bituminous for parking lot reconstruction and culvert repair at the Tower Airport. The total project cost, including engineering and construction administration, will run \$207,762 and the city will be responsible for five

percent, or \$10,388.

➤ Gave the second and final reading of a new ordinance pertaining to the management of RV parks and other campgrounds in the city.

➤ Agreed to put the city’s water and sewer line jetter up for bid, with a minimum bid of \$1,400. The city is looking to get out of the business of line thawing, mostly due to liability concerns.

➤ Heard from Schultz about several minor upgrades to the city’s website.

➤ Approved an amended 2022 budget under the consent agenda. The biggest change is an increase in the forecasted revenues to the general fund, from \$442,883 to \$552,064.

TOWER...Continued from page 1

closely.” Norby said the group would likely look at the cost of upgrading the service to ALS and possible new revenue streams, such as the creation of a taxing district, possibly overseen by a joint powers board.

Norby said rural ambulances are facing the same challenges around the country. “You can’t survive getting smaller,” he said. “So maybe you need to look at getting bigger.”

Councilor Joe Morin called the creation of an ad hoc committee “a good first step,” but acknowledged there are lots of questions that still need to be answered.

Mayor Dave Setterberg questioned whether ALS service was sustainable for Tower, even with the

creation of a taxing district. “Let’s face it, right now, Ely, Virginia, they’re having a hard time keeping paramedics and ALS. So how are we going to do that better than them?”

Even so, Setterberg agreed it was worthwhile exploring options for the service.

The council also approved a pay increase of a dollar per hour for ambulance staff who respond to calls. Setterberg noted that it had been nearly seven years since the last pay increase for EMTs and EMRs who respond on a per-call, rather than on-call, basis. The council, missing Sheldon Majerle, voted 3-0-1, with Tom Suihkonen abstaining due to a conflict of interest, to approve the one dollar an hour increase.

The council also backed, again with Suihkonen abstaining, to pay EMTs and EMRs an extra \$2-4 an hour for taking inter-hospital transfers. Setterberg advocated for the higher pay as part of a six-month pilot project to see if the bonus pay, which would be in addition to their base rate, would encourage more ambulance staff to

take transfers.

Setterberg said increasing the number of transfers could generate more badly-needed revenue to cover the high cost of the service’s paid on-call staffing. The Tower ambulance service has been operating for the past several months with virtually no cash cushion to cover the monthly payroll and Setterberg was hopeful that increasing the number of transfers could provide revenue to help cover payroll.

Setterberg provided an analysis he had completed of the revenues and expenses generated by transfers over the past six months. He said it was clear that the longer transfers were generally net-lossers for the ambulance service, particularly when the mileage charge of \$1.66 assessed by the ambulance commission to help cover vehicle depreciation is included in the cost. He said since the service focused its transfers on relatively shorter distances, the numbers improved significantly. By his calculation, the service generated a net surplus of about \$9,600 from 24 transfers

completed in the second half of 2021, or an average of about \$400 per transfer. Setterberg said if the department could double its transfers, it could generate close to \$20,000 in net surplus. He said that would help to cover the cost of on-call staffing, which has jumped sharply since the Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board highlighted the service’s past failure to maintain a 24/7 on-call roster. The service has greatly improved its staffing levels since. “We’re now up to 90-95 percent staffing,” noted Setterberg, but that improvement has come with a cost.

The EMSRB report had predicted that the cost of maintaining the required staffing level would be unsustainable given Tower’s exceptionally high on-call pay rates. The EMSRB’s financial consultant noted that Tower’s on-call rates were the highest he had encountered in the Upper Midwest and had recommended cutting the rate at least in half. Setterberg and Norby downplayed the high on-call pay rates and said

that Tower was actually lower than pay rates for Ely and Virginia. Setterberg later acknowledged that the Ely and Virginia pay rates were for emergency personnel who are actually on-duty, whereas the staff in Tower is considered to be on-call, but not on-duty. “It’s not apples to apples,” he admitted.

While Morin said he was interested in trying the higher pay to see if it encouraged more transfers, he said he’d like to see measurable outcomes so the council can assess its effectiveness six months from now.

In other ambulance business, clerk-treasurer Michael Schultz provided an update on the cost savings from utilizing city workers during their regular hours to provide on-call ambulance coverage. Both the deputy clerk and the maintenance assistant are trained ambulance staff and on-call hours they cover while at work can reduce the need to pay for other on-call staff. Schultz said the deputy clerk covered 101.25 on-call hours over the past quarter, yielding

a savings of \$1,063. The maintenance assistant did not cover any hours.

Schultz also reported that he plans to make payments to the ambulance replacement account that the city currently owes based on the transfer mileage charge of \$1.66 a mile.

“I was unaware that the funds had not been transferred,” said Schultz. The city had previously paid \$6,397 for transfer mileage in 2021, out of a total of \$9,791 owed. The city’s arrears, totaling \$3,394, were an issue with some township representatives at the most recent ambulance commission meeting. Schultz noted that the ambulance service sometimes lacks the funds to pay larger bills, and he suggested that the council consider transferring money from the general fund to cover the cost. He said he planned to make the payment before the end of April. Norby suggested a late payment should not be a major issue. “Other townships have been a little late on their payments at times,” he said.





Wall of Heroes



Timothy Pepworth

December 17, 1977 – January 6, 2007

Tim always lived life to the fullest. He always had a smile on his face and loved Christmas time because of the family gatherings. He left behind a son, Nathan and Nathan's mom Angela, who were his world. He also left behind his beloved mom, Vickie, as well as his 3 sisters, Crystal, Allison & Rhiannon. Tim was an amazing guitarist and could often be found jamming with his friends, who he loved immensely. He was so proud to work for Max Gray Construction and had recently received his union card. The day he went to the hospital he was actually Christmas shopping with his mom. It was found that he had an aneurysm in his brain that had burst. He spent the next 17 days fighting hard to heal. With information from his friends it was discovered that he wished to be a donor if anything had ever happened to him. So, with that, his family made the hardest decision they ever could and let him peacefully pass on January 6th, 2007. While our hearts have been broken with his passing, we find comfort in knowing some of him lives on in those he gave the most precious gift of life to.

WALL...Continued from page 1

The wall also gives families the opportunity to write about the life and passions of their loved ones.

Vickie's tribute to her son Tim on the "Wall of Heroes" says that he lived life to the fullest.

"He always had a smile on his face and loved Christmas time because of the family gatherings," Vickie wrote. "Tim was an amazing guitarist and could often be found jamming with his friends, who he loved immensely." The posting also honors Tim's

family members, including his mother Vickie, his son Nathan and Nathan's mother Angela, and his three sisters, Crystal, Allison and Rhiannon. Tim worked for Max Gray Construction and was proud to have recently received his union card.

Essentia St. Mary's is hosting a special event on Monday, April 18 for the dedication of the Wall of Heroes. It will be held at 12 noon at the flagpole on the Third Street Lobby Entrance, 407 E Third St. Duluth.

Rennae Houle-Burns, an Essentia Nurse Manager who chairs the organ donation committee, said their ICU staff's goal is "always to have our patients go on to live quality lives."

But sometimes this isn't possible, and families have to make a very hard, and very emotional, decision, she said.

"This is a way we could honor those who have provided this gift," she said, "and to honor those heroes."

The wall display allows families to make a tribute to their loved ones. It also will become a place to recognize those whose lives have been saved or transformed after an organ transplant.

"To recognize their values in life," she said, "and the value that their gift of donation has made for other lives."

Organ donation is a rare procedure. St. Mary's only had nine donors in 2021. But the organs from those donors went on to save 27 lives.

"Not everyone who dies is eligible," Houle-Burns said.

St. Mary's is not a transplant center. Organs donated are retrieved by transplant teams who fly into Duluth and travel back to their own hospitals, usually to the Mayo Clinic or University of Minnesota. St. Mary's does perform cornea transplants, she said.

The Wall of Heroes began last spring, in honor of April's designation as National Donate Life Month. The display was funded by the Essentia Health St. Mary's Auxiliary and the Essentia Health Foundation.

"This was a big investment," she said, "but we have a heart for donation."

The group sent out invitations to the April 18 flag raising to area donor families and patients who have received organ donations, and they included information on creating a tribute.

"We've had two new tributes added to the wall," Houle-Burns said. She hopes that more families will participate, and that others will visit to learn about the area families whose lives have been touched by organ donation.

Whenever a family chooses donation, the hospital flies a special flag, and has a ceremony with the family and staff. The flag is then sent to the family.

"The purpose is to honor the gifts of life and sight," she said.

Organ donor education

Houle-Burns said the most important thing families can do is to talk about donation now.

"It is so much more helpful if a family member knows if their loved one wants to do a donation," she said. "It makes a hard time a little easier."

During National Donate Life Month the hospital works to increase awareness, and to urge people to register as donors, on their driver's license or other documents.

You can also register as a donor at <https://www.donatelife.net/ndlm/>.

Essentia St. Mary's is hosting a Wall of Heroes dedication on Monday, April 18 in Duluth.



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Preview Order 0209-W1E-4x4 SuperCrew: Order Summary

Dealership Name: Ford of Hibbing

Dealer Rep.	President Award Winning Staff	Type	Retail	Vehicle Line	F-150	Order Code	0209
Customer Name	Satisfied Customer	Priority Code	19	Model Year	2022	Price Level	230
DESCRIPTION	MSRP	DESCRIPTION	MSRP				
F150 4X4 SUPERCREW-145	\$46,885	275/65R18 BSW ALL-TERRAIN TIRE	\$0				
145INCH WHEELBASE	\$0	3.55 RATIO REGULAR AXLE	\$0				
CARBONIZED GRAY METALLIC	\$0	6600# GVWR PACKAGE	\$0				
CLOTH 40/20/40	\$0	JOB #2 ORDER	\$0				
MEDIUM DARK SLATE	\$0	CV LOT MANAGEMENT	\$0				
EQUIPMENT GROUP 302A	\$5675	FRONT LICENSE PLATE BRACKET	\$0				
XLT SERIES	\$0	BRIGHT POLISHED STEP BARS	\$0				
ELECTRONIC AUTO TEMP CONTROL	\$0	50 STATE EMISSIONS	\$0				
SIRIUS XM W/ 360L	\$0	ON BOARD 400W OUTLET	\$0				
SYNC 4 W/ENHANCED VOICE RECOGN	\$0	CLASS IV TRAILER HITCH	\$0				
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18" CHROME-LIKE PVD WHEELS	\$0	ADVERTISING ASSESSMENT	\$0				
2.7L VG ECOBOOST	\$1,195	DESTINATION & DELIVERY	\$1,695				
ELEC TEN-SPEED AUTO W/TOW MODE	\$0						
TOTAL BASE AND OPTIONS						MSRP	\$55,450

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Preview Order 0405 - R9B 4x4 Big Bend: Order Summary

Dealership Name: Ford of Hibbing

Dealer Rep.	President Award Winning Staff	Type	Retail	Vehicle Line	Bronco Sport	Order Code	0405
Customer Name	Happy Customers	Priority Code	19	Model Year	2022	Price Level	230
DESCRIPTION	MSRP	DESCRIPTION	MSRP				
R9B0 BRONCO SPORT BIG BEND AWD	\$29,980	225/65 R17 102H A/S BSW TIRES	\$0				
105.1" WHEELBASE	\$0	JOB #2 ORDER	\$0				
CARBONIZED GRAY METALLIC	\$0	CV LOT MANAGEMENT	\$0				
CLOTH WEASY CLEAN MATERIAL	\$0	50 STATE EMISSIONS	\$0				
EBONY	\$0	FUEL CHARGE	\$0				
ORDER CODE 200A	\$0	PRICED DORA	\$0				
17" CARBON GRAY HIGH GLS WHL	\$0	ADVERTISING ASSESSMENT	\$0				
1.5L ECOBOOST ENGINE	\$0	DESTINATION & DELIVERY	\$1,495				
8-SPD AUTO TRANSMISSION	\$0						
TOTAL BASE AND OPTIONS						MSRP	\$31,475

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2017 CHEROKEE LIMITED V6



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#7824B

2014 ESCAPE TITANIUM AWD



\$16,980

#25095A

2017 MKX RESERVE AWD



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#24965B

2015 ESCAPE TITANIUM AWD



\$18,478

#7821

2018 EXPLORER XLT W/LEATHER
35K MI



\$37,542

#7819



LEIGH LONSON



TIM CARRUTH



RYAN AULTMAN



JAMI HENDRIX</

VOTE...Continued from page 1

stemming back to when Maus was dismissed from his fire department officer job when the town board simply eliminated the position. This occurred after Maus had made complaints about the fire department’s safety practices.

Maus has been a fire department member for about 15 years, and he is also a First Responder.

April 6 special meeting canceled

A special meeting set for April 6 was canceled after Ralston claimed the meeting was a violation of the open meeting law, but that claim was challenged this week.

The board had set a special meeting to name replacements for the township clerk and treasurer both of whom indicated they were resigning. The clerk, who had not submitted her resignation in writing, rescinded it prior to the meeting, but the treasurer spot still needed to be filled. Ralston claimed the meeting was a violation of the open meeting law since email notifications had gone out Monday, only two days prior to the Wednesday meeting. The meeting had been posted at the town hall more than three days prior.

Ralston told the board, “This is a clear violation of the open meeting law, and I will not be part or parcel of it.” He then went on to ask if “the likes of [John] Bassing and [Jeff] Maus” were going to make a claim to the state on the violation.

John Bassing, at the April 12 meeting, told the board that the claims about a possible violation were incorrect. Bassing told Ralston he had contacted the state office which handles such complaints, and they said this was not a violation, because there was a statute which allowed for one-day notice via email in such situations. He asked Ralston to verify his information before making accusations against township residents.

Maus said Ralston’s accusations that the two “like to file at the drop of a hat” was also wrong.

“Ralston becomes upset when challenged by anyone,” Maus said. “Those open meeting claims [made in the past] were to improve transparency.”

Attorney resigns

Michael Couri, from the firm Couri and Ruppe, sent a letter to the board resigning as township attorney after serving in the position for nearly six years.

“Given the recent changes in the town board, I no longer believe that I am the best person to occupy the position,” he wrote. “In my opinion, a majority of the town board during my tenure has attempted to follow the law and advance the interests of township residents. The board has not always been successful in implementing their policies and has faced significant opposition from other members of the town board and from one of the persons who has occupied

the clerk’s office.”

The town board had discussed getting quotes from other area legal firms at their reorganizational meeting last month. The board did get a proposal from Mitch Brunfelt, of Colosimo, Patchin, and Kearney, which included a flat fee of \$500 per month for routine consultations and advice for township officials, with a \$200/hour fee for additional services as needed.

Ralston wondered if there would be a conflict since the firm also represents the city of Tower. The board will follow up on this question, and in the meantime noted that Couri had said he would continue until a new firm is hired.

Ambulance issues

The board approved issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) on a study on how to upgrade current ambulance service to a regional Advanced Life Support (ALS) service. RFPs are due by the end of June and the township can take up to 90 days to award the bid. The board also passed a motion to seek funding for the RFP process from the IRRR and St. Louis County.

Supervisor Barb Lofquist said that the Tower Area Ambulance

Commission is planning “the same sort of study and we don’t want redundancy.”

Greenwood resident Lee Peterson said he understood what Tower is doing but said they are not hiring a professional EMS consultant to look at the region.

“You won’t find that from Tower,” Peterson said. “I am going to be a bit impatient on that there.”

The Tower Ambulance Commission, which is comprised of representatives from the city and surrounding townships, voted at their April meeting to form a working group to explore the creation of a regional ambulance service that could provide faster response times and ALS level service. The working group is still being created and has yet to make a decision on whether they will hire a consultant.

Supervisor Rick Stoehr read a written report he had prepared regarding the Tower Ambulance Commission meeting he attended on April 4. He started off by stating that “in his role as Greenwood’s representative on this board, his actions or comments are in no way a criticism of the dedicated and exceptional folks that provide essential emergency care

receive from the Tower Area Ambulance Service. They do a stellar job.”

He reiterated the township’s frustration with the lack of follow-through on completing a draft business plan in 2021 as requested, with changes made to the draft 2022 subsidy agreement, and with the fact that the city of Tower had yet to make its transfer miles payment into the subsidy account or to repay the ambulance service funds that had been transferred to other city accounts.

“The vague answers to my questions left me unsettled,” he said.

Other business

In other business the board:

► Tabled approval of minutes, treasurer’s report, claims, and payroll because the clerk was absent and there was no treasurer. The board will also make sure the board of audit numbers had been corrected at next month’s meeting.

► Set a special meeting for Wednesday, April 20 at 5 p.m. The board noted that payroll will be late this month.

► Heard that Senators Tina Smith and Amy Klobuchar are both adding funding for Greenwood’s broadband project to their earmark requests. Ralston

told the board that Whitney Ridlon, from the IRRR, was updating the township’s federal application. John Bassing reported that the township’s broadband committee had met with CTC, the company interested in installing broadband, and found the township would be eligible for state Border to Border broadband funding. CTC recommended the township split the project into two phases to better take advantage of funding opportunities. He said CTC would be getting the township an updated proposal shortly. CTC will commit at least one million of their own dollars to the project.

► Heard from Mary Worringer, who is setting up a volunteer system to provide food to firefighters at fire scenes, that she has one interested volunteer. In addition, Sue Drobac also volunteered to help.

► Made revisions to the fire department’s SOGs to come into compliance with changes to township policies passed at the reorganizational meeting, and also to require the standard Firefighter I and II training be completed within two years for new members. The department had earlier voted to make this training optional.

“I’ve spoken to other local fire department chiefs who told me that decision gives them heartburn,” Stoehr told the board.

Ralston and Skubic both asked why the changes were not going to fire department members first, for approval. “The department should give us their recommendation,” said Skubic.

These changes, along with a few others, were all made on 3-2 votes.

► Denied a request on a 2-2 vote with Stoehr abstaining, to raise the annual fire department pension amount from \$3,000 to \$3,500 a year. Skubic and Ralston voted in favor, and Lofquist and Drobac against.

► Heard from Lofquist, who said they are waiting for final results from the water testing on the outdoor spigot, to determine if the arsenic removal system is working properly. Ralston said there might be grant dollars available to upgrade the water system to serve the entire building. Lofquist said she will get a quote on the cost.

► Appointed a committee of Drobac, Ralston, and John Bassing to review the township’s budget to get a closer idea of revenue and expenses.



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MUSIC...Continued from page 1

learn to be able to describe what they are seeing and hearing in a knowledgeable manner.”

This learning all recently culminated with an in-depth exploration of “Carnival of the Animals,” composed by Camille Saint-Saens.

“The study of this composition also served as an introduction to the instruments of the orchestra, which the classes will be studying by instrument family groups throughout April and May,” he said.

The first family of instruments studied by the classes was the ‘Keyboard Family’, which includes Rouse’s favorite instrument, the piano.

One of the things the longtime music teacher likes to do is have the students get a close-up look and to touch and feel the instruments.

Last week, after study-

ing and exploring various keyboard instruments, the class looked at an “x-ray” (drawing) of the insides of a piano. The students were then offered not only a chance to play a few notes on the piano, but along with Dr. Rouse (the piano doctor), “dissected” the piano to see what made it work and why the piano could play both “piano” and “forte” simply by regulating how soft or hard you depressed the key.

“Our patient was the school’s 1937 Steinway B. The students were fascinated by the fact that in 15 years, this piano will be 100 years old,” Rouse said.

One student commented, “That piano is older than Mr. Rouse.” The teacher did not confirm nor deny the fact.

“The students were very happy to report that the patient survived the procedure and is in



great condition for more classes,” he added. “It was a very fun and exciting day for both the students and teacher. In the coming weeks, the students will be getting a close up look and listen to members of the String Family, the Wind Family, and the Percussion Family.”



The Ely school Washington Auditorium stage is being used as a temporary music classroom this school year as the school campus building renovation continues. Mike Rouse uses the school’s 1937 Steinway B piano for many classes. photos by K. Vandervort

News in Brief

Semi rolls on Highway 169

EAGLESNESTTWP—Snow and ice on Highway 169 near here caused a semi-truck and trailer to run into a ditch and roll over early Monday morning.

According to a report from the Minnesota State Patrol, Larry C. Dupree, of Eveleth, was driving the Ford 550 northbound on Highway 169 near mile post 270 at 7 a.m. on April 11, when the road conditions caused the truck to get pulled into the ditch and roll over.

Dupree, age 30, was taken to Essentia Health in Virginia with non-life threatening injuries. There were no passengers involved. He was wearing a seat belt, according to officials.

The St. Louis County Sheriff Department, the Tower Ambulance Service, and Fire Department assisted with the accident.

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THANK YOU




Boo zhoo fellow Band Members,

I want to extend a heart felt thank you to all those who supported me in the recent Primary Election. I am humbled and encouraged. Your vote has demonstrated that Band Members want a Tribal Leader with experience and has a proven record of honesty and open government. I want to thank all candidates who ran in the Primary Election and congratulate those who will move on into the General Election. I commend you for stepping up and expressing the desire to serve our people. I now ask for your continued support as we move towards the General Election that is scheduled on June 14, 2022. Over the next few months, I will be sending you information on my election platform and future goals that I will work towards if re-elected. I welcome your input and will try to meet with as many of you as possible. For now, please get the word out to **VOTE FOR DAVE MORRISON SR. on June 14th, 2022.**

Gigawaabamin (I will see you).


David C Morrison Sr.

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Kruse locks in
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a pitch.

Below right:
Fans didn't
mind
making their
way through
ice and snow
to watch a little
baseball.

Bottom right:
The Grizzlies'
John Warren
keeps a wary
eye on the
pitcher as he
edges off first
base.

photos by
D. Colburn

BASEBALL

Grizz drop opener to Giants

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

AURORA- With six starters gone from last year's 7A Sectional tourney runner-up squad, the North Woods baseball team will be looking to plug a few holes this season as they round into form.

That was apparent early on in the first game of the season on Saturday at Mesabi East, where the Giants took command early and coasted to a 13-2 win.

While cancellations and postponements have made a shambles of early season baseball schedules due to snow, Mesabi East's artificial turf field was ready for play, although maintenance workers were still blowing snow through the outfield fence just minutes before game time.

Mesabi East rocked North Woods starter Louis Panichi for three runs in the first and five runs in second, aided by some Grizzlies miscues, and reliever Ben Kruse surrendered an inside-the-park home run and five

runs total in the third before finding the groove and retiring the side in the fourth on two grounders and a strike-out.

Through three innings only nine North Woods batters had stepped to the plate, but the Grizzlies managed to manufacture a pair of runs in the top of the fourth. Panichi walked and then reached third

“We’re going to be OK, we’ve just got to find the right pieces and put them in the right spots.

Jeff Smerud
Grizzlies Head Coach

on a double by Kruse. Jake Panichi rapped a bouncer to third and Louis Panichi beat the throw home for the Grizzlies' first run of the season. Kruse motored to third on the play, then scored on a sharp infield shot by Tate Cly. The Grizzlies had a shot to extend the game in



their fifth at-bat but came up empty, giving the Giants the run-shortened 13-2 victory. Mesabi East racked up 11 hits in four innings, while the Grizzlies managed just two.

“We have three returners and a lot of young kids and a couple of juniors and seniors came out this year and haven't played for a while, so, we've got a lot of work ahead of us,” Head Coach Jeff Smerud said.

See **BASEBALL...pg. 2B**



SOFTBALL

North Woods' offense on fire in season debut

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

AURORA- The softball field at Mesabi East remains packed with snow, but the North Woods Grizzlies found the makeshift diamond on the school's artificial turf football field to their liking for their first game of the season on Monday, trouncing the Giants by a football-like 21-7 score.

It took pitcher Evelyn Brodeen an inning to settle in, but after surrendering four runs in the first, she got dialed in. With solid fielding behind

her, Brodeen had two shutout innings and allowed only three more runs in the game, collecting eight strikeouts against just two walks and giving up a total of 12 hits.

Helen Koch collected the Grizzlies' first hit of the season in the bottom of the first with a triple to right and scored when Skyler Yernatich followed with a double. Hannah Cheney doubled Yernatich in for a run, then stole home for the Grizzlies' third score. Addy Burckhardt crossed the plate on another stolen run to bring the game even after one, 4-4.

Mesabi East answered with two in the top half of the second, but the Grizzlies exploded for 13 unanswered runs in their next two at-bats to take a 17-6 lead en route to a five-inning 21-7 win.

The Grizzlies had a heyday at the plate, getting hits and RBIs up and down the lineup. Koch went four-for-four at the plate with two triples and two runs batted in. Cheney was three-for-three with a double, a triple, and four RBIs. Avery Thiel was three-for-three hitting, and

See **SOFTBALL...pg. 2B**

ULTRA MARATHON



Runner Alex Falconer looks back from one of the many overlooks on his cross-BWCAW run last summer.

Sulfide mining documentary a finalist for national award

Features ultra-runner's trek across BWCAW

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

REGIONAL – An ultra-runner's recent 110-mile trek across the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness was turned into a documentary to raise awareness of the threat of sulfide-ore copper mining, and the film is nominated as one of five finalists for a Webby Award in Sustainability and Environment.

Last summer, ultra-runner Alex Falconer completed a 110-mile run across the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness to raise awareness of the threat posed by sulfide-ore copper mining.

The run was turned into a short documentary by Minneapolis-based production company Current Resident, and was sponsored by Save The Boundary Waters, where Falconer also works as director of government relations.

“The BWCAW is America's most visited wilderness area, attracting as many as 155,000 visitors each year,” said Zoe Esser, associate producer and studio manager at Current Resident. “This area consists of 1.1 million acres of interconnected waterways, uninterrupted forests and diverse wildlife that is crucial for conservation and a sustainable economy in surrounding communities.”

The BWCAW faces potential impacts from a proposed sulfide-ore copper mine upstream of the wilderness boundary. To raise awareness for this cause, Falconer set off on a mission to complete the first-ever recorded ultra-run he titled the Boundary Waters Traverse. He completed the race on May 22, 2021, running more than 110 miles connecting the Border Route and Kekekabic Trail, finishing with a time of 38 hours, 15 minutes and three seconds.

See **RUNNER...pg. 2B**

MOVING ON UP



FIELD TWP— After verbally committing to Hamline University in the fall, North Woods senior Erik Aune made it official last week by signing a national letter of intent to play football for the Pipers next fall. Aune was a standout wide receiver and defensive back for the Grizzlies, averaging over 18 yards per catch. However, Pipers Head Coach Chip Taylor plans to give Aune a shot on

defense. “We identified Erik early in the recruiting process and we liked how he fit into our academic culture and his natural football abilities. Our defensive backs coach can't wait to work with and develop him.” Joining Aune for the signing were his parents Cathy and Mark Aune, seated, and Grizzlies Head Coach Joel Anderson, as well as many North Woods teammates, students, and staff.

ENTREPRENEURS

Cook’s Country Connection raising funds for new driveway

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK – Those who know Lois Pajari have probably learned the hard way that it takes a little, and sometimes a lot, of arm twisting to agree to have someone help her with something.

Since the inception of Cook’s Country Connection, Pajari has been a determined do-it-yourselfer, building the unique petting zoo into one of the region’s top spring and summer attractions with unique animals, special events, classes, traveling shows, and more. Yes, she’s had some help here and there along the way, but Pajari has always been the driver of change and improvements.

So, when a land survey a number of months ago yielded a surprising result that her actual property line runs right down the middle of her quarter-mile driveway, Pajari set to work trying to find a solution, but one option suggested by a friend, Dani Spolarich, was well down the list at the start.



Cook’s Country Connection will need to relocate their driveway and is seeking donations to cover the estimated cost of \$16,000. photo by D. Colburn

“When this came up, I said let’s just do a GoFundMe and raise the money to get it moved,” Spolarich said. “I said, ‘Lois, people love the farm, they love you, just let them help.’ She said no. Then after a few more months, it was maybe. Finally, she said yes the other night.”

Moving the drive, even if the solution is simply to widen it to the north, is an expensive proposition, in no small part because

of what it will cost to have the electric power line moved, about half of the estimated \$16,000 cost.

Finally given the green light, Spolarich put together the “Cook’s Country Connection Driveway Project” page on GoFundMe with a target of \$16,000 and launched it last Friday on Facebook. As of Wednesday morning, the post had been shared over 220 times, and the response has been just as Spolarich expected.

“It’s doing great,” Spolarich said. “We raised \$10,000 in about 24 hours.”

“It’s a great place to bring your family. It’s kept spotless and the animals are well cared for. One of the more innovative business ideas that’s ever come to Cook!” one donor wrote.

“My grandchildren love going to your farm,” wrote another.

As of Wednesday morning, 178 donors had contributed \$12,477. As is generally the case with online fundraisers, the pace of giving slowed in days following the initial post, and social media shares don’t automatically generate donors, but Spolarich is hopeful there’s enough momentum there to reach the goal.

“We’re so close,” Spolarich said. “Worst case scenario would be that we have to do a fundraiser, but hopefully we can get real close with this over the next couple of weeks.”

Pajari was extremely grateful for the donations and support and is eager for the weather to improve so they can get started on the project.

“It would be super, super helpful if it would stop snowing,” she said. “It’s hard to even get a good bid on widening or moving it when everything is still hidden deep in snow.”

Widening the drive is the first option, provided that doing so doesn’t create a hazard, as the entry is near the crest of a hill. If that isn’t feasible, Pajari said, the alternative is to build a new driveway farther to the north to a place that St. Louis County would sign off on.

In either case, the longer it takes to get to work, the possibility grows that the construction will have an impact on Cook’s Country Connection operations.

“We will probably be working on construction into May,” Pajari said. “If the weather isn’t cooperating we could have to delay the opening or try to work around it.”

If you’d like to make a donation to the driveway project, the link to the GoFundMe donation page is <https://gofund.me/b7e77ea5>.

COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

Looking for answers to Ely’s child care shortage

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – The Ely Community Care Team, in collaboration with St. Louis County, hosted an informational meeting on Monday in hopes of convincing community members to consider opening additional child care facilities here.

According to Heidi Favet, care team leader at Essentia Health, Ely Clinic, the lack of local child care as a health and wellness issue is growing in the region, and the event at the Grand Ely Lodge was the result of a nearly year-long effort by community members to address the challenges of providing adequate child care

Along with discussions by a city of Ely committee to study the issue that concluded the increasing child care shortage is stifling economic growth in the region by hindering people from moving to the area, and making it difficult for employers to attract workers, a recent survey identified the growing interest in providing child care service in the area.

City officials are aware that existing child care operations in the Ely community are experiencing an increase in long waiting lists for clients.

Estimates are that as much as 40-percent of Ely child care space was lost during the past two years during the coronavirus pandemic and increase in public health concerns and protocols.

Since the city’s committee work on the issue produced possible funding ideas for start-up costs and child care certification and identification of possible spaces for child care operations, the discussion caught the attention of local healthcare officials, state and county lawmakers, the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation (IRRR), the Northland Foundation and other organizations to pursue possible funding and assistance options.

CCT and county officials provided information on resources available to get started in daycare in the Ely area, including training and license requirements.

Family child care licensing is completed through the county, and child care centers are licensed by the state of Minnesota.

Susan Sauls, St. Louis County supervisor for family child care licensing, along with Carrie Woods, one of three St. Louis County child care licensers, attended the information

session and provided some insight to starting and running a child care facility.

Favet said that the lack of child care in rural areas of northern St. Louis County “is not only an inconvenience, but really a health and wellness concern in this community.” She noted that the local Community Care Team is “looking to fill the gaps and connect our services to each other.”

Area stakeholders, including Ely Bloomenson Community Hospital CEO Patti Banks and EBCH communications director Jodi Martin, St. Louis County Commissioner Paul McDonald, Ely City Council member Heidi Omerza, and other members of the city’s child care task force attended the session.

“We gathered information about people who may be thinking about starting a child care operation in their homes,” Favet said. “We know that starting (child care) centers is a really big, long, slow process, but our need (in Ely) is immediate. In the cities, if one or two in-home child care programs were started, you would say, ‘so what,’ but in a community this size, if we were to add just 10 or 20 spaces for children in child care, that is half of an entire (school) grade. We want to take a look at what

the opportunity is to make a real difference with even a small change is what we hope to do.”

As county commissioner, McDonald said he continues to work with the Northland Foundation and the United Way of Northeast Minnesota. “We understand the need and the lack of day care not only in Ely, but throughout St. Louis County,” he said.

He revealed some breaking news on child care funding. “We did submit, just today, an earmark request to both Sen. Tina Smith and Sen. Amy Klobuchar for possible (child care) centers in both Ely and Chisholm. We have ongoing discussions with the IRRR on funding for a center as well. There a lot of ideas out there and a lot of possibilities. This is very near and dear to my heart as I spent all of my career in education. Children are the backbone of what we are going to hand off to them,” McDonald said.

EBCH’s Banks did not reveal any possible child care center plans in the hospital’s development of an expansion and growth plan, but added, “Being one of the largest employers in town, and working with our employees, patients and different community groups, it is definitely a

need, and we are trying to figure out what our future role might possibly be in supporting child care.”

Ross Petersen, former Ely mayor and child care task force member, said one of the group’s initial tasks was to develop projects to expand local child care options with the understanding that federal money was waiting in the wings. “It looked like there was going to be a lot of day care money out there,” he said. “As it turned out, I’m not sure what the situation is with the federal money.”

Despite the update from McDonald on the local federal legislation earmark request, Petersen said, “I’m starting to lose a lot of faith in the federal situation because with inflation the way it is, they just can’t print any more money. Don’t know for sure, but I don’t think we can look to the feds. The state, on the other hand, has a \$10 billion surplus and that’s the way I’m leaning now.”

As the Community Care Team ramps up efforts to bring more child care options to Ely, Petersen said that he and city council member Heidi Omerza “are looking to step back from” the community effort.

Sauls described the licensing and facility

requirements in place for in-home or family child care operations for several people at the session who showed an interest in pursuing that option, and contrasted that with starting up a community child care business.

“When you are looking at a town like Ely where you have a lot of empty downtown buildings, I know that several smaller communities all around the state have looked at using some of those unused spaces in their downtown,” she said. “Access is close. People can get there easier.”

She added, “For family child care, you can only have up to 14 kids with two care givers. I can’t speak for (child care) centers, because I don’t do licensing for centers, but I can tell you that we had one ready to rock and roll in Tower, but they couldn’t get a child care teacher. The criteria for centers has some very specific things needed.”

St. Louis County holds a monthly virtual orientation that provides licensing information and resources for family child care operations. To sign up for the virtual session, contact St. Louis County at 218-726-2064 or email them at childcare@stlouiscountymn.gov.

BASEBALL...Continued from page 1B

“We’re going to be OK, we’ve just got to find the right pieces and put them in the right spots and get outside on the field and get some real practice time.” Smerud said he saw some

good things happening for the Grizzlies in the field.

“You have to give Mesabi East credit. They hit the ball hard and hit the gaps. It’s pretty easy when you have four or

five doubles. But we didn’t make many defensive mistakes, and we’ll be fine. We told them at the start of practices that it doesn’t matter where you start, it’s how you finish. Now

we have a baseline and we can go from there. It’s just a totally different team than we’ve had out there the last two years.”

Most of all, both teams appeared to be happy to be

playing ball again.

“We’ve been stuck in the gym like everybody else in northern Minnesota,” Smerud said. “We got outside yesterday to catch some fly balls and then

came out today to play a game. It’s just nice to be out on a complex like this where it’s nice and warm and the kids are happy and smiling.”

RUNNER...Continued from page 1B

Helping tell this story, Current Resident, a Twin Cities production house, followed Falconer and his team to capture the efforts of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters.

“The impact this run and documentary have had on the public has been astounding over the past couple months,” Esser

said. “With more than 1,000 of views on YouTube and more traffic onto the campaign’s website at savetheboundarywaters.org, wilderness defenders everywhere are looking to help fight for the cause.”

The Boundary Waters Traverse documentary is a finalist for a national award with the Webby’s.

“This award is a top tier recognition, bringing out the best of the best online,” Esser said. The Webby Awards presents two honors in every category—The Webby Award and The Webby People’s Voice Award, awarded by the voting public.

“Each year, The Webby People’s Voice Awards

garners millions of votes from all over the world,” she said.

As one of only five chosen from around the world, it’s among the top 12 percent of the over 14,000 record-breaking projects entered.

“The Webby People’s Voice Award is voted on by the public, that’s where

our supporters come in,” Esser said. “Please vote for ‘The Boundary Waters Traverse’ in the category of Video - Sustainability and Environment.”

To show support for the Boundary Waters and help raise awareness, supporters can vote for it in The Webby’s People Voice award at: <https://>

vote.webbyawards.com/PublicVoting#/2022/video/general-video/sustainability-environment.

The full documentary can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-G8hIEuijpk&t=22s>.

SOFTBALL...Continued from page 1B

Brodeen and Yernatic each collected three hits on four trips to the plate.

The Grizzlies’ home opener will be Tuesday,

April 19 when they host Littlefork-Big Falls, weather and field conditions permitting.

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Obituaries and Death Notices



Glenn W. Bertelson
Glenn Warren Bertelson, 85, of Duluth and Ely, died on Sunday, April 10, 2022. His family thanks the kind, caring and compassionate staff at Westwood, Benedic-

tine Health Center, Essentia Health and Essentia Health Hospice. Memorials are preferred and can be directed to the Listening Point Foundation in Ely or Benedictine Living Community in Duluth. Funeral arrangements are with Dougherty Funeral Home of Duluth.
Glenn was born in Ortonville, and graduated from high school in Virginia. He loved and played basketball and was known to his teammates and buddies by the nickname “Stretch”.
A U.S. Army veteran, Glenn was stationed

in Germany for three years during peacetime, after which he completed college and earned his master’s degree. He was employed in Duluth as a social worker for St. Louis County until his retirement in 1996. With his family, Glenn owned and ran a hobby farm, loved camping in the north woods, and went on canoe trips in the BWCAW. His love of wilderness and solitude led to his eventually living on a lake in Ely in his retirement.
Glenn will be remembered for his voice advocating for the wilderness,

and his commitment to preserving it; for nurturing his relationships with people; for his dedication to God; for his determination to write his book; and for passing on to his children and grandchildren reverence for nature.
He is survived by his daughters, Nanette (Michael) Hillmeyer and Lise (Eric) Peltier; granddaughters, Claire and Sophie, Holly and Lauren; great-grandson, Rylan; brother, James (Sherie) Bertelson; first wife and the mother of his daughters, Lynn (James) Freeman; dear lifelong friends;

friends at the lake; and Westwood friends.
Glenn was preceded in death by his parents, Glenn W. and Ada Bertelson.
Agnes Mesojedec
Agnes “Ag” Chiabotti Mesojedec, 98, a lifelong resident of Soudan, died on Sunday, March 13, 2022, with family by her side at Edgewood in Hermantown where she had lived since June 2021. A Memorial Mass will be held at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, April 20 at St. Martin’s Catholic Church in Tower. Reverend Fa-

ther Beau Braun will be the celebrant. A gathering time for family and friends will begin one hour prior to the Mass at the church. Spring inurnment will take place in Lakeview Cemetery in Tower. Family services are provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower.
A complete obituary ran in the Timberjay edition of March 25, 2022.

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS
SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
COURT PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No.
69VI-PR-21-120

Estate of Nancy Jean Wall aka Nancy Jean Wall Glowaski, aka Nancy Jean Longhenry, Decedent

NOTICE AND ORDER OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION OF INSTANCY, DETERMANTION OF HEIRS, AND PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE OF CREDITORS

It is Ordered and Notice is given that on May 4th, 2022 at 9:00 a.m., a hearing will be held in this Court at 300 5th Ave South, Virginia, Minnesota, for the adjudication of intestacy and determination of heirship of the Decedent and the appointment of John F. Longhenry whose address is 13339 185th AVE NE, Foreston, MN 56330 as Personal Representative of the Estate of the Decedent in an UNSUPERVISED administration.

Any objections to the petition must be filed with the Court prior to or raised at the hearing. If proper and if no objections are filed or raised, the Personal Representative will be appointed with full power to administer the Estate including the power to collect all assets, to pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, to sell real and personal property, and to do all necessary acts for the Estate.

HEARING WILL BE HELD VIA ZOOM

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

If you have objection to this case, please contact Court Administration at 218-221-7560 Option #8 for further instructions as these hearings are currently held remotely due to the pandemic.

Dated: 03/25/2022
BY THE COURT
/s/ Andrew R. Peterson
Judge of District Court
/s/ Amy Turnquist
Court Administrator
Chelsea Opdahl, Deputy

Petitioner
John F. Longhenry
13339 185th AVE NE.
Foreston, MN 56330
Telephone: 763-268-2359
Email: longhenryjohn@gmail.com

Published in the Timberjay,
April 8 & 15, 2022

**BEARVILLE TOWNSHIP
LOCAL BOARD OF APPEAL AND
EQUALIZATION NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Appeal and Equalization for Bearville Township shall meet on Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. at the Bearville Town Hall (13971 Hwy. 22, Bearville Township). The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether taxable property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor.

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.

The Bearville Township Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting will be held in person at the Town Hall. The Bearville Township Board encourages those wishing to appeal their valuation to contact the Itasca County Assessor prior to the meeting with their concerns.

Kathy Cressy, Bearville Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, April 8 & 15, 2022

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS
SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT PROBATE
DIVISION
Court File No.
69VI-PR-22-49**

**NOTICE AND ORDER OF
HEARING ON PETITION FOR
PROBATE OF WILL AND
APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL
REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE
TO CREDITORS**

Estate of
Todd Mark Pepelnjak, aka
Todd M. Pepelnjak, aka Todd
Pepelnjak,
Decedent

It is Ordered and Notice is given that on May 4, 2022, at 9:00 a.m., a hearing will be held in this Court at 300 5th Avenue South, Virginia, Minnesota, for the formal probate of an instrument purporting to be the Will of the Decedent dated, March 27, 1990, (“Will”), and for the appointment of Nicholas Timothy

Pepelnjak, whose address is 1101 12th St. South, Virginia, MN, 55792 as Personal Representative of the Estate of the Decedent in an UNSUPERVISED administration.

Any objections to the petition must be filed with the Court prior to or raised at the hearing. If proper and if no objections are filed or raised, the Personal Representative will be appointed with full power to administer the Estate including the power to collect all assets, to pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, to sell real and personal property, and to do all necessary acts for the Estate. If you have an objection to this case, please contact Court Administration at 218-221-7560 option # 8 for further instructions as these hearings are currently held remotely due to the pandemic.

Notice is also given that (subject to Minnesota Statutes section 524.3-801) all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the Personal Representative or to the Court

Administrator within four months after the date of this Notice or the claims will be barred.

BY THE COURT
Andrew R. Peterson
Judge of District Court
Amy Turnquist, Court Administrator
Chelsea Opdahl, Deputy

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

Published in the Timberjay, April 8 & 15, 2022



**REAL ESTATE AUCTION
& ESTATE SALE**
April 22 & 23 in Soudan
3 BR, 2 BATH, 3 CAR GARAGE. Homeowner passed away and family has decided to liquidate personal property and sell the house to the highest bidder on Saturday, April 23rd at 3 p.m. on sight. Bidders must have proof of qualifying from lender to be eligible to bid. Seller has right to reject highest bid if it doesn't meet minimum expectations. There is a 10% buyer's premium added to the final bid. For more info, contact auctioneer 218-391-7098. Local realtor handling paper work.
ESTATE SALE starts Friday at 10 a.m., 15 Superior St Soudan. Estate sale includes 2004 Yamaha motorcycle as is {clutch}, riding mower, push mower, tools, golf clubs, several guitars including some acoustic and Fender, computers new in box, couches, beds, household, patio furn, lots of misc very cheap.
In a separate online auction for this same estate we are offering for bids a 1980 Camaro 79,000 miles, a 2002 Harley and several Fender guitars. Online bidding only and ending on Saturday, April 23 at 6 p.m. **TwinportsBid.com**. This sale will be up with pictures and descriptions at least 10 days before closing. These special items can be scene on site prior to sale days. TBA.

**St. Louis County
Solid Waste Facility
Area site hours**

Northwoods Transfer Station 9384 Hwy 21 N., Ely/Babbitt Summer Hours Mon, Thu, Fri, Sat: 8am–3pm Tue: 9:30am–3pm Wed: noon–6pm	Cook Transfer Station 2134 S. Beatty Rd., Cook Hours Mon: 10am–6pm Tues thru Sat: 9am–3:30pm
County 77 Canister Site 2038 County Rd. 77, Greenwood Twp Summer Hours Tues: 1–6pm Thurs: 8am–1pm Sat: 8am–5pm Sun: noon–6pm	Soudan Canister Site 5160 Hwy 169, Soudan Hours Mon, Wed, Sat, Sun: 8am–5pm
Embarrass Canister Site 7530 Koski Rd., Embarrass Hours Sat: 12:30–4:30pm Thu: 10am–5pm	Aurora Transfer Station 5910 Hwy 135 N., Aurora Hours Mon, Thurs, Fri: 8am–4pm Tue, Wed: 10am–4pm Sat: 8am–noon
Household Hazardous Waste Facility 5345 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia Hours Tues and Sat: 8am–1pm	Regional Landfill 5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia Hours Mon–Fri: 8am–4:30pm Sat: 8am–3:30pm

*Summer hours effective April 15th through September 30th
For solid waste and recycling information go to www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle*

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**COVID-19 Vaccine
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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 eligiblity requirements, please call the number below to schedule an appointment.

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

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www.timberjay.com



Outdoors

Our lives in the
Northwoods

CLIMATE

Drought conditions improve in area

Unusual winter precipitation events should help boost water levels in area lakes

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

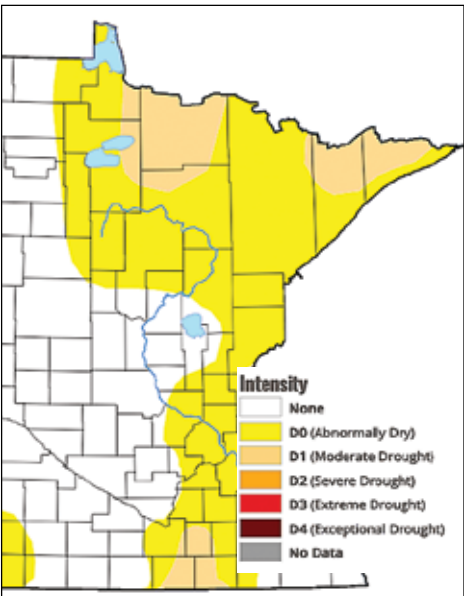
REGIONAL— While the merry-go-round of late winter snowstorms that have hit the area in late March and early April has frustrated North Country residents looking forward to spring, the storms have offered a benefit that could help make for a better summer this year than in 2021. Recent precipitation

events have brought much needed moisture to the region, which has been plagued by drought for nearly a year. But drought conditions have eased significantly, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, which maps drought conditions throughout the U.S. Most of northern Minnesota went into the winter in severe-to-extreme drought, but a series of unusually prolific precipitation events, including

a highly unusual record rainfall in mid-December, and several moisture-rich snow events in March and April, including this week’s snow and rain, have helped to ease conditions. As of late last week, drought conditions across virtually all of St. Louis County were listed as “abnormally dry,” the lowest level of drought status. Northern Lake and Cook counties, along with virtually all of Koochiching

County remain in moderate drought, according to the Drought Monitor, but that’s an improvement from the severe or extreme drought that had been in place in those areas earlier in the winter. Additional precipitation this week could further improve the drought conditions when the new weekly Drought Monitor map is released on Thursday, after

See WEATHER...pg. 5B



A stretch of open water on the Shagawa River in Ely attracted plenty of waterfowl on a recent morning. Pictured are a pair of trumpeter swans (above), a male goldeneye (below) and a pair of goldeneye (lower right). Meanwhile, area lakes remain locked in ice.

photo by M. Helmburger



HONORS

Redhead garners two statewide awards

Chisholm mountain biking center honored for innovation in industrial redevelopment

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

CHISHOLM— The popular Redhead Mountain Bike Park at the Minnesota Discovery Center has won two statewide awards for innovative redevelopment in the past three weeks. In late March, the Minneapolis-based Environmental Initiative announced it had selected the Redhead as the winner of its 2022 Rural Vitality Award. The award will be officially presented on May 18. The Environmental Initiative Awards program provides annual recognition of people and projects that involve working in partnership to advance a healthy environment, a prosperous economy and an equitable society. Earlier this month, park creators won the Innovation Award presented by Minnesota Brownfields, a nonprofit focusing on redevelopment of former industrial or commercial sites,



during a ceremony in St. Paul. The Innovation Award is presented to companies, individuals or organizations employing unique and innovative approaches to redevelopment challenges related to engineering, financing, legal, and community outreach. About the park The Redhead Mountain Bike Park, funded primarily by the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation

(DIRRR), transformed 1,225 acres of idled mine lands into the destination outdoor recreation facility that takes riders deep down into a vast former open pit iron mine. The park features 25 miles of single-track, natural-surface trails for mountain biking and hiking, as well as canoeing, kayaking, swimming, and paddle boarding in a crystal clear mine pit lake. The trails, which traverse a reclaimed mine site, include

Left: A biker passes by one of the pit lakes on the trail at the Redhead mountain biking center in Chisholm. Courtesy DIRRR

red rock canyons, sky-tinted pit lakes, waterfalls, and forests repopulated by aspen, paper birch, and red pine. Since opening in 2021, the park has provided area residents and visitors with free access to a world-class outdoor recreation venue, which has attracted new investment in the area to serve the steady stream of visitors to the park. It now draws thousands of cyclists and hikers every year, providing a significant boost to the tourism industry. Local members of the Iron Range Off-road Cyclists, or IROC, initiated the effort, but it received critical support from the city of Chisholm, the DIRRR, St. Louis County, and the Minnesota Discovery Center.

BLACK BEARS



Hunters seeking bear permits for 2022 will need to apply by May 6.

Bear permits dip in the northeast

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Anyone hoping for a 2022 bear permit has until Friday, May 6, to apply. The DNR will be issuing a total of 3,605 permits across the quota zone, which encompasses all of northeastern, north-central, and much of central Minnesota. While the total number of permits to be offered is on par with recent years, the DNR will be offering fewer permits in most of northeastern Minnesota. “Several permit areas in northern Minnesota require additional permit reductions to stabilize their populations,” stated the DNR in a press release. The DNR is offering 360 permits in bear management area (BMU) 25, which includes most of northern St. Louis and eastern Koochiching counties, and an additional 425 permits in BMU 31, which includes much of eastern St. Louis and all of Lake and Cook counties (outside the BWCAW). Those permit numbers represent a 13-percent decline from recent years, when the DNR issued 400 permits in BMU 25 and 500 in BMU 31. BMU 24, which encompasses most of central St. Louis County, including the Iron Range, will see fewer permits as well, with 135 to be issued this year, compared to 175 in 2020, a nearly 23 percent decline. Back-to-back poor food years in those areas led to a higher-than-expected bear harvest the past two years, along with a higher-than-average percentage of female bears.

Meanwhile, the DNR will be issuing more permits in BMUs in central Minnesota, where the bear population appears to be stable or slightly increasing. The DNR also issues an unlimited number of bear permits for areas outside the quota zone, which includes more agricultural parts of the state. Applications for the 2022 season can be submitted online, or completed at any DNR license agent or via telephone at 888-665-4236. Lottery winners will be notified by Wednesday, June 1. The deadline to purchase bear hunting licenses awarded by lottery is Monday, Aug. 1. Any remaining unpurchased licenses will be available over the counter starting at noon Thursday, Aug. 4. Complete instructions about how to apply for a license, maps of permit areas and a listing of permit availability for each area are available on the DNR website (mndnr.gov/Hunting/Bear).

CRUST SEASON



A hard morning crust this past weekend created an endless maze of ski routes through a Lilliputian forest of black spruce and tamarack near Lost Lake. photo by M. Helmberger

Outdoors briefly

Stream trout season opens Saturday

REGIONAL — Minnesota’s popular warm weather stream trout season opens Saturday, April 16, with plenty of fishing opportunity available in northeastern Minnesota where ice has cleared from fast-flowing streams. Brook trout and splake fishing also open April 16 on Lake Superior and its tributary streams. Trout anglers can find information on Minnesota’s trout streams and lakes on DNR’s website (mndnr.gov/Fishing/Trout). Modeled after the DNR’s popular LakeFinder tool, StreamFinder (mndnr.gov/Fishing/Trout/Map.html) provides anglers with a description, species list, regulations and access information for trout streams throughout Minnesota. Anglers also will find helpful learning guides and fishing tips tailored to each of Minnesota’s six trout fishing regions. Minnesota has roughly 3,800 miles of designated trout streams. Anglers fishing on designated trout waters must have a trout stamp validation in addition to an angling license. Complete trout season details are available at the DNR’s fishing webpage at mndnr.gov/Fishing.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST from NOAA weather

Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
26 14					30 11					36 20					35 15					37 18				
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.
04/04	40	23	0.03		04/04	41	18	0.05	0.4"	04/04	40	17	0.03	0.4"	04/04	45	28	0.00		04/04	40	17	0.06	0.4"
04/05	44	30	0.01		04/05	44	29	0.00		04/05	44	28	0.00		04/05	37	28	0.00		04/05	43	28	0.00	
04/06	38	31	0.25	1.8"	04/06	39	30	0.35	1.2"	04/06	39	30	0.35	1.5"	04/06	37	32	0.00		04/06	38	30	0.52	1.0"
04/07	40	29	0.07	1.0"	04/07	39	29	0.04		04/07	35	30	0.06	0.2"	04/07	34	27	0.00		04/07	38	27	0.15	0.3"
04/08	31	23	0.11	0.6"	04/08	30	23	0.08	0.4"	04/08	31	23	0.02	0.4"	04/08	39	21	0.00		04/08	30	22	0.10	1.5"
04/09	41	17	0.00		04/09	40	12	0.00		04/09	40	17	0.00		04/09	52	16	0.00		04/09	41	11	0.00	
04/10	53	16	0.00		04/10	52	24	0.00		04/10	51	17	0.00		04/10	45	36	0.00		04/10	52	27	0.28	2.4"
YTD Total			2.74	81.1"	YTD Total			3.36	52.7"	YTD Total			3.58	88.3"	YTD Total			NA	NA	YTD Total			4.48	68.4"

WEATHER...Continued from page 4B

the Timberjay’s weekly deadline. Since Dec. 1, most area reporting stations are running from two-to-three inches above normal for precipitation, a significant departure in a four-month winter season during which the area typically sees approximately four inches of total liquid-equivalent precipitation. Most of that additional precipitation fell in December, when the majority of reporting stations saw more than

twice, and in some cases three times, their average precipitation for the month. While winter is typically almost desert-dry here in northern Minnesota, and typically does not contribute much to drought relief, this year was an exception. And that should help boost water levels, at least temporarily, once the snow and lake and river ice have melted. The near-term forecast calls

for a bit more sunshine, with dry conditions but with continued cool temperatures through the weekend and into next week. Weekend highs are forecasted in the low-30s, climbing into the upper-30s for next week, with lows mostly in the teens. The normal high in Tower for April 15 is 51 degrees, with a normal low of 25 degrees.

PESHEL

ACCOUNTING

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1704 E Camp St. | PO Box 89 | Ely, MN 55731 | askjean.net

CHECK OUT askjean.net for current TAX TIPS!

READ
the Timberjay!

EARTH

Fest

IRON RANGE 2022

ENERGIZING OUR future

FREE ADMISSION

SATURDAY, APRIL 23 • 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

MOUNTAIN IRON COMMUNITY CENTER • MERRITT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL • MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

• Children’s Activities • Local Marketplace • Silent Auction • Demos, Exhibits and Speakers

• Phenology Walk with John Latimer • Local Lunch by Go Figur’s • Music by Nadair (Sara Softich/Ryan Lane)

Don't miss the concluding presentation by Robert Blake of Solar Bear “Native Nations Leading the Way in Renewables”

Don't miss the feature presentation by Macalester College's Dr. Roopali Phadke on “Recycling Precious Metals from e-waste”

Electronics recycling outside of Mt. Iron Community Center 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Accepting ONLY computers (laptop and desktop), monitors, and TVs under 19”.

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Minnesota Farmers Union • Essentia Health • Comfort Inn & Suites

www.irpsmn.org/earthfest

Area St. Louis County Solid Waste and Recycling Facility site hours

Ash River Trail Canister Site

11391 Ash River Trail
Summer Hours
Wed: 1pm–4pm
Sat: 2:30pm–5:30pm

Kabetogama Lake Canister Site

10150 Gamma Rd
Summer Hours
Mon. & Wed: 9am–noon
Sat: 10:30am–1:30pm

Sturgeon Canister Site

8380 Hwy 73
Hours
Sun: 8am–noon

Orr Canister Site

4038 Hwy 53
Summer Hours
Tue: 9am–1pm, Thu: 2pm–7pm
Sat: 8am–noon, Sun: 10am–2pm

Portage Canister Site

6992 Crane Lake Rd.
Summer Hours
Tue: 2pm-6pm; Thu: 10am-1pm,
Sat: 1pm-5pm; Sun: 3pm–6pm

County 77 Canister Site

2038 County Rd. 77
Summer Hours
Tue: 1–6pm, Thu: 8am–1pm
Sat: 8am–5pm, Sun: noon–6pm

Cook Transfer Station

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

Regional Landfill

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

Household Hazardous Waste Facilities

5345 Regional Landfill Rd., Virginia
Tue, Sat: 8am–1pm

3994 Landfill Rd, Hibbing
Sat: 8am–1pm

Summer hours effective April 15th through September 30th

St. Louis County Environmental Services Department

1-800-450-9278

Office hours 8-4:30 Mon. thru Fri.
stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle

Oshkigin Spirit of Fire

April 21, 2022
6:00-8 PM

The Screening of a locally filmed “Oshkigin Spirit of Fire,” a 16-minute fire documentary will be followed by a discussion with panelists from tribal nations within the 1842 and 1854 Treaty areas.

Location:
Historic Ely State Theater
238 East Sheridan Street
Ely, MN 55731

For thousands of years in the Great Lakes Region, Native Americans used fire intentionally to manage the ecosystems they lived in. Oshkigin Spirit of Fire highlights this deep, reciprocal relationship with the land and the role fire plays in that relationship. This story is told by two Ojibwe wildland fire practitioners, Fond du Lac tribal band elder Vern Northrup and Gezihibideg Damon Panek, tribal band member of the White Earth Nation and Forest researcher Lane Johnson.

Filmed, with permission, on the reservations of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe in Minnesota and the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe in Wisconsin.

Hosted by:

EMPLOYMENT

NORTH AMERICAN BEAR CENTER

NORTHWOODS ECOLOGY HALL

NOW HIRING!

The North American Bear Center has a great job opportunity for individuals looking to work in an exciting family environment! We are searching for people with a positive attitude, who have experience working with the public, to fill our sales associate positions for our 2022 season.

Hours will include weekdays and some week-ends between 9 am-6 pm. We offer competitive wages and employee perks. Valid driver's license is a must, along with the ability to pass a background check.

If you are interested in applying for this position, stop by the North American Bear Center (located just 1 mile west of Ely off Hwy. 169) to pick up an application Mon-Fri between the hours of 9 am-2 pm or email your resume to mhietala@bear.org. 4/15



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



International Wolf Center

Now Hiring - Join Our Pack!

The International Wolf Center has openings for seasonal part-time retail and admissions positions. 20-40 hours per week, May - September. Starting wage is \$13/hr. Must be able to work weekends, evenings and have excellent customer service skills. To apply, submit a cover letter and resume to careers@wolf.org or stop by the International Wolf Center to pick up an application. For additional information, call Jackie at 218-365-4695 Ext. 1260. 4/22



OPEN POSITIONS

10 Fifth Street SE Cook, MN 55723

Hospital/ER

Casual Unit Clerk/Nursing Assistant (Current NA Cert. or EMT required)

Nursing

FT RN House Supervisor

Dietary

PT Dietary Aide/Cook

Laboratory

FT Medical Lab Tech

Radiology

FT Radiologic Technologist (\$4,000 Sign-On Bonus)

Activities

PT & Casual Activities Assistant

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)

Environmental Services

Casual Laundry Aide
FT, PT & Casual Housekeeping & Laundry

TO APPLY:

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

More Info? Contact Human Resources

218-666-6220
humanresources@cookhospital.org

The Cook Hospital is an equal opportunity provider and employer

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

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Swiss peaks
- 5 — roll (winning)
- 8 Lily variety
- 12 Not worth debating
- 13 Chest muscle
- 14 Here (Sp.)
- 15 Shop tools
- 17 Void partner
- 18 Chemical suffix
- 19 MGM motto start
- 20 Enlighten
- 21 Elev.
- 22 Petrol
- 23 Prima donnas
- 26 Thornton Wilder drama
- 30 B — boy
- 31 Grass shack
- 32 "Closer" actor Clive
- 33 "Blue Bloods" actress Moynahan
- 35 El Greco's birthplace
- 36 Sunbather's goal
- 37 Carrier to Amsterdam
- 38 Cabbage choice
- 41 Chairman of China
- 42 Persian, for one
- 45 Recognized

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
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45					46				47			
48					49				50			
51					52				53			

- 46 Sightseeing stop
- 48 Falco of "The Sopranos"
- 49 Whatever number
- 50 Unruly kid
- 51 Volition
- 52 Zee preceder
- 53 Priestly vestments
- 6 Reporter's quest
- 7 Rm. coolers
- 8 Desert hazard
- 9 Iso-
- 10 Chasm
- 11 Unctuous
- 16 Droops
- 20 Listener
- 21 Small wiper
- 22 Belly
- 23 Apply cream
- 24 Medit. nation
- 25 Half of XIV
- 26 Ump's call
- 27 Have bills
- 28 Drench
- 29 SSW oppo-site
- 31 Chick's mom
- 34 Carefree
- 35 LummoX
- 37 Rap star West
- 38 Distort
- 39 "The King —"
- 40 Bridal accessory
- 41 Oodles
- 42 Poet
- 43 Basra resident
- 44 B'way booth sign
- 46 Legislation
- 47 CEO's deg.

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Foundation Coordinator

Office & Admin Specialist, Int.

Vermilion Community College, soon to be Minnesota North College — Vermilion Campus, is seeking to fill the position of a permanent, part-time (45% FTE/18 hours a week) Office & Admin Specialist, Int. — Foundation Coordinator.

The Foundation Coordinator is responsible for organizing and coordinating office operations and procedures which support the Vermilion campus foundation in promoting and maintaining mutually beneficial relations between the campus and its students, its alumni, the community and donors.

For position details, qualifications and application procedures, please view the posting at: <https://www.nhed.edu/human-resources/employment/vcc>

Deadline to apply: April 22, 2022

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is an Equal Opportunity employer/educator committed to the principles of diversity. We actively seek and encourage applications from women, minorities, persons with disabilities and veterans. All applicants must be able to lawfully accept employment in the United States at the time of employment. AA/EOE Veteran Friendly



Work at the TIMBERJAY!

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICES

LOCAL BOARD OF APPEAL AND EQUALIZATION KUGLER TOWNSHIP

Important Information Regarding Property Assessments.
This may affect your 2023 property taxes

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Appeal and Equalization for Kugler Township shall meet on **Wednesday, April 20, 2022 from 10 - 11 a.m. at the St. Louis County Service Center, 3020 Miners Dr. E, Ely, MN**

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.

Any questions, call Paul Cherry at 218-365-8235

Chris Suihkonen, Kugler Township Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, April 8 & 15, 2022

See our legal notices online each week at www.timberjay.com



Public Health Program Coordinator (Nutrition)

\$30.83-\$37.75 Hourly
Apply by 04/19/2022

www.stlouiscountymn.gov
or call 218-726-2422

Equal Opportunity and Veteran-Friendly Employer 4/15

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF VACANCY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The St. Louis County Board of Commissioners will make four appointments: One (1) Northern Townships representative, One (1) Hibbing representative, and Two (2) At Large representatives to the St. Louis County CDBG Citizen Advisory Committee with terms expiring December 31, 2026. The CDBG program provides funds for community facilities, public infrastructure, economic development, housing activities, and public service activities.

The CDBG Advisory Committee holds one public hearing and three public meetings to review applications and provide funding recommendations. Meetings are typically held in January between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. CDBG Citizen Advisory Committee members are paid \$50 per diem and mileage at the current county rate.

Persons interested in being considered for this appointment should submit an application no later than **June 30, 2022** to: Phil Chapman, Clerk of County Board, 100 North 5th Avenue West, Room 214, Courthouse, Duluth, MN, 55802, fax: 218-725-5060, or e-mail chapmanp@stlouiscountymn.gov.

To apply online, go to www.stlouiscountymn.gov/clerk, click on the "Application for Citizen Advisory Committee". Applications are also available in the County Auditor's Office in the Duluth Courthouse and in the Government Services Building in Virginia or by emailing chapmanp@stlouiscountymn.gov. You may also request an application by calling 218-726-2385.

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

Published in the Timberjay, April 15 & 22, 2022

Subscribe Today
(218) 753-2950
www.timberjay.com

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

1	7			6		2		
8			3					4
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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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www.netitle.com

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from
Cook Building Center

Closed Good Friday, Saturday and Easter Sunday

Phone/Fax: 218.666.5344
Hours: Mon. Fri: 7-5, Sat: 8-12
eric@cookbuildingcenter.com

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Paint • Friendly Service

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CLOSED
Friday & Saturday, April 15 & 16

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302 Main St., Tower, MN
M-F: 8 AM-5 PM; Sat: 8 AM-Noon

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Crew Cab 1500 LTD RST 6.2 4x4
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Purchase Bonus Cash-\$500
NOW \$54,165
* OR CHOOSE 0% APR!

Disclosures: * 0% APR up to 48 months with GM Financial O.A.C. Not compatible with all rebates and offers. Must take delivery by 5/2/2022. See dealer for details.

NEW INVENTORY ARRIVING DAILY
PRE-OWNED DEALS

2019 RAM 1500 Bighorn 4x4	18K Miles!	\$42,990
2019 Buick Envision Premium II AWD	GM Certified!	\$34,990
2018 Chevrolet Tahoe LT 4x4	Clean, One Owner!	\$49,990
2018 Jeep Compass Limited 4x4	23K Miles!	\$29,990
2017 KIA Sorento LX AWD	Third Row Seating!	\$19,990
2013 Dodge Grand Caravan	Stow-N-Go	\$15,990

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126 N Hwy. 53, Cook, MN
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CONGRATULATIONS
Congratulations Max Bruckelmyer, the new owner of the "Viking Plumbing Building" in Grand Marais, from Steve Bragg, Business Broker

Max is planning to relocate his plumbing business "Amax Plumbing & Heating" to Grand Marais from Duluth. He will be looking for helpers/apprentices and journeymen plumbers as well as HVAC techs to help with the workload in Cook County.

Calhoun

Your local source for news, music and entertainment!

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Northern Community Radio
90.5 KBXE

91.7fm - Grand Rapids
90.5fm - Bemidji
89.9fm - Brainerd
kaxe.org

OUR DESIGN TOOLS
are at **Your Fingertips**

Super Crossword

Answers

M	A	D	S	U	B	S	E	A	Y	K	N	O	W	S	H	O	P		
E	R	E	R	R	A	N	D	E	C	O	L	I	T	A	B	U			
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HARDWOOD FLOORING	AREA RUGS	CARPETING
CERAMIC TILE	WINDOW TREATMENTS	COMMERCIAL

SNOWFLAKES
by Japheth Light

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

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

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