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the TIMBERJAY

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WEATHER GONE WILD



Flooding hits record levels

Crane, Kabetogama water levels blow past 2014 mark

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- The mounting crisis for regional lakeshore property owners and resorts entered a record-breaking phase late last week when water levels at Crane Lake and Lake Kabetogama blew past the damaging highs of 2014, with another foot or more expected before the surge levels off.

As of Wednesday morning at 3 a.m., the monitoring station at Crane Lake recorded the lake level at 1,121.94 feet, up over two-and-a-half feet since May 4, and nearly a foot higher than the 2014

See...**FLOOD** pg. 11

Above: A wall of tarps and sandbags protects outbuildings and gas pumps at Voyagaire Lodge from Crane Lake's rising waters on Saturday.

Right: A solitary fisherman gazes out on Lake Kabetogama from a bench on a submerged boat dock on Saturday. The dock is normally two to three feet above lake level.
photos by D. Colburn



Flood debris creates hazards for boaters

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Some of the worst flooding to hit the NorthCountry in generations has left an extraordinary amount of debris floating in area lakes— and that is posing a considerable public safety risk for boaters.

That's the word from the St. Louis County Sheriff's office, which has been busy this week trying to assess the situation and respond to reports of a wide range of hazards on the region's many lakes.

"We're just having a hard time keeping up with it," said Jon Skelton, a

supervising deputy sheriff, based in Virginia. The high water, combined with considerable ice damage in many locations, has left area lakes riddled with floating debris, ranging from boats to branches, and even entire trees.

"Even as we speak, our lieutenant is on the phone with the county rescue squad

to remove a floating dock that's out on Birch Lake," said Skelton on Tuesday.

Sheriff's office officials have also been using drones in recent days to get a better visual handle on the extent of damage to roads and bridges and the hazards that

See...**HAZARDS** pg. 11

MEDIA

Does WELY-FM radio station have a future?

Brett Ross envisions municipal, non-profit collaboration effort

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – According to Brett Ross, longtime program director and general manager at WELY, the "End of the Road" radio station, this community's on-air presence still has a future. At a Tuesday Group gathering this week, he discussed the possibility of a local municipal and non-profit effort to keep the radio station alive.

The idea comes in the wake of the announcement earlier this month that the station would cease operations on June 1. The station, operated by the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa since 2005, has experienced mounting financial losses in recent years.

Ross, who moved to Ely in 1998, has had an on-and-off relationship with WELY during that span and will be out of a job on June 1 when the station goes off the air.

"Being on the air at the radio station really helped me to fall in love with Ely," he said. "I got to share connections with people, and that's one of the biggest things I gained at WELY. Helping people connect with one another is one of the ways that radio still thrives in small communities. It is a crucial resource here."

He reminisced about his time at the station and gave the Tuesday Group audience a timeline of the station's recent past.

Opening first as an AM-band station in 1954 and adding an FM simulcast in 1992, the station has had a long list of owners over the years, and it's not the first time that WELY has had trouble generating revenue. The station closed for a month in 1984 due

See...**WELY** pg. 9



Brett Ross is the general manager of WELY-FM radio station in Ely.

More on WELY
City of Ely could acquire radio station for free. **Page 9**

BUSINESS EXPANSION

Ely brewpub and restaurant ready to double in size

Major development project largely under the radar

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – Despite numerous roadblocks, including supply shortages and construction delays, the expansion project at the Boathouse Brewpub and Restaurant here is nearing

completion.

While largely ignored when people review business progress in this community, the Boathouse, one of the few eating establishments to not only survive but thrive during the past

See...**BREWS** pg. 10

Helen and Brian Tome, owners of Ely's Boathouse Brewpub and Restaurant, are nearly ready to open the upstairs dining room and bar, doubling the seating capacity.
photo by K. Vandervort



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Community notices

City-wide rummage sale, Crazy Day, and used equipment/watercraft sale Saturday, May 21 in Ely

ELY - Kick-off your summer with a trip to Ely on Saturday, May 21 for the 11th annual city-wide rummage sale, Business Crazy Day, and used equipment and watercraft sale. The rummage sale hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with an event map of sale locations available at the Chamber of Commerce office starting Monday, May 16, or at Ely.org/city-wide.

Don’t miss this one-day event. Dozens of Ely residents offer garage and rummage sales throughout the city. And, many retail businesses are offering in-store savings. Stop by the Ely Chamber of Commerce Saturday morning on the day of the sale and receive a free market bag compliments of Midco. The reusable bag is huge (as big as four plastic shopping bags) and is great to hold all those sale items.

The Ely Chamber of Commerce is hosting its own massive rummage sale too. All proceeds support the annual WolfTrack Classic Sled Dog Race. Find men’s and women’s clothing, games, holiday décor, cake decorating, books – the list goes on.

Plan to make a day of it in Ely. There will be plenty to shop for and don’t worry about going home hungry. Restaurants will be open to serve even the hungriest shoppers.

Singers auditions being held on May 22, 23 at VCC

ELY- Auditions for singers will be held on Sunday, May 22 and Monday, May 23, both at 6 p.m., in the VCC Fine Arts Theater lobby for the Reflections Dance Company summer show. The company is looking for singers who can sing with a “pop” sensibility for the Reflections Dance Company chorus. The ability to read music and choir experience is a big plus. No dancing is required.

Embarrass Region Fair needs volunteers; you can help

EMBARRASS – The 82nd Embarrass Region Fair needs volunteers to make the event happen. The Embarrass Region Fair Association (ERFA) needs volunteer coordinators for the exhibit hall, the parade, and the pageant. Other volunteer opportunities include gatekeepers during the fair weekend (August 26 -28) and to work at the “Miss or Little Miss”. Volunteers in any area are always welcome. For more information, contact Amber Johnson at 218-600-8517 or join a monthly meeting held the first Thursday before the first Saturday of the month at the Timber Hall/fairgrounds, 4855 Hwy. 21.

Edge Center hosts two June events

BIGFORK - June is special this year for the Edge Center because it is presenting two events in one month. The first event, part of the community wide celebration called “Wilderness Days”, will be performed by the Ragamala Dance Company. The Ragamala performance will be at the Bigfork city hall on Saturday, June 11 at 1 p.m. The second event will be on Saturday, June 25 at 7 p.m. on the Edge Center stage performed by “The Duluth Transit Authority.” The June 11 performance is free of charge. Tickets for the June 25 performance are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Masking is strongly advised for both events. Visit www.edgecenterarts.org. The Edge Center is located at 101 2nd Ave. in Bigfork.

Vietnam Veterans “In Memory” Program Sign-Up deadline

CHISHOLM - Applications are due at 4 p.m. on Friday, May 20 for loved ones to be included in the “In Memory” program while “The Wall That Heals”, a traveling replica of the Vietnam War memorial, is in Chisholm from June 23-26 at the Chisholm Football Field. The program recognizes veterans who served in the Vietnam War, returned home, and have since passed away. Applications can be submitted online at www.vvmf.org/inmemory-apply.

Lake Country Power awards scholarships to area students

COHASSET– Lake Country Power is pleased to announce 32 local high school seniors from 27 different schools have been awarded the Lake Country Power 2022 Les Beach Memorial Scholarship. The Les Beach Memorial Scholarship honors a former co-op employee and recognizes student commitment and contribution to local communities.

The \$4,000 scholarships, issued at \$1,000 per year for four years, will help the following graduating seniors in our area pursue college plans and career dreams: Jon Hakala and Annikka Mattson, Ely; Alex Hartway and Abby Koch, North Woods; and Natalie Nelmark, Northeast Range.

The Les Beach Memorial Scholarship is available to local students from more than 35 area high schools. Qualified students must be co-op members through their parents or legal guardians who receive electric services from Lake Country Power. The scholarships are made possible through unclaimed capital credits.

“As a locally member-owned cooperative, we want to ensure any unclaimed monies stay local among our co-op community and are put to good use like youth education,” said Greg Schulzetenberg, LCP manager of community relations and marketing. “The State of Minnesota permits electric cooperatives like Lake Country Power to use unclaimed funds for charitable purposes, such as scholarships.”

POW WOW SONGS



With Terry Goodsky, left, in the lead, a gleeful group of boys learn traditional drumming and singing with a not-so-traditional song about a popular modern-day cartoon character. photo by D. Colburn

Bois Forte youngsters learn the ways of the drum

Connecting to traditional culture has long-term benefit

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

VERMILION RESERVATION- The history and traditions of the drum and singing in Ojibwe culture were passed along to the youngest generation last week in a fun and educational event at the Bois Forte Vermilion Center.

Wet conditions on the pow wow grounds sent the activities inside to the gymnasium, but the young boys and girls there to participate didn’t seem to mind the change one bit.

Seated with Terry Goodsky and David Morrison Jr. at the drum were four young boys who were eager to take sticks in hand and begin drumming away, while as many young girls stood or sat outside the circle. The boys were there to learn to drum and sing, while the girls were there to learn to dance, as is tradition. Goodsky immediately gained their attention as he related the story of how the drum came into being from the vision of a woman, and that because of the high regard for the power of women as lifegivers, they could not sit around the drum. Their presence could interfere with the spiritual connections the drum allows as a living being itself.

“The reason a woman (had the vision of the drum) is because a woman is more powerful than the drum,” Goodsky explained. “That’s

why we don’t allow young girls and teenagers and women to sit at the drum, because they’re stronger than the drum.”

Nonetheless, young minds are curious minds, and soon one of the young girls sat down in a chair in the circle. Goodsky gently reminded her of the teaching, but did not send her out of the circle; she could stay seated as long as she turned sideways and did not face the drum directly. She listened for a while and then moved away of her own accord before singing began.

Even the best of storytellers has a hard time holding the attention of youngsters when there’s a drum to be played. As Goodsky began talking about how the original drum was left at Red Lake, one of the boys thrust forward his drumstick and asked, “Why is this soft?” Not skipping a beat, Goodsky explained that it was soft so that one did not have to strike the drum hard.

Goodsky showed them how to hold and use the sticks properly, and as they transitioned into learning and singing traditional songs, the boys gradually began to get the hang of it. Morrison held his hand out over the drum as a prompt to keep the drumsticks at a lower height until only an occasional reminder was necessary.

The boys took the activity seriously, but broke into smiles and laughter when Goodsky turned

to a nontraditional callback song about none other than Sponge Bob Squarepants to bring the lesson to a close.

“You want to teach the kids fun songs like Sponge Bob,” Goodsky said. “Even if they don’t get the beat, they still want to do it. With the parents here and the girls around, sometimes they get bashful. I was the same way.”

Morrison said the activity was funded by the Band’s opioid prevention program. A primary goal of the program is to reconnect adults who may be substance abusers with tribal culture.

“We’re trying to get people to quit using and come back into their culture,” he said. “Drugs cause a lot of harm and addiction leads you down a road that you don’t want to go down. We’re bringing back cultural awareness.”

Doing this activity with children is a natural extension of the program, Morrison noted. By connecting children with their cultural heritage and teaching them to embrace the strengths of tradition and community, the hope is that they will be able to make the good choices later on to stay connected and healthy.

A repeat of the session was held for children and families at Nett Lake the next day.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships offered by Mesabi to those recovering from Opioid Use Disorder to learn to become counselors

VIRGINIA - The Minnesota Department of Human Services awarded Minnesota North College’s Mesabi Range campus a \$543,243 grant. The grant will help train recovering individuals with a diagnosis of Opioid Use Disorder who are working toward either an Assoc. of Applied Science degree to become an Alcohol and Drug Counselor-Trainee or to obtain a full certificate for those with bachelor degrees to apply as Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors (LADC). This is in response to the need for substance abuse treatment services in the state.

According to the Addiction Studies Department Head, Mary Kay Riendeau, “I believe this innovative idea is realistic, and we should be enlisting recovering persons to be involved in the helping process.”

For over 28 years, Mesabi Campus Addiction Studies Program has been preparing individuals to become Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors while also adapting the program to fit the current needs of the profession.

Fall semester begins August 22. These classes will be offered mostly Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3-9 p.m. depending on the student’s prior education and background. A total of 50 scholarships

are available to eligible students looking to fulfill the demand for qualified LADC professionals across the state. The state has been divided into eight regions, each having five scholarships available as well as six scholarships available to the Twin Cities Metropolitan area. The criteria requires potential students to have an Opioid Use Disorder Diagnosis, live in Minnesota, and have a year free of problematic substance use.

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact the Addiction Studies Grant Coordinator by calling 218-749-7779 or visiting addictionstudiesprogram@mesabirange.edu.

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INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER

New pups for a new season

New members of the pack will be part of programs starting next month

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY - The International Wolf Center is adding two pups to its Exhibit Pack this year. The pups have arrived at the Wolf Center and will be visible to the public starting in early June.

“These ambassador wolves allow us to teach thousands of people a year about the real behavior of wolves,” said Lori Schmidt, the Center’s wolf curator. “The Exhibit Pack is also a key part of the online programs we offer to schools across the world. These ambassadors are a key part of our aim to teach the world about wolves.”

She added, “The Wolf Center believes in wolf education, and one method for accomplishing the mission of advancing survival of wolf populations in the wild is through the use of ambassador wolves.”

The Ely Wolf Center planned to add pups in 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic forced officials to delay those plans.

The Wolf Center planned to add two pups last year but was able to obtain just one pup. “Adding pups this year was important for the health of the pack, and to allow our yearling wolf, Rieka, to experience some pup behavior she lacked as a singleton,” Schmidt said.

“So often people portray wolves for their predatory behavior and don’t appreciate the intricate pack life and social organization that keeps them together as a social unit,” she said. “As curator, it is my job to maintain a socially cohesive unit of wolves, and we recognize that to do this, new life must be added to the exhibit.”

The International Wolf Center is a non-breeding exhibit, and when pups are added, they coordinate with another professional animal organization. The source is dependent upon reproductive plans within their facility and availability. The Wolf Center always acquires captive-born pups.

The 2022 pups were acquired



Above and right: The two new pups that arrived recently at the International Wolf Center are enjoying the attention. Neither has a name yet— those will be decided as part of a naming contest set to get underway next month.

submitted photos

from a USDA regulated facility in Minnesota. They will join the three wolves in the Exhibit Pack, including Axel and Grayson, each six years old, and Rieka, who turns

See PUPS...pg. 5



HEINOUS CRIME

Buley sentenced in Ely sex-trafficking case

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – Daisy Joy Buley, 37, of Ely, was sentenced last week to nearly eight years in prison for trafficking a young girl in exchange for drugs and money. She received the 94-month sentence from Judge Michelle Anderson in State District Court in Virginia.

Her sentence also includes restitution, which has yet to be determined, but the judge did allow her credit for the 474 days she has already spent in jail.

In January, Buley was accused of trafficking her daughter



Daisy Joy Buley

ter to several men in exchange for money and drugs, and admitted to

a first-degree aggravated sex-trafficking charge through a plea agreement. In court last week, that charge was switched to solicitation to practice prostitution and the aggravated sex-trafficking count was dismissed.

The charges were filed against Buley last August after her now teenage daughter met with investigators and told them about years of sex abuse committed by multiple men. According to the criminal complaint, the victim told investigators the sexual assaults began in 2013 and happened at least seven times while she was 11-13 years old. She also said Buley “threatened to kill her

if she tried to fight back or tell anyone what was happening.”

The court document also states that after the first sexual assault, the girl told her mother what had happened and her mother responded by saying she already knew about it and “it was fine.”

On the day of each assault, according to charging documents, Buley would reportedly tell the victim to “get pretty for the men” and drive her to one of their homes. The men were estimated to range between ages 40 and 70, and all the homes were in small towns. Upon arriving, Buley would talk about drugs with the men, who

she was allegedly friendly with, before leaving the girl.

Buley’s defense attorney reportedly filed an unsuccessful motion to have Buley placed on five years of supervised probation, arguing the public would be better served by her receiving chemical dependency and mental health treatment outside of prison.

Buley must serve a little more than five years of the sentence before she is eligible for supervised release. She must also register as a predatory offender, and will be subject to ten years of parole conditions.

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Editorial

Greenwood dysfunction

Fight over clerk’s pay suggests the idea of public service has fallen on hard times

In St. Louis County, townships that lack a viable government are known as “unorganized.” That might be an apt description of Greenwood Township as well, these days, given that it has served across the region in recent years as a poster child for dysfunction in government.

The latest jaw-dropping antics include the decision by the township clerk to use meeting minutes to extort a pay raise. As we reported last week, the town board has not seen board minutes since January and when they asked why, town clerk Debby Spicer said she wasn’t getting paid enough to complete them. She has decided, based on what is unclear, that she is owed something well above and beyond the current clerk’s salary that was in place at the time she first ran for office, and she is making it clear that she doesn’t intend to fulfill basic functions of her job, such as recording minutes or being in the office 12 hours a week to serve Greenwood residents, unless she is paid more.

Given that it’s Greenwood, Spicer’s self-serving actions shouldn’t be a surprise. Yet, that doesn’t mean her actions aren’t offensive. “I get paid for those extra hours, you get the minutes,” she told the board earlier this month, effectively holding the minutes hostage.

This is the mentality of a kidnapper, not a public servant.

That said, the town board is, unfortunately, reaping what the prior town board sowed back in 2020, when it slashed the pay of former clerk Sue Drobac from just over \$2,300 a month to \$1,400, as part of a campaign of harassment that board members hoped would prompt her to quit. Drobac, who did eventually resign, actually did her job, but was viewed by the board as being aligned with the wrong faction in this sharply divided township. Since the clerk remains an elected position in Greenwood, the board couldn’t fire Drobac, although they could set her work hours and salary and they used that authority to cut her hours and her pay. Spicer, who was hired by the prior town board on an interim basis in the wake of Drobac’s resignation,

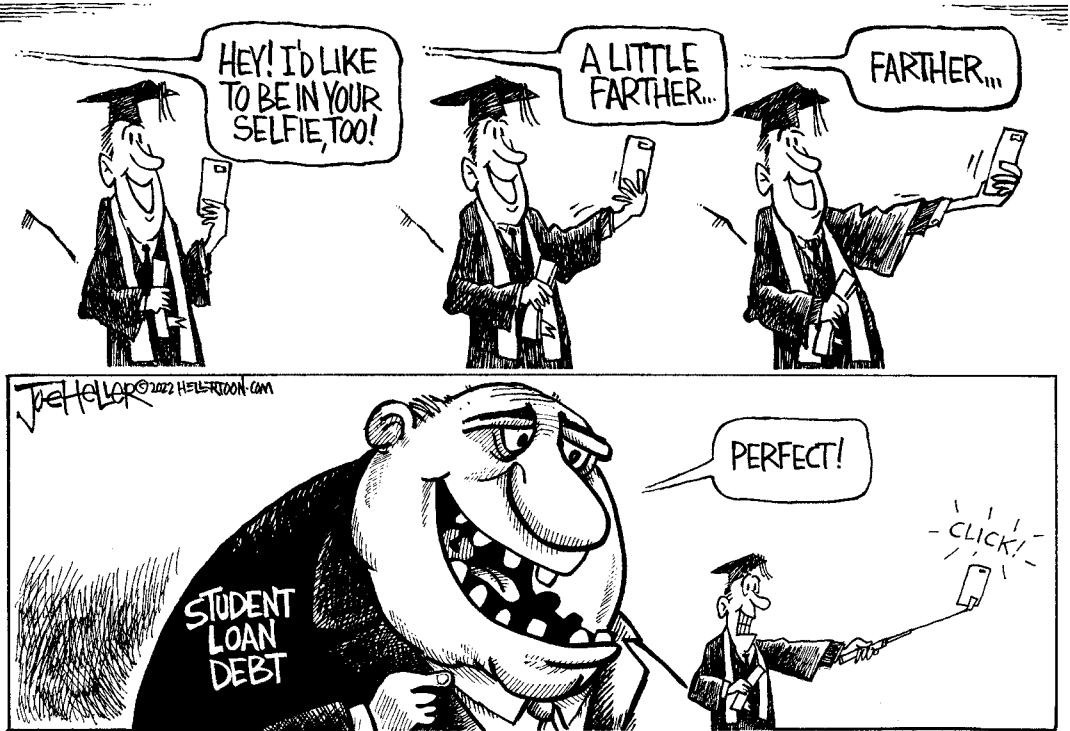
was paid \$27 an hour to carry out the basic clerk functions, but when she opted to run for the position, that hourly pay went out the window, replaced by the same clerk’s salary that had, among other things, prompted Drobac to quit.

Spicer certainly has the option to follow suit and resign if she feels she isn’t being paid sufficiently. Her recent actions, which appear increasingly erratic, suggest such a move would be the best thing for everyone.

Spicer doesn’t have the right to refuse to do her job by holding board minutes hostage or refusing to maintain office hours if required to by the board. She took an oath to fulfill the duties of town clerk and under state law those duties include “to record minutes of the proceedings of every town meeting in the book of town records...”

It’s ironic that it is Drobac who is now chair of the town board and is having to figure out how to extricate the township from the latest symptom of the dysfunctional divide within the community. On the one hand, Drobac is well aware that the current clerk’s pay is probably insufficient to the workload. On the other, Spicer has been difficult to deal with from the day she was appointed to the position. And she has taken the wrong approach to addressing her concerns about pay. There are few points of agreement between the various factions in Greenwood these days, yet even a normally divided town board is in full concurrence that Spicer’s actions are entirely inappropriate.

Since there appears to be no provision for the recall of a township official in Minnesota, the Greenwood board’s recent decision to hire someone else to fulfill the duties that Spicer is refusing to undertake, and paying for that out of her current salary, is understandable. It’s hardly ideal, however, since it has the potential to make Greenwood’s dysfunction even worse. At the same time, the town board certainly can’t bend to Spicer’s extortionary tactics. It’s an absolute mess. In other words, it’s so very Greenwood.



Letters from Readers

Stauber shows contempt for veterans

Congressman Pete Stauber has demonstrated his contempt for American service veterans by voting against the bill to compensate victims of burn pile exposure in Iraq and Afghanistan — the Honoring Our Pact Act.

Our Iraq folly was perpetrated by our infamous chicken

hawks George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, and Dick Cheney, all based on falsehood. Less than one percent of young Americans volunteer to serve now. Expect even fewer to do so if promises made at the time of recruitment are not honored.

If the ranks cannot get enough volunteers, the draft will be reinstated and the rich and powerful will once again be kept exempt with doctors bought off

to testify their clients can’t serve because of some crippling defect, disease, or illness.

Freedom isn’t free, but don’t worry, real patriots are serving and paying the dues for the rest of us. Call or email Stauber and ask him why he voted against this bill. I bet you get the same answer I did — “No comment.”

Terry Peterson
Ely

COMMENTARY

Bipartisanship isn’t dead, but it isn’t in good health, either

Having just watched a Supreme Court nominee supported by a comfortable majority of Americans draw just three Republican votes in the Senate, you could be forgiven for thinking bipartisanship in Congress is a thing of the past. And in the case of Supreme Court nominees, you’d be right: The last time a nominee got over half the votes of the opposition party was in 2005, and you have to go back nearly three decades — to Ruth Bader Ginsburg in 1993 — to find one who drew votes from almost all senators.

But if you look carefully, there are plenty of signs that bipartisan ship is still possible in Washington. President Biden recently signed into law a bill reforming the Postal Service, which drew strong support from both parties in Congress. The same happened with a measure that keeps companies and universities from shielding themselves against lawsuits for sexual harassment. And both houses have passed a package aimed at boosting American competitiveness, again with support in both parties.

There are other examples, as

well, but you’ll notice something about them: They’re not focused on hot-button issues like voting rights or gun control or immigration. This is in no small part because in the Senate, a measure effectively needs 60 votes to pass — which means neither party can get bills approved without members of the other party.

This is often intensely frustrating to partisans of whichever party is in power. Yet I’d argue it’s not a bad thing. In fact, the need for bipartisanship is pretty much baked into our system.

We live in a time when political life is intensely polarized and many Americans live in what amount to partisan bubbles of like-minded neighbors. For many people, this is just fine — they’re okay with avoiding contact with people who have different views. And ambitious politicians, always looking for an edge, have figured out how to navigate division: They use polarization to raise money from one group of potential supporters by attacking another group, and then goose election turnout by riling up their base.

There are some state legislatures where party-line law-

making can produce actual laws — witness the wave of strict anti-abortion and anti-voting-rights measures passed last year and on the docket this year. But at the national level, intense polarization yields legislative deadlock. And at both the federal and state levels, it produces laws with dubious futures.

The reason for this is that by requiring lawmakers to compromise and work with their political adversaries, bipartisanship often produces better, longer-lasting legislation. It helps ensure that a proposed law will take into account a broad range of views, produces wider acceptance both within a legislative body and in the public at large, and perhaps most important, means that the legislation has a chance of surviving the next change in power. Which, inevitably in our system, will occur.

Politicians recognize this, of course. It’s not just that most Americans prefer to see bipartisanship. The reason you see politicians talking about finding bipartisan support and, less frequently but still often enough, working hard to secure it, is that they know that getting support from members of the other party is usually necessary not only to get something passed, but to have it be implemented effectively.

See **HAMILTON...**pg. 5



LEE HAMILTON



Building community in spite of ourselves

This week Brett Ross gave an excellent presentation on the history and present circumstances of WELY radio with which he has been affiliated since 1998, rarely taking some time out for other work and sanity breaks. It was a compelling saga of an evolving team of participants who loved the idea of commu-



BETTY FIRTH

nity radio and were willing to work to keep it going, some paid employees, some as volunteers. Brett said with a chuckle that through the years he had no shortage of feedback from the community, often from listeners who were not shy about letting him know they didn’t like what he was doing. He benefitted by develop-

ing a thicker skin. They may not have been diplomatic, but they cared about our local radio, and they kept listening.

Brett was and is passionate about the importance of community radio, and although he’s looking forward to his first completely free day off in a very long time on June 1, he said he would love to continue working with WELY if it manages somehow to reconfigure and survive. Gil Knight, who was involved with WELY since the 70’s, said he’s sure that like the dying phoenix,

it will rise again. “You just can’t kill WELY.”

There was a lot of interest and many good questions about the future possibilities from the full house of Tuesday groupers. Some wondered about what made other community radio stations successful, particularly WTIP out of Grand Marais and KAXE/KBXE out of Grand Rapids/Bemidji. Both are membership, non-profit community radio stations, which have income from membership contributions and are eligible for fundraising from

grants and other sponsorships. WELY is a commercial station relying on advertising for income, and the Covid shutdown also shut down advertising

Some optimistic participants said they thought it would be very possible that a coalition of non-profits could work together to revive the radio station in a new configuration. That set me to wondering with familiar questions. What are the crucial elements that make or break efforts to organize

See **COMMUNITY...**pg. 5

Letters from Readers

On Memorial Day, let us honor the true peacemakers

Memorial Day will be celebrated by the usual high speed trips to the lake or wherever we can get away in the comfort of our own indifference, with displays of flags, and the sounds of bugles and drums, and by parades and speeches by bloviating politicians with stupefied applause.

It will be celebrated by the corporate oligarchies, which make guns, bombs and bullets, fighter planes and drones, aircraft carriers and an endless assortment of military armaments, which hope to cravenly capitalize on the more than \$800 billion in annual military contracts that have been approved by Congress and the President.

In other words, Memorial Day will be celebrated by the annual ritual of the betrayal of our war dead. Memorial Day represents the annual apogee of the hypocritical patriotism of our politicians and corporations, as they prepare for more war, more graves and white crosses, to receive more flowers on future Memorial Days.

The memory of our war dead, like my father, a highly decorated war hero of World War II, who was a Pathfinder paratrooper, who jumped into the frightening dark abyss of Normandy on the evening of June 5, 1944, deserve a better dedication. They deserve a dedication to peace and a defiance to governments that make war.

Politicians who voted funds for war, business contractors

and lobbyists for the military, generals who ordered young men into war, the FBI men who spied on anti-war activists, should be banned from attending all public ceremonies on this sacred day. The dead of our past wars must be honored, and let us pledge ourselves, in their memory, to demand no more war.

Let us honor on Memorial Day, John Dos Passos, who argued against war in his angry novel 1919. Let us honor Henry David Thoreau, who went to jail in protest of the Mexican War, and defined a mode of conscientious objection as, “let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine.” Let us honor Mark Twain, who argued against our war with the Filipinos at the turn of the 20th Century.

We must honor and hold a place in our heart for the antiwar activist Eugene Debs, who due to his outspoken protests of entering World War I, was arrested and jailed along with more the 450 other conscientious objectors in 1917, for violations of the Espionage Act. Debs was sentenced to ten years in prison. In 1920 he ran for United States President from the Atlanta Penitentiary and received a million votes as a peace candidate. His antiwar activism along with Randolph Bourne, would be an inspiration for activists during the Vietnam War.

Let us remember Jeanette Rankin of Montana, the first woman to be elected to Congress, who was one of the lone votes against entering World War I in 1917. She again voted no on the Declaration of War after Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Let us honor the effort to avoid war by President John F. Kennedy, when on Oct. 11, 1963 he signed the National Security Action Memorandum NSAM 263, bringing 1,000 military personnel home from Vietnam. Forty-two days later he was murdered in Dallas, Texas.

Let us honor I.F. Stone, who all alone among newspaper editors, exposed the fraud and brutality of the Korean War. Let us honor Martin Luther King, who protested bravely and vigorously and righteously against the Vietnam War, in his speech “A Time to Break Silence,” on April 4, 1967. Exactly a year later, on April 4 1968, he was assassinated as he stepped onto his motel balcony in Memphis, Tennessee.

Let us honor Father Daniel Berrigan, who declared in court, “for the burning of draft cards instead of children in Vietnam.” We must remember and honor the student activists at the University of California at Berkley, like Mario Savio and Jack Weinberg, who protested against the Vietnam War, and confronted the University’s policy of allowing on-campus military recruitment. In 1966, the student activists sang their protest song, “It’s Gonna be a Long Hard Fight,” to the tune of the Beatle’s, “Hard Day’s Night.”

Let us honor all the anti-war activists in the late 1960s and early 1970s who pioneered a new kind of protest, one that hinged on exposing the corporate role in war, like the thousand dissident shareholders and proxies who attended the Honeywell Corporation’s spring 1970 annual meeting in Minneapolis to protest

the company’s manufacture of fragmentation bombs. The activists forced the adjournment of the meeting after only fourteen minutes.

Let us honor Congresswoman Barbara Lee of California, who was the only representative in Congress to vote no for the war resolution, three days after 9/11. Let us honor the memory of Paul Wellstone, who was the only Senator running for reelection, to vote no on the Iraq War, on Oct. 11, 2002. Two weeks later he was dead.

On Memorial Day, we must rage against our country that has despicably used NATO to set up the Ukraine war and spends in the name of “defense,” nearly a trillion dollars a year on military weaponry, yet won’t even think about providing universal health care, a living wage and social justice. Those in power say we must not deplete our defenses. Yet, those in power have unconscionably depleted our livelihood, and depleted our youth, as they have consistently stolen our precious resources and applied them to war.

It is not easy, in the corrupting atmosphere of Washington D.C., to hold firmly to the truth, to resist the temptation of capitulation that presents itself as compromise. We are not politicians, but citizens. We have no office to hold on to, only our consciences, which insist on seeking and telling the truth. That, history suggests, is the most realistic thing a citizen can do.

Americans have hidden behind the mask of their country’s good intentions for so long, that their faces have grown into that mask. The mask that hides and

deludes the lies of empire and ruthless resource acquisition. The lies of 9/11, the lies that brought us the Iraq War, the lies of the new heresy hunt of the “war on terror,” and today with the criminal in the White House and his co-conspirators, the lies put before us regarding Venezuela and Iran, in the immoral attempt to foment even more war.

Soon, profound change will come to this country, this world, so tired of its approaching spiritual death, so tired of war, so tired of a Fox media that is a cancer on our democracy, so tired of seeing our wealth squandered, while the basic needs of our families are not met. These needs are very practical and are requirements of the soul. The need for affordable health care for all, living wages, a sense of dignity, and a feeling of being at one with our fellow humans on Earth.

Let us on this and all Memorial Days, put flowers on the graves of our grandfathers, fathers and sons and daughters, and then destroy the weapons of death that endanger us, and waste our resources, and now even threaten our children and grandchildren.

“We the people,” have our own agenda, our own mandate. We must all join the BDS movement, boycott, disinvestment and sanctions against all the forces that year after year spend more money on military defense, than on programs of social uplift.

Let us on this Memorial Day, not bask in the same old stupefied celebrations and obedience to the hypocrisy of war.

T.D. Duff
Tonka Bay

COMMUNITY...Continued from page 4

and work together? Why is it so difficult for human beings to pull together in the same direction even when the goal is shared and desired by all involved?

Many answers come to mind: interfering egos, stubborn independence, underlying emotional issues, poor listening, poor planning, conflicting sub-agendas (spoken or unspoken,) just to name a few. I do know some essentials: there must be people who are willing to take leadership who have skills in pulling together, people, agendas, and details; who know how to facilitate meetings and the overall process; who are excellent listeners. Without good facilitation, people will lose patience and mentally drift away or give up completely. Leaders need to be committed to the health and success of the project without personal agendas distorting their motivation and actions. And, of course, there needs to be a core of people who are willing to work, not just talk.

We are seeing extreme levels of polarization in our

country right now, often instigated and fertilized by so-called leaders who have something to gain from the dissension. They are very skilled at manipulating people through skillful distortions and outright lies, pushing emotional triggers on issues like gun control, abortion, and immigration. Their aim is to engender fear and distrust in the “others,” anyone who looks different or thinks differently. They attempt to create a false sense of belonging, of brotherhood or community through distrust while at the same time stroking egos with the message that “you’re smart and you’re on the right side.”

To my mind, these efforts are always destructive. I have trouble finding anything positive in them. My concern is that the so-called trickle-down theory is finally working as it never did as an economic theory, (which held that reducing taxes for the wealthy and the corporations would have benefits that would trickle down to the rest of us.) Never hap-

pened, but it’s still touted as a justification for giving more benefits to the aforementioned people and companies. The trickle-down does seem to be working with hate-mongering and polarization, as evidenced by a recognized lower level of civility generally and overt acts of violent protest or violence against others. I think presenting this model of war and permission to act irresponsibly and selfishly is possibly the worst legacy of ex-President Trump, or at least it’s in the top ten of a long list.

Locally, we certainly have seen disagreement and dissension on issues of mining, school curriculum, and military force in Iraq, but we also see daily examples of the community working together. Just look at any local paper. There are people planting trees, putting together plays and musicals, raising funds for individuals with medical issues, installing playground equipment in the park, supporting local sports teams, and working on trails. When trees come down, the chain saws come

out. When snowstorms dump inches of snow, neighbors with plows help others who need their help. Not to mention the hundreds of people who volunteer with over forty-five non-profit organizations in the Ely area, benefitting young and old in so many ways.

We do know how to do it. We just need to get out of our own way and perhaps hone up on some skills that would benefit us. Did I mention listening?

I would love to see WELY rise from the ashes, and I particularly would love to see more opportunities for local people to contribute to programming as has happened in the past. I remember Diane, who brought her vast collection and knowledge of jazz to do a weekly program; members of the local writer’s group who would read selections on Sunday night; Sonya, who offered her vast knowledge and wisdom about nutrition and natural remedies, and many others.

Can we do it? With a true American spirit, I think we can accomplish

whatever we can envision and have the will to accomplish. If you expect to miss the music, community announcements, coverage of local sports, Saturday morning polka, hearing the voices of your friends and neighbors

on the air, and so much more, think about it for a while, and then let Lacey Squier know at Lacey@NEMinnesotansforwilderness.org that you’re interested in helping.

HAMILTON...Continued from page 4

To put it simply, if you’re just interested in scoring points with the base, then bipartisanship doesn’t matter. If you want to have a beneficial and lasting impact on American life, it matters a great deal.

It may be tempting these days to throw up one’s hands in despair at the

displays of highly partisan behavior in Washington and all around us at home in our states. But as a voter, there’s something you can do about it. Notice all the instances in which lawmakers work across the aisle to secure some piece of legislation. Pay attention to who does the heavy lifting to make it

possible, and who stands in the way. Then support the people who recognize that bipartisanship is the route to effective legislating.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at

the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

PUPS...Continued from page 3

one year on May 23.

One way for Wolf Center visitors to see the pups is through an outdoor viewing area adjacent to the wolf yard, where pups will be spending time conditioning to the human component of a public exhibit. These programs are dependent on the weather, according to Schmidt. They last 15 minutes each and are held throughout the day.

“We will do our best to accommodate everyone, but safety of our guests, our staff and the wolves is paramount,” said Director Krista Woerheide.


Another way to see the 2022 wolf pups is with a one-hour behind-the-scenes tour. These tours are only available for members of the International Wolf Center. Information about membership is available at

www.wolf.org.

The International Wolf Center will conduct a pup naming contest beginning in early June and announce the names at a special virtual fundraising event on Tuesday, June 14, Woerheide said.

Advance tickets are available for purchase. “Everyone who wants to guarantee themselves a chance to see the pups

should get an advance admission ticket,” she said. “To get tickets, click the ‘Book Now’ button on the lower right-hand side of the page at www.wolf.org. For members of the Wolf Center, entrance tickets are free. We recommended that members also book their tickets in advance.”



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TIMBERJAY

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Moving? Questions about your subscription? Call the Tower office at (218) 753-2950.

Week of May 23

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 June 21.

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.

Little Church service set for Sunday, May 22

VERMILION LAKE TWP- The Little Church will be hosting a service on Sunday, May 22 at 4 p.m. with Jon Salo. There will be coffee an’ following the service.

The committee is open to everyone in the area who is interested in keeping The Little Church preserved and maintained in our community. The group also hosts a men’s group that meets every Thursday at 9 a.m. for coffee and conversation. All are welcome. The Little Church is located in Vermilion Lake Township on Cty. Rd. 26/Wahlsten Rd. Please contact Len Hujanen at 218-749-2014 with any questions.

TS Joint Powers Rec Board meets Tuesday, May 24

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Joint Powers Recreation Board will meet on Tuesday, May 24 at 8:30 a.m. at Sulu’s in Tower. All funding requests must be made in advance, in writing, to Terri Joki-Martin, Tower City Hall, PO Box 576, Tower, MN 55790.

Depot Museum volunteers needed

TOWER- Are you willing to share your time and enthusiasm greeting visitors to the Tower-Soudan Historical Society Depot Museum this summer? TSHS hopes to have the Depot Museum open seven days a week from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. with area volunteers. Support from the community is crucial. We are looking for people willing to commit to a three-hour shift throughout the summer (Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend), on a flexible basis. Training is provided. Please contact TSHS secretary Linda Folstad at 218 750-0193 or email tshssecretary@gmail.com by May 15 for more information.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Come meet your local clubs, organizations

TEDA is sponsoring public event on Saturday, May 21 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- Ever wonder what TSLVEB, TSAA, TFM, LVC, TSHS, and other acronyms stand for? On Saturday, May 21, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., everyone is invited to the Herb Lamppa Civic Center in Tower to learn more about all the volunteer groups in our area and to meet some of

the volunteers that help keep our community thriving. This is also a good opportunity to find out about upcoming events, and to learn about the many fun volunteer activities available for area residents. Groups will have information available about their missions, activities, and upcoming events. Questions and suggestions will be welcome. These

are the groups that “make things happen” in our community. Expected participants in the Meet and Greet are the Tower Soudan Civic Club (TSCC), Tower-Soudan Lake Vermilion Events Board (TSLVEB), Tower-Soudan Athletic Association (TSAA), Friends of Vermilion Country School, Tower Farmers Market, Vermilion Lake Association (VLA), Lake Vermilion

Chamber, Lake Vermilion Cultural Center (LVCC), Greenwood Recreation Board, Tower Economic Development Authority (TEDA), Old Settlers, area snowmobile and ATV clubs, Howard Wagoner Trails Club, and more. Coffee an’ will be available. The event is being sponsored by TEDA.

TOWER-SOUDAN ELEMENTARY



Above: Teachers Jacque Horvat and Charissa Dahl checked out Harper Olson’s winning bingo card. Right: Parker Salmela checks out her board. Below: Bentley Crego, Zaxton Wellander, and Ayden Mickle.



Bingo & more...

Golden Eagles families celebrate Pride Night

Above: Levi Clemenson has a lucky card, while his mother Tiffany and baby sister Maddi watch. Below: Mark and Raven Rettke wait for their numbers to get called. photos by J. Summit



COMMUNITY NOTICES

Rachel Stoddard receives Doctorate of Physical Therapy

REGIONAL- Rachel Stoddard, a 2014 graduate of Hibbing High School, recently received her Doctorate of Physical Therapy from the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus in Denver. She has accepted a physical therapy position at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute in Golden Valley, Minn. Rachel is the daughter of Peter and Patti Stoddard of Lake Vermilion, Tower.



Upcoming guest speakers at St. James Presbyterian Church

TOWER- Nathan Thompson, Executive Director of North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity will be the guest speaker on Sunday, May 22 at 10 a.m. Everyone in the community is cordially invited to attend the Sunday service.

Rehearsals to begin in June for Midsummer Singers

TOWER- The Lake Vermilion Cultural Center’s annual Midsummer Festival is back up and running after a two-year hiatus. The Midsummer Singers, a group of singers from the Tower-Soudan area and Twin Cities area will begin rehearsing on June 5 for the event set for Saturday, June 18 at 7:15 pm.

Janice Kimes is, once again, executive producer and music director. Larry Reynolds will serve as rehearsal director. The rehearsal schedule is:
Sunday, June 5: 7-8:30 p.m.
Monday, June 6: 7-8:30 p.m.
Tuesday, June 7: 7-8:30 p.m.
Sunday, June 12: 7-8:30 p.m.
Tuesday, June 14: 7-8:30 p.m.
Thursday, June 16: 7-8:30 p.m.
Friday, June 17: 2-4:30 p.m.
Saturday, June 18: 10 a.m. – 12 noon
Email Larry Reynolds if you have questions or need more information at tracker.backer@yahoo.com.

Memorial Day Tribute planned for May 30 at Civic Center

TOWER- Plans are being finalized for the Tower-Soudan annual Memorial Day Tribute to

be held on Monday, May 30 at the Herb Lamppa/ Tower Civic Center from 10 a.m. to noon. This trib-

ute will honor the military service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, their families at home, and those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Dianna Sunsdahl will be the guest speaker. The

names of local veterans killed in action and deceased veterans will be read. A medley of patriotic songs will be sung by the Tower Soudan Area Singers under the direction of Rolf Anderson. The program will

conclude with a traditional Memorial Day wreath placed on a symbolic Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in a ceremony to be held outside the Civic Center. Refreshments, provided by the Tower Soudan Civic Club, will be served before and following the tribute. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend this heartwarming event.

IT’S THAT TIME AGAIN!

The Tower Cemetery Board asks for your support.


Thank you all for your past donations.

Tower Cemetery Association
PO Box 874
Tower, MN 55790

Published in the Timberjay 5,20, 27, 6/10, 17, 24

Tower-Soudan-Embarrass Bookmobile Schedule

Every third Wednesday:
May 25; June 15;
July 6 and 27; Aug. 17; Sept. 7 and 28;
Oct. 19; Nov. 9 and 30;
Dec. 21



Britt (Sand Lake Storage): 9 - 9:30 a.m.
Bois Forte (Boys & Girls Club): 11 - 11:30 a.m.
Greenwood (Town Hall): 12 - 1 p.m.
Soudan (Post Office Vicinity): 2:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Tower (Civic Center): 3:45 - 4:30 p.m.
Embarrass (Hwy 135 & Hwy 21): 5 - 6 p.m.

You can see the full bookmobile schedule on the website, alslib.info/services/bookmobile. For more information on the Bookmobile or Mail-A-Book services, contact the Arrowhead Library System, 218-741-3840, email at als@alslib.info, or website at alslib.info.

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SUSTAINABILITY



Walk
for water

Ely students help raise awareness of world’s clean water crisis

ELY - A dedicated group of Ely Community Resource and Ely High School Key Club members recently participated in the annual Walk for Water event at the Trezona Trail.

They walked the four-mile trail carrying jugs of water to raise awareness for the 785 million people in the world who do not have access to safe, clean drinking water on a daily basis. The task of collecting water tends to fall on women and children between the ages of eight and 13. As a result, women are often unable to get jobs or contribute financially to their households. Children are often unable to go to school or get an education due to the thousands of hours they have to spend annually just hauling water. The average distance that someone in a developing community walks to fetch water is 3.75 miles.

The school Key Club is aligned with the Thirst Project whose mission is to build a socially-conscious generation of young people to help end the global water crisis.

Fourth grade students also recently participated in their own Walk for Water project at Ely Washington Elementary.

According to John Meyer, Ely Washington Elementary teacher, the fourth graders spent approx-



Above: Ely Memorial High School Key Club members collaborated with Ely Community Resource and walked the four-mile Trezona Trail, while carrying five-gallon containers of water, to raise money for the Thirst Project. photo by K. Vandervort

Top: Ely fourth grade students carried a portion of the water they may use in a day around the Washington Elementary School playground during their Walk for Water project. submitted

imately a half hour carrying a portion of the water they may use in a day around the school playground to simulate what it might be like for the many people who lack reliable access to clean water.

“This project helped raise awareness and critical funding for life saving clean water infrastructure at a community primary school

in Kenya,” Meyer said. “Students were motivated to help and through coin drives in our fourth-grade classrooms and online donations, contributed nearly \$1,100 to help fund this important work. We would like to extend our gratitude to the students, families and community members who joined this effort.”

Minnesota based H2O For Life Schools is a non-profit organization that helps provide stable, life-saving clean water access to communities around the world.

To learn more or help, visit: <https://www.h2oforliveschools.org/> and search «Ely».

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2022



short season garden
watching the seedlings push up

veggies by july

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.

ELECTION 2022

Ely city candidate filing period runs through May 31

ELY – A two-week filing period for the city of Ely mayor and three city council seats began this week and runs through Tuesday, May 31.

Mayor Rodger Skraba is pursuing the Republican nomination for the Minnesota State House seat, now occupied by Rep. Rob Ecklund (DFL), and unless he changes

this city’s mayoral ballot in November to run for re-election for the two-year position.

Also on the ballot this year are four-year Ely City Council seats now held by Angela Campbell, Albert Forsman and Heidi Omerza.

A primary election would be held on Tuesday,

Aug. 10 if at least three candidates file for the mayoral position. Six or more council candidates would also force a primary election. The general election is Tuesday, Nov 8.

Affidavits for candidacy are available at the Ely City Clerk’s office in City Hall, 209 Chapman St., on the city of Ely website, www.ely.mn.us,

and email, deputyclerk@ely.mn.us, or call 218-365-3224. The cost of filing is \$5.

Completed documents and fees must be received by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 31.

Over at the Ely School District, ISD 696 will hold school board elections on Nov. 8. Positions now held by Tony Colarich, Ray

Marsnik, and Rochelle Sjoberg are up for grabs for four-year terms. The position held by Chad Davis, who was appointed earlier this year to fill a board vacancy, is also open for a two-year term. Candidacy filing will take place later this year. No primary election will be held.

WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Ely fourth and fifth graders present ‘Summer Camp’ musical

ELY – Washington Elementary School fourth and fifth graders presented a spring musical, “Summer Camp,” last Friday in the auditorium. Ely students and families have waited two years for the school musical to

return to the stage.

“Summer Camp” takes place at Camp Runamuck and is filled with the many feelings and memories of those who have ever been to a summer camp might have experienced. “This

musical had everything you loved and feared about summer camp, from the morning routine to the bugs,” said Ely music teacher Michael Rouse who co-directed the show with Crystal Poppler.

photo by K. Vandervort

ORR CITY COUNCIL

Volunteers step up for Orr July 3rd celebration

City council members vote to approve allocation for event expenses

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- If there's a town in the North Country that loves its celebrations, it's Orr, and it's become clear that when a treasured festivity may be on the verge of disappearing, someone will step up to keep the party going.

With the disbanding of the Orr Chamber of Commerce and longtime July 3rd Fun Day at the Bay volunteers saying last year that it was time for them to pull back, the possibility loomed large that patriotic Orr revelers would have to hop in their vehicles and travel elsewhere this year for the parades and kiddie games and food vendors and all the rest associated with Independence Day celebrations.

But good news was in store for the community at the May 9 meeting of the Orr City Council, where it was announced that Sandy Wardas, Emily Koch, and Hannah Manick have stepped up to keep the fun in July 3rd Fun Day.

Wardas, who has put a great deal of time and effort into organizing past event, will hone in this year on the 5K run and also the bean bag tournament. Koch will be mak-

ing arrangements for the food and vendors at the community center, and Manick will spearhead the kiddie parade, the sawdust pile treasure hunt, and also help with outside vendors.

City auditors gave the green light to the council to appropriate funds for the event, noting that it was a permissible expense of city money as long as the event was open to anyone and benefited the entire community. Council members responded by approving \$500 for expenses, to come from the city's economic development fund.

Council members also approved an outdoor beer garden at the Orr Muni, as well as a porta-potty and a band. The cost for a band is estimated to be between \$1,500-2,000, and the rental fee for the porta-potty for the weekend will be \$110.

Blighted property

An extension request for cleanup of the property at 4735 Pine Drive was deliberated and approved by the council.

"I received a call from Paul Olson, and I told him I would ask for a 30-day extension because there was just too much snow on May 1," Mayor Joel Astleford said.



All signs are pointing to another festive July 3rd Fun Day at the Bay in Orr this year, including the kiddie parade where Uncle Sam could make an encore appearance.

file photo

"There's been very little activity, but he might be starting in on it," council member Tom Kennebeck said.

Clerk Cheri Carter said that someone had come in to report that

In other business, the council:

➤Approved raising the user fees for the RV dump station and potable water. The dump station fee went from \$8 to \$10. The cost for up to 10 gallons of water jumped from \$2 to \$5. New subdivisions were created for 11 to 50 gallons, priced at \$10, and 50 to 100 gallons at \$15. The price for 100 or more gallons was raised from \$10 to \$25.

➤Heard from Chet Nieman about problems with the ice machine at the Muni. It has been making ice with black specks in it that haven't disappeared after passing the water through a filtration system. Nieman has been using bagged ice for customer consumption. The city will explore options for fixing the machine or getting a new one.

➤Approved a request from Ambulance Director Donna Hoffer to buy a new laptop computer for Assistant Director Patrick Hoffer. Health confidentiality laws require that protected health information cannot be stored on a personal computer, hence the need for the additional unit. A Dell Inspiron 15 was approved at a cost of \$1,005.

➤Agreed to sponsor

the Voyageurs Trail Society, Inc. in its application to the snowmobile trail assistance program offered by DNR. The city will incur no additional operational costs for the sponsorship.

➤Heard from Airport Manager Rocky Hoffman about issues with pooling water in the lobby at the airport. Water was discovered the weekend of April 16, but a source was not determined at that time. After a big rainstorm the following weekend, water was discovered in the floor ductwork. Hoffman reported pumping 900 gallons of water out, and a dehumidifier continues to draw about five or six gallons a day. A likely source water coming through a large crack where the sidewalk has separated from the front of the building.

➤Approved a job description for volunteer firefighters submitted by Fire Chief Jeremy Wright.

➤Approved fire protection contracts for three unorganized townships totalling approximately \$12,800.

➤Heard that the community center has three rentals in May and five in June.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Clock running down on photo contest voting

COOK- The submissions are in, and now it's time for the public to weigh in with their votes on the 2022 "Happiness Is ..." Photo Contest now on display at Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook.

Vote for your favorite photos to determine who will receive \$100 for the first-place entry. The runner-up will receive \$50. Awards will be unveiled and presented at a gala event at the gallery from 1 - 3 p.m. on Friday, May 27.

Viewing and voting is open during regular gal-

lery hours of Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. -1 p.m. at 210 S River St. in Cook.

Writers group to meet on Saturday

COOK- Ellie Larmouth, PhD. will reprise her popular writers group with local writers on Saturday, May 21 from 2 to 4 p.m. at at the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery, 210 S River St. in in Cook. This group has been meeting for about 11 years now and several books have been published by authors who attend Larmouth's workshops. Many other folks

who love to write enjoy gathering to talk about writing and perhaps write a little and share during the meeting.

The volunteer staff at NWFA is so appreciative of Dr. Larmouth's generous volunteer participation in NWFA, a nonprofit membership arts organization. Ellie lives in Tower, MN and grew up in the Finnish lifestyle in Esko, MN. She is a retired educator, counselor, therapist, and college professor.

So, everyone interested in writing is invited to attend on (behind the big Spruce tree) next to Dreamweaver Spa and Salon in Cook. There is no fee and no registration requirement.

More information about classes and events may be found online at www.nwfamn.org or by emailing nwfamn.org@gmail.com.

District to host special Native graduation event

VIRGINIA- ISD 2142 St. Louis County Schools will hold an American Indian Graduation Ceremony on Tuesday, May 24 from 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Fortune Bay Resort Casino.

Students and invited guests from all four district high schools, Mesabi East, and Mt. Iron-Buhl will come together for this first-ever graduation

event for students of this educational consortium. Attendance is by invitation only, but well-wishers are encouraged to express their congratulations to the graduates in other ways, including attending individual high school graduation ceremonies.

Church hosts free community meal May 26 in Cook

COOK- Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook will host a drive-through community meal on Thursday, May 26 from 4-6 p.m. The menu will be hamburgers, pasta salad, chips and dessert. The meal is free and open to the public.

Woodcarving is ongoing at NWFA

COOK- An enthusiastic group of carvers meet and share the joy of carving on wood each week on Thursdays from 6-8 p.m. at the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery at 210 S River St. in Cook. Beginners are welcome! Call Howard for information at 218 290-1391.

HELPING HANDS



Volunteers at Kabetogama Town Hall work on filling sandbags on Saturday to be distributed to anyone needing them to fend off potential flooding of their property from the rising waters of Lake Kabetogama. More than 10,000 bags have been assembled by volunteers. Lake levels surpassed those of the 2014 flood last week and are predicted to continue rising at least through Sunday. photo by D. Colburn

FLAG PROJECT



The Cook Lions Flag Park at the intersection of E Vermilion Dr. and 2nd St. E has been a beautiful, inspiring fixture in the community for about three decades. The Lions are preparing to undertake a refurbishing project that will involve general renovation and maintenance that is long overdue, including purchasing new flags. Those interested in supporting the effort with contributions are encouraged to call Lions President Steve Kajala at 218-750-0310 for more information.

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ELY CITY COUNCIL

City of Ely could aquire WELY radio station for free

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY –For the past two weeks this community has been in desperation, almost panic, over the impending shut down of WELY-FM radio on June 1.

Ely Mayor Roger Skraba talked informally with the owners of the station, the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, last week and again this week about what the city of Ely’s role could be in keeping the station on the air.

“I’ve received a lot of feedback in the community about losing the radio station,” Skraba told the city council members Tuesday night. “There are a lot of people who don’t want it to be lost. They want in some way, shape or form, for it to continue.”

Apparently, Skraba

Same offer made last summer was dismissed by mayor

received an offer from tribal council leadership last August indicating that they wanted to give the radio station to the city of Ely. For free.

“I told them that’s not something we want to run,” the mayor said. “There are several people who have been trying to buy it and they all came to the conclusion that the radio station is not profitable, and they don’t want it.”

A non-profit group in town, according to Skraba, is considering ways to keep the station on the air.

“They think they can sell memberships and have access to grant money, and want an opportunity to make a go at it to see if it can be done,” he said.

With the impending closing of the station coming in less than two weeks, the organization is in discussions with tribal leadership.

“Our role would be, after the tribe gives us the station, we, in turn would lease it to the (non-profit) organization that would operate the station. That’s going to take time to make that happen,” Skraba said.

While the mayor knew about the station giveaway offer last summer, he is now taking the rest of this summer to consider a plan to keep the station on the air.

“They want to know if we are serious about doing this,” he said.

He asked council

members for permission to represent the city of Ely in talking with Bois Forte leadership over a possible transition of ownership of WELY. Skraba would include City Attorney Kelly Klun and Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski in negotiations.

“We wouldn’t make any decisions before coming back to you,” he told the council.

While he referenced the non-profit group interested in running the station, he did not reveal the name of the non-profit. Earlier this week at a Tuesday Group gathering, Becky Rom said her non-profit organization, Boundary Waters Connect, was

seeking help to figure out a business model for keeping the radio station on the air.

Skraba said he asked tribal leadership for a grace period until September to see if the city of Ely and local non-profit organizations could form a business model.

“We know that the group would have to go out and get fundraising to make up the monthly deficit of \$8,000 to \$12,000 per month in operating losses,” he said.

“The (Bois Forte) Band is done. They are not going to do this anymore. That’s it,” Skraba continued. “Many in this community are saying that there has to be a better way.

Maybe there is a better way. We’re interested in finding out if something like this can work. If the tribal council feels generous, they will give us everything.”

The council voted 5-0, with two members absent, to give the mayor permission to enter into negotiations with the Bois Forte tribal council for the transfer of the WELY radio station ownership.

In making the motion, council member Heidi Omerza said, “I see the pluses and minuses of this. We all see how valuable the radio station is to this community. But the liability (of ownership) I can definitely see as well. There are people in this community who really want to see this succeed. It is worth giving this a chance.”

WELY...Continued from page 1

to lack of funds, but the community responded with a \$9,000 fundraising effort to help get the station back on the air.

CBS News “On the Road” reporter Charles Kuralt saved the station again when it went belly-up in 1995. Kuralt, fell in love with Ely as he did numerous stories here over the years, bought the station at a court-supervised auction and poured thousands of dollars of his own into upgrades. His dreams were cut short when he died in 1997.

Bois Forte bought the station in 2005 when Boundary Waters Broadcasters, Inc. put it up for sale. Station managers had implemented a format change to “adult album alternative” similar to Minnesota Public Radio’s The Current.

no advertising sales to be had and that’s when the bottom dropped out,” he said. “It was bleak and really rough. We got some help with (COVID funding) to keep things going.”

Meanwhile, the radio station’s signal strength was cut substantially in late 2020 when tower equipment was damaged by a work crew, according to Ross.

“Our signal was cut to about 30 percent of what it was. A new transmitter and new antenna are sitting at the Ely tower site waiting to be installed. We could have full range as far away as Cotton, Hibbing, Virginia and all the communities in between.”

A future for WELY?

On the news of the

impending shut down, Ross said, “My initial reaction was heartbreak and sadness. This station has so much history and means so much to the town. The fact is, the people of Ely owned this station and there will be a big void once we leave the airwaves.”

He also described a sense of relief.

“I’ve been watching in the rear-view mirror for the last three years that something like this was going to happen. I’ll say right now, I’m looking forward to June 1 and having a day off, turning my phone off, going into the woods and not worrying about anything,” he said. “We have outdated and obsolete equipment, for the past four years we’ve held the station together with technological duct tape.”

He was quick to add,

“This community wants its radio station. People here love it. People count on it. It is a huge resource and service for this community.”

He said he believes there is a future for WELY in Ely. He described his personal-best case scenario.

“There has been interest expressed by the city of Ely, by the mayor,” he said. “They have an interest and they also have an infrastructure that can support a radio station, like high-speed fiber broadband.”

He noted that several non-profit groups have expressed an interest in being involved in keeping WELY alive.

“There is talk of collaboration going on,” Ross said. “We have all these different strong non-profit groups that can produce some incredible

results. They can open up possibilities of fundraising and grant funding.”

Ross said he can see a partnership between the municipal organization, the city of Ely and some non-profit groups.

“My position on that right now is that I want to support the right people that have an interest in seeing WELY survive,” he said. “Would I come back and work at WELY? Absolutely, 1,000 percent. I would love to see it survive into the future and I am really optimistic that it will.”


He urged Ely radio station advocates to contact Bois Forte leadership and the city of the Ely’s mayor and city council members to urge support for continuation of WELY.

“The decision to close

the radio station created a sense of urgency and panic by those who don’t want this to go away,” Ross said.

The clock starts ticking on June 1. The station’s Federal Communications Commission (FCC) broadcast license was just renewed last year and is valid until 2028; however, when the station goes off the air next month, the owners can apply for a six-month renewal, and if the station remains off the air after six months, the station’s owners can apply for another six-month renewal, according to Ross.

“But after one year without being on the air, they will lose the license,” he said.



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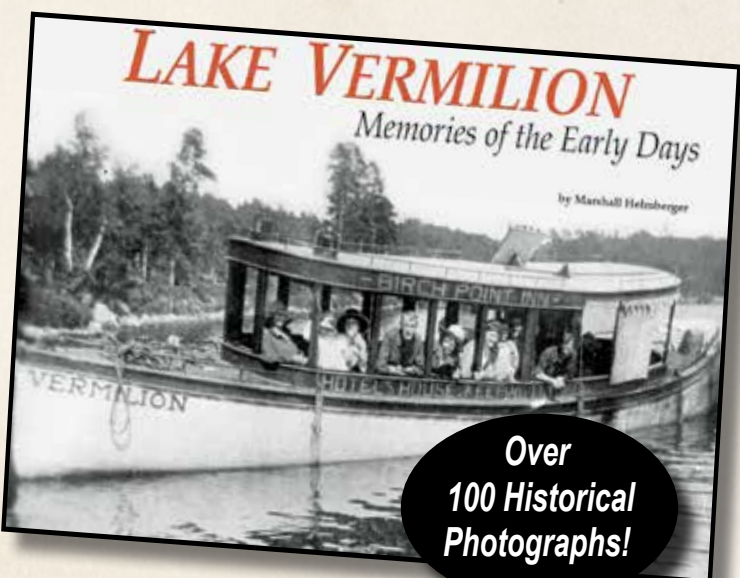
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BREWS...Continued from page 1

two years of COVID closures and operating constraints, is completing a expansion project that will more than double their seating capacity on the second floor.

Owner Brian Tome won't make any promises on an opening date, but he revealed last week that the upstairs venue, which features a horseshoe bar, eight additional tanks for their craft beer, seating for about 100 people, new bathrooms, service elevator, a private meeting room, and a lounge area, is 90 percent complete.

"I want to be open for the start of summer," he said, as he and his wife Helen gave a tour to a visitor.

"We want to do a soft opening before going all



The upstairs seating capacity at the expanded Boathouse Brewpub and Restaurant will be about 100 people. Eight more stainless steel tanks upstairs will double the establishment's beer capacity to 1,600 gallons.

photos by K. Vandervort

in," Tome said. "I've never run two floors. I don't know how it is exactly going to work. We have to work out the kinks and we need to square away some logistics to make this all run properly."

A longtime Boathouse chef and Ely-area native, Tome "took a leap of faith" in early 2020 when he accepted an offer from Boathouse owner Mark Bruzek, of Duluth, to join in co-ownership of the

popular brew pub downtown eatery.

Then COVID-19 hit. "I had many sleepless nights wondering what I was getting myself into," Tome said. "COVID briefly closed us down to

indoor customers so we took sledge hammers and went upstairs and started demolition."

The expansion required the installation of a sprin-

kler system in the landmark building that was built in 1905. A \$73,000-plus grant to the city of Ely from the Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation helped fund a water main replacement in the alley behind the establishment necessary for the installation.

Accessible by a new staircase in the front, and an additional staircase in the back of the house, the open floor plan upstairs features six-foot windows, exposed ceiling beams and a refurbished original wood floor. The original hardwood floor, put in in 1904, was restored by Hebl Floor Sanding of Embarrass.

The poplar tongue-and-groove wall boards, installed by general contractor Lenci Enterprises, of Virginia, took about three months to obtain.

"And getting plumbers up here was next to impossible," Tome added.

The new bare equipment that was ordered last year didn't even make to Ely.

"Some of it was damaged in transit," he said. "So there is a delay in getting that here and installed. We made the order last June and finally received some of it in April. Our new tables and chairs were fairly easy to get, but again, some of that was also damaged in transit so that had to be sent back."

The walk-in beer cooler contains eight stainless steel tanks, manufactured by Central Stainless, Inc. in Marshfield, Wis. Each tank holds 3.5 barrels or about 100 gallons of Boathouse beer. Brewer Joey Colarich is working hard this month to make and fill the additional tanks.

The upstairs seating capacity will be about 100 people.

"Our private meeting room, perfect for birthday parties, writing group meetings and other small gatherings, will have room for about two dozen people," Tome said. "A small lounge area off the bar will have couches and stuffed chairs, but don't look for televisions up here."

"I would like to have parties up here in the future," Helen Tome added. "A Halloween party, Christmas party, theme parties, and other events. And we'll have a place for more live music here."

The Boathouse has about 27 employees now and Tome said he expects to increase his employment roster by at least 12 more within the next year when he is at full capacity.

And they still won't be done with expansion ambitions.

"We purchased the former chiropractor building next door and are making plans to relocate the kitchen and open a retail shop there," Tome said. "We can then expand our beer brewery in the back of the building. We've been kind of under the radar, but we have been making progress on continuing to have a year-round destination for our community and visitors to Ely."

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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 W/EASY 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

2022 EDGE SE AWD

\$38,640 MSRP
-679 FORD OF HIBBING DISCOUNT
-1500 FORD ORDER INCENTIVE

\$36,461



*Discount may vary depending on Model/Vehicle Line. Not all Vehicle Lines qualify. See sales staff for details. Must place order by 5/31/22.

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

Dealership Name: Ford of Hibbing

Dealer Rep.	President Award Winning Staff	Type	Retail	Vehicle Line	Edge	Order Code	0511
Customer Name	Happy Customers	Priority Code	19	Model Year	2022	Price Level	235
DESCRIPTION		MSRP	DESCRIPTION		MSRP		
K4G0 EDGE AWD-SE		\$37,145	JOB #2 ORDER		\$0		
ICONIC SILVER		\$0	TIRE INFT/SLNT KIT NO SPR INC		\$0		
CLOTH BUCKET SEATS		\$0	CV LOT MANAGEMENT		\$0		
EBONY		\$0	50 STATE EMISSIONS		\$0		
EQUIPMENT GROUP 100A		\$0	FRONT LICENSE PLATE BRACKET		\$0		
ORDER CODE 200A		\$0	FUEL CHARGE		\$0		
SE		\$0	PRICED DORA		\$0		
.18" SPARKLE SLVR PTD ALUM WHL		\$0	ADVERTISING ASSESSMENT		\$0		
.TWIN-SCRL 2.0L ECOBOOST ENG		\$0	DESTINATION & DELIVERY		\$1,495		
8-SPD AUTO TRANSMISSION		\$0					
.245/60R18 A/S BSW TIRES		\$0					

TOTAL BASE AND OPTIONS

MSRP
\$38,640

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#7771

2019 EQUINOX LT AWD 23K MI



\$25,739

#25119A

2021 ECOSPORT SE AWD 12K MI



\$23,947

#9442

2017 TAURUS LTD 34K MI



\$23,574

#9463

2007 F150 XLT



\$7,500

#24811C

2014 ESCAPE SE AWD



\$13,457

#25121C

2019 F150 KING RANCH DIESEL



\$47,483

#25114A

2016 EXPLORER BASE



\$20,980

#25094A

2019 ECOSPORT TITANIUM



\$20,954

#7801A

2019 CHEROKEE LTD V6



\$30,497

#25093A

2020 ESCAPE SE 17K MI



\$28,215

#25129A

2010 MUSTANG V6 COUPE



\$12,478

#9466C

2018 EDGE AWD SE



\$21,804

#7754A

2015 CHEROKEE LATITUDE V6



\$16,736

#25089C

2014 RAM 1500 SLT



\$16,978

#25050C

2014 ESCAPE TITANIUM



\$14,736

#25162B

2015 EDGE SPORT AWD



\$25,497

#7822

2016 RENEGADE TRAILHAWK



\$22,980

#7833

2020 EDGE TITANIUM



\$34,438

#25165A

2018 ESCAPE SE SP. APP



\$24,651

#7835

2012 LIBERTY SPORT 99K MI



\$11,978

#7747A

2017 EXPLORER SPORT



\$36,436

#7834

2018 JOURNEY CROSSROAD AWD



\$22,978

#7825

2012 F150 4X4 WALDOCH



\$23,980

#9472

2018 F150 XLT CREW 5.0L



\$32,741

#25130A

2007 FREESTYLE AWD



\$6,500

#9475

2020 GRAND CARAVAN GT



\$27,498

#7818

2016 GRAND CHEROKEE



\$26,980

#25081B

2010 CHEVY SONIC LT 98K MI



\$9,500

#9467A

2014 ESCAPE TITANIUM AWD



\$16,478

#25095A

2017 MKX RESERVE AWD



\$29,472

#24965B

2011 EXPLORER XLT



\$12,980

#25127A

2018 EXPLORER XLT W/LEATHER 35K MI



\$35,947

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BANS OFF OUR BODIES

Pro-choice advocates rally in Ely

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY- Nearly 100 pro-choice advocates here joined thousands of marchers in hundreds of cities across the nation for a “Bans Off Our Bodies” rally expressing concern and even outrage that the U.S. Supreme Court could soon scrap the constitutional right to abortion.

Local advocates of abortion rights walked down Chapman Street from Central Avenue on Saturday morning, gathering in Whiteside Park for a rally then walking back downtown on Sheridan Street.

A leaked draft opinion considered by the court’s conservative majority that would overturn the *Roe V. Wade* ruling spurred demonstrations across the county. The privacy right has endured in this country for nearly 50 years and many fear about what that could mean for women’s reproductive choices.

Local political activist Carol Orban told the crowd, “I feel for all the women in those states who aren’t going to be able to get an abortion. What we need



to do in Minnesota is not take abortion rights for granted.”

She urged those in the crowd to vote this year. “We need to work to keep

Democrats in office and to take over the Minnesota Senate,” Orban added. “We

Ely-area pro-choice advocates joined thousands of marchers in hundreds of cities across the United States last Saturday for a “Bans Off Our Bodies” rally. photos by K. Vandervort

also need to make sure that all of our Minnesota-wide officials stay in office. Think about Scott Jensen as our governor.”

The crowd shouted in unison, “No!”

Orban continued, “Think about Pete Stauber remaining in Congress.” The crowd replied in unison, “Booo!”

She praised State Rep. Rob Ecklund (DFL), who is pro-choice.

“Keith Ellison, our Attorney General, has been working for justice his whole term and we need him to be re-elected,”

Orban said.

In referencing the Secretary of State office, “Imagine one of those crazy Republicans in charge of our elections.”

Pro-choice advocates implored the crowd to sign up to help with the upcoming elections. “We need all of you to help with this election,” Orban said.

During the brief rally in the park, several vehicles driving by honked in apparent support. A couple of people in vehicles also yelled expletives at the peaceful rally.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Northeast Minnesota region feels COVID’s economic hit

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- As health experts look both backward and forward to understand and address the seemingly ever-mutating coronavirus, a different group of experts are doing the same thing as they try to piece together the pandemic’s effects on the state’s economy.

The public is all too familiar with the sudden impact of the COVID-induced recession and restrictions on business that sent unemployment skyrocketing, but the Center for Rural Policy and Development hosted a teleconference on Monday to dig deeper into the numbers and their implications for the future.

More than 100 people logged-in on Zoom to listen to Luke Greiner, a Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development analyst, CRPD researcher Kelly Asche, Waseca County Administrator Michael Johnson, and Minnesota Extension Service economic specialist Neil Linscheid share data and their own analysis and opinions on how COVID has influenced the economy. Their task was complicated somewhat

because of the variables they were looking at and the fact that economic data has a significant lag period before it is available.

Employers in the North Country and elsewhere have had difficulty finding employees as the economy has rebounded, and it appears their challenge is tougher than anywhere else in the state.

Asche reported that the job vacancy rate of 9.8 percent at the end of the second quarter of 2021 in northeast Minnesota was the highest in the state.

“These are crazy vacancy rates,” he said.

The northeast and southwest regions had similar declines in employment during the first year of the pandemic of 3.5 percent. Asche said that’s a clear indicator that there aren’t enough people in those areas to fill the available jobs.

Another challenge the region faces in attracting people back into the workforce compared to other areas is that the northeast lagged behind other regions in wage growth, due in part to the high concentration of hospitality-related jobs, which increased in pay at a lower rate than other sectors of the economy.

Entirely rural areas

were the hardest hit of all economically during the pandemic, particularly with regard to the number of retirees and the number of women leaving the workforce. Asche explained that with the workforce skewing older in rural areas, the percentage of people choosing to retire early was greater. Female employment also dropped more than males, driven significantly by having to adjust to accommodate school closures, distance learning, and daycare needs, and the effect was greatest in rural Minnesota.

“That narrative of females being really hit hard by the pandemic really rings true outside of the metro areas,” he said.

Greiner said he was surprised by the size and speed of the exodus from the workforce as the pandemic forced a lot of decisions in a short time. Decisions about retirement or staying at home with children are ones that in the past have been gradually considered over a longer period of time, but

because of the pandemic people were forced to make changes within weeks or a few months.

It’s been no secret that workforce shortages have been predicted for northeast Minnesota for many years, and one attendee asked if it was possible to know how much of the current shortfall is specifically due to the pandemic, suggesting that it’s possible it might have happened anyway.

Asche said there weren’t any specific ways to narrow the trends down with the data that’s available, but reiterated that the growing shortage of workers is inevitable.

“What we’re going to see over the next year

is how we’re going to recover, and that will give us some answer as to how much of this was inevitable (as opposed to COVID-caused),” he said.

What wasn’t part of the landscape last year was inflation, and Greiner said inflation could act as an incentive to bring older workers back into the workforce.

“What do you do to hedge against inflation? You get more income. Especially if you decided to draw Social Security and the stock market isn’t producing unbelievable returns, one way to hedge against that is working,” Greiner said.

Linscheid emphasized

that whatever the cause, the decline in available labor is real.

“Two years ago without the pandemic, we’d still be talking about this,” he said. “There’s not enough people being born in Minnesota to solve that problem.”

Other questions focused on topics such as child care and elder care, local option sales taxes, the effects of online shopping, and the possibility of more and more jobs becoming automated to make up for the lack of workers.

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BASEBALL

T-wolves win streak extends to seven

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

ELY— Senior pitcher Mason Davis tossed a no-hitter on Monday as the Timberwolves won their seventh straight to improve to 8-3 on the season. Davis fanned 11 Littlefork batters as Ely blanked the Vikings 11-1.

Davis had plenty of help from his offense, as Ely racked up 13 hits in the contest. Junior Joey Bianco, who tallied three RBIs and three runs scored on three hits, led the way for Ely. Fellow junior Logan Loe added

three hits of his own, including two doubles, while scoring twice. Junior Erron Anderson and senior Eddie Prijatel did their part, knocking out two hits and an RBI apiece.

As has been the case for the past couple weeks, solid pitching has helped Ely’s cause. “I really like our depth,” said Ely Head Coach Frank Ivancich. “We have had four different pitchers throw complete games in the past two weeks, and we have gotten key contributions from 14 guys which allows us to get out and play games.”

Right: Ely’s Gunnar Hart slides in safe at second during a steal attempt against Littlefork-Big Falls on Monday.

photo by K. Vandervort

The Wolves added two more wins to their streak in last Saturday’s doubleheader in Blackduck, outscoring their opponents in the two contests by a total of 23-2.

Drew Marolt earned win number one from the mound, as he struck out six Red Lake Falls

See WOLVES...pg. 2B



SOFTBALL

Wolves go 1-2 for the week

Regular season finale set for Friday in Ely

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY–The Timberwolves batters came out swinging against the Nighthawks in the first game of a doubleheader on Monday, putting on their best performance of the week. Kate Coughlin had three hits for the day, including two doubles, while her sister Rachel added two hits, including another two-bagger, to help lead Ely to a 12-7 win over Northeast Range. Charly Flom had two hits and two stolen bases, while Clare Thomas tallied two hits and a stolen base as well. Katrina Seliskar and Cedar Ohlhauser each had a hit.

Seliskar got the win from the mound, scattering six hits, striking out seven, and issuing just two walks as she went the distance against the ‘Hawks.

Ely was helped by the five walks issued by Northeast Range pitchers, including three to Ely’s Zoe McKenzie, who added a stolen base to the mix.

In the nightcap, it was all Mt. Iron-Buhl as the Rangers exploded for 22 runs on as many hits to rout the Wolves 22-10.

Ely’s starting pitcher, Zoe McKenzie, just couldn’t tame the Rangers’ bats, as they rapped 19 hits off her in six innings of work. Seliskar came on in relief in the seventh and gave up three more runs on three hits.

Ely wasn’t without its bright

See ELY GIRLS...pg. 2B



BASEBALL

Grizzlies down ‘Hawks

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

SOUDAN- The air carried a chill and the skies were mostly cloudy on Monday, but the North Woods Grizzlies heated up in the latter part of Monday’s game against Northeast Range to claim an 11-6 win on the Soudan diamond.

Starting pitchers Louie Panichi for the Grizzlies and Elliot Levens for the Nighthawks both got roughed up a bit in the first inning as the designated away-team North Woods took a 3-2 advantage. Both hurlers then settled into a groove, and supported by good defensive play, kept their

Above: North Woods hurler Louie Panichi winds up for a pitch.

photos by D. Colburn

opponents scoreless going into the bottom of the fourth, when NER pushed across a run to tie the contest at 3-3.

From there it was all North Woods, with the Grizzlies scoring twice in their next at bat to reclaim the lead. North Woods sent ten batters to the plate in the sixth, hammering the Nighthawks’ bullpen for five runs, and added an insurance run in the seventh. The eight-run cushion was too much for the Nighthawks to

See BASEBALL...pg. 2B



NER’s Zander Lislegard calls for time after safely diving back to first base.

SOFTBALL

Grizzlies edge Timberwolves 5-4

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY— On Friday, the undefeated Grizzlies put the hurt to Ely for the second time this season, even as the Timberwolves bared their teeth in a hard-fought 5-4 contest.

North Woods pitcher Evelyn Brodeen was able to keep Ely’s hot bats mostly under control as she allowed just five hits, all singles, while striking out nine to get the win. Ely hurler Zoe MacKenzie held the Grizzlies to just three hits, while fanning five and issuing five walks.

Ely was first on the board

in the game, taking a 2-0 lead in the top of the first inning. The Grizzlies picked up a run in the second, but it was a four-run third inning that proved the decider. “That third inning killed us,” said Ely Head Coach Cory Lassi. “It was a kind of a perfect storm. We made a couple of errors behind Zoe. She walked a couple of batters and beamed a couple. It was just not a good combination against a good team.”

Ely’s Madeline Kallberg picked up two hits for the Timberwolves. Charly Flom, Clare Thomas and Raven Sainio notched a hit apiece.

“This was kind of a frustrat-

Right: Grizzlies pitcher Evelyn Brodeen winds during last Friday’s contest with Ely. photo by K. Vandervort

ing loss,” Lassi said. “We know they are a good team, and hats off to them, they are having a great season. What we represented on Friday was a better showing of who we are and how we can compete with them, rather than the week before [Ely lost to North Woods last week by a 13-0 score].”

The North Woods coach did not return a phone seeking comments or stats.



SOFTBALL

Grizzlies smash Chisholm in rebound from season’s first loss

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- The perfect season record for the North Woods softball team gained its first blemish with a loss Monday to Mesabi East, but the Grizzlies came roaring back on Tuesday to demolish Chisholm 16-3 and move to 8-1 on the season.

The Grizzlies might still have been smarting from Monday’s loss in the first inning against Chisholm, as the Bluestreaks tagged North Woods starter Helen Cook for three singles, a triple,

and two walks to take a 3-0 lead with the Grizzlies still to bat.

North Woods got two of those runs back in the bottom of the inning, with Koch driving home Addy Hartway on a single and then scoring herself on a wild pitch.

Hartway put the Grizzlies on top for good in the second inning with an inside-the-park home run to right field, with Lauren Burnett scoring ahead of her for a 4-3 lead.

The Bluestreaks went down in order in the top of the third, and then the Grizzlies’ scoring machine kicked into overdrive.

Amind-numbing 16 North Woods batters came to the plate in the bottom half of the frame. Burnett, Karah Scofield, Hartway, Skyler Yernatic, Avery Thiel, and Evelyn Brodeen all drove in runs in an 11-run blitzkrieg that left the Bluestreaks stunned at the reversal of fortunes and staring into a 15-3 abyss. The Grizzlies shut out the Bluestreaks over the next two innings and added one more run for the 16-3 blowout win.

Koch went all the way on the mound, giving up seven hits and three runs over five innings while notching three strikeouts.

North Woods stole 15 bases in the game, with four players having multiple steals. Brodeen was a perfect three-for-three at the plate with an RBI.

North Woods Head Coach Dee Ann Sandberg was pleased that the Grizzlies bounced back so well.

“We had a rough game yesterday, but they came back and and we switched up a little bit,” Sandberg said. “I knew they’d come around – they’re all good athletes.”

It’s a more confident Grizzlies team on the field this year, in part

due to maturity, and also due to the players’ familiarity with each other and a strong desire to win. Sandberg said many of the girls have been playing together since they were in third grade.

“They’re playing great, and that’s all we can ask,” Sandberg said.

North Woods could have used some of those hits, steals, and runs on Monday, as all were in short supply in a disappointing 7-1 loss to Mesabi East.

The Grizzlies had another game scheduled for Wednesday at Cherry.

BASEBALL...Continued from page 1B

overcome, although they tried, rallying for three runs in their last at bat to account for the 11-6 final.

Panichi picked up the win for North Woods, going four innings and giving up two earned runs and three hits against three strikeouts. Reliever Ben Kruse rang up four strikeouts while yielding a hit and a run.

Levens looked sharp in sending eight Grizzlies to the bench on strikeouts, but the Grizzlies tagged him for five hits and four earned runs in four innings for the loss.

At the plate, Louie Panichi and Tate Cly had hot bats for North Woods, Panichi rapping three hits and Cly recording a pair of two-baggers. NER was led by Miko Maki and Zander



Left: NER pitcher Wyatt Gorsma got creative with his anti-glare application.

photo by D. Colburn

We got enough swings on him, kept fighting him off with foul balls, and then the pitch count rule came into play. As you could see on the scoreboard, it changes (in our favor) right after he goes out.”

It was the third win of the weather-abbreviated season for the Grizzlies, and having played well even in most of their losses, Smerud was pleased to see his team come through with the win.

“We’ve been pretty consistent all year. We’ve had close games with Virginia, Cherry, and

Mesabi East,” Smerud said. “It’s been a pretty good year, the kids are all playing pretty decent baseball, and our goal was to be playing our best baseball at the end of the season.”

He also gave credit to Davis Kleppe and Eli Smith, two-sport athletes this spring as they also tee up the ball for the North Woods golf team. They had a tournament earlier in the day before suiting up against NER.

“You couldn’t ask more from a couple of guys who came in from a golf meet today,” Smerud said. “They’ve given us everything we could possibly ask from them and they’re a huge help to this team. I don’t think they realize how big of a help

they really are.”

Inclement weather has meant more than just canceled games for North Woods, as their home turf has suffered. They played all their games to date on the road, and they’ve only been able to practice on it twice, Smerud said. If the weather was cooperative, the 3-6 Grizzlies had a scheduled Thursday home game against Cook County.

“It’d be nice to have a home game,” he said. “We only have four scheduled all season.”

The loss dropped the Nighthawks to 3-4, with a game against Wrenshall on Tuesday.

WOLVES...Continued from page 1B

batters and scattered just three hits in the six-inning game to lead the Wolves to an 11-1 win over the Eagles. Freshman shortstop Caïd Chittum paced Ely with two hits, two RBIs, and three runs scored.

Anderson tallied two hits and an RBI, while senior fielder Harry Simons added two hits as well.

In the nightcap, junior hurler Gunnar Hart pitched a one-hitter, while striking out four, through four innings of work, as the Wolves routed Blackduck 12-1 in a five inning game.

Davis got the hit parade started with a two-run homer in a four-run second inning. The Wolves blew it wide open with eight runs in the third inning. Chittum, senior Chase Sandberg, and Loe all had hits in the inning. Chittum



Left: Ely freshman Caïd Chittum slides safely into home, scoring one of Ely’s 11 runs against Littlefork on Monday.

photo by K. Vandervort

Cherry did have its chances as Simons struggled at times with control, hitting four batters and walking another three. “But we always seemed to find a way to work out of innings as the defense came up with play after play to hold Cherry at bay,” said Ivancich.

Bianco had a huge day at the plate, going three-for-four with a double and an RBI in Ely’s three-run third inning, which proved the decider. Deegan Richards tallied two hits and scored a

run on a third inning single, driven home by Bianco’s double.

Ely was scheduled to host Virginia on Thursday, with a 4:30 p.m. start.

They’ll host the annual Veterans Memorial Showcase Tournament beginning at noon on Friday and running through Saturday evening. On Friday, the Wolves are scheduled to face Carlton at noon and Silver Bay at 7:30 p.m.

They’ll round out the tournament on Saturday, playing Cook County at 7:30 p.m.

A total of nine teams will take part in the week-end’s competition.

ELY GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

spots in the game, particularly on offense. Kate Coughlin went four-for-five at the plate, including a double. Lexi Halberg, Flom, and Ohlhauser had two hits apiece, while

Thomas, Rachel Coughlin and Seliskare each added a hit.

The Timberwolves were scheduled to play Wednesday at Littlefork and Thursday at Silver Bay. They were set to wrap up

their regular season at home on Friday with a 1:30 p.m. game against Floodwood.

Playoffs start next week and Head Coach Cory Lassi is hoping Ely will host a post-season game.

“Looking at our record, we may be in the top four in our bracket,” he said.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Northland grant could aid Main Street projects

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— The Northland Foundation has received a \$4.28 million grant as part of the Main-street Revitalization program through the state Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

This \$80 million statewide economic redevelopment program, distributed through two rounds of funding, awarded grants to partner organizations to establish programs within specific communities that will, in turn, fund economic development and redevelopment projects. This was the second round of grants, and it awarded over \$40 million to organizations across Minnesota. The Duluth-based Northland Foundation was one of 14 non-profit organizations or foundations awarded funding in this final round.

The money will eventually be

available to assist potential partners in northeastern Minnesota communities and tribal nations served by the Northland Foundation. Northland President and CEO Tony Sertich said his organization is thrilled with the award, which was the third largest grant among the 14 entities receiving funds.

Specifics about where the funding might end up, who might qualify, and how area organizations or businesses might be able to apply for the dollars from Northland remains up in the air for now. “We won’t know the specifics until we see the actual grant award,” said Sertich. “We first had to show there was a need. Now, we have to have a process [for allocating the funds].”

According to a statement from DEED, organizations, like Northland, that receive grant funds from this program will use the funds to establish their own funding program within their service area to provide assistance to eligible recipients

and projects. Once programs are established, partner organizations can offer grants up to \$750,000 per project or up to \$2 million in guaranteed loans. Leveraged grants can cover up to 30 percent of the project cost. Guaranteed loans will be guaranteed by the state up to 80 percent of the value of the loan. Leverage grants and guaranteed loans can be used by eligible recipients for the following:

- Repair, or renovation of real property.
- Building construction.
- Landscaping and streetscaping.
- Demolition and site preparation.
- Predesign and design.
- Engineering.
- Infrastructure.
- Related site amenities.

Sertich said the Northland Foundation will be issuing more information about their application process and criteria once it’s developed.

Hauschild wins DFL nod in Third Senate District

REGIONAL— Hermantown City Council Member Grant Hauschild won the unanimous endorsement of the Third Senate District DFL during their endorsing convention held last Saturday. “We were able to unite a broad and diverse coalition from the largest geographic district in the state,” said Hauschild in a statement. He said the unanimous endorsement shows that DFLers from around the region are “ready to unite behind a pragmatic, driven leader who will continue the legacy of ‘just delivering’ for the region.”

Over the past several weeks, Hauschild has added endorsements from a number of prominent

individuals and organizations, including several unions, St. Louis County Commissioner Keith Musolf, Proctor Mayor Chad Ward, former Grand Marais Mayor Sue Hakes, and former DFL House Majority Leader Tony Sertich.

No other DFL candidate has indicated an interest in seeking the seat, long held by Sen. Tom Bakk, who announced his plans to retire earlier this year.

Hauschild is expected to face Republican candidate and Babbitt Mayor Andrea Zupancich in the November general election.

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Outdoors

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EXTREMES

“April was a lousy month” to state the obvious

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— As scientists, meteorologists like to view the weather objectively. But even they have been willing to sound off on what turns out to have arguably been one of the most miserable weather months in recent memory in Minnesota.

“It was a lousy month,” noted the crew at the state

climatology office in a recently-issued report on April’s sorry conditions. “Climatologists usually don’t take sides in judging the character of a month because there are too many conflicts,” noted the office in their report. “But April 2022 was almost universally despised by Minnesotans.”

Among the items in April’s catalog of misery was the sheer number of storms that hit the region.

“A highly active weather pattern that began during mid-March provided the state with a steady diet of precipitating weather systems during April, each lasting 1-3 days, with only 1-2 days in between. This pattern meant that half or more of the month’s days had measurable precipitation, including 19 days at Duluth and 18 at International Falls,” according to the climatology office.

Right: High winds, high water, and ice combined to destroy this boathouse on Lake Vermilion’s Birch Point.

All that precipitation demolished previous records, at least in far northern Minnesota. International Falls shattered its previous April precipitation record, reporting 7.61 inches.

See **APRIL**, pg. 5B



END OF WINTER

May 11 ice-out for Vermilion

LAKEVERMILION— There was open water for Saturday’s fishing opener on Lake Vermilion, as the lake officially cleared of ice on May 11, about 12 days later than the average date of April 30.

A cool, cloudy, and frequently snowy April allowed winter conditions to linger a bit longer than usual this year. But high winds and warm temperatures early this week helped break up the last of the ice around the area. Wednesday, May 11, was the big day for most of the larger area lakes, including Pelican and Elephant lakes, near Orr, and Fall Lake, near Ely.

Ice-out was declared on May 9 at Bearhead Lake, and May 10 for both Elbow, Moose (end of Fernberg) and Shagawa lakes.

Fishing reports



Shelby Nelson caught this 39-inch northern on opener while fishing with her family on the Vermilion River.

Ely area

Walleye fishing was outstanding for the majority of anglers this last weekend, with many anglers limiting out in under an hour. Anglers found mostly post-spawn males in and around current areas. Three-eighth ounce jigs, in blue and gold, tipped with a minnow, were easily the most popular and effective way to catch walleyes. Anglers found walleyes in ten feet of water or less during low light and after dark. During the day, walleyes were located in 10-16 feet of water.

Pike anglers reported slower fishing then normal for opening weekend. Anglers still reported catching decent numbers and generally good-sized pike, but the big females, over 40”, were noticeably missing. These big fish are likely still recovering from spawning and should really turn on by this weekend. Anglers catching pike were using heavy suckers and floating them under a bobber back in shallow mud bottom bays. Frozen smelt has also been a popular choice for pike anglers.

Courtesy of Arrowhead Outdoors in Ely.



2022 FISHING OPENER

Tough conditions, solid bite

High water, lots of debris create challenging circumstances for Vermilion anglers

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

LAKE VERMILION— In the midst of a challenging spring, it was high water, rather than ice, that posed the biggest challenge to anglers here hoping to hit the lake for last Saturday’s fishing opener.

As has become something of a tradition, my friend Rob Bryers and I headed out on opener morning just after 7 a.m. This time, however, we buzzed off from the dock at the Birch Point public landing, since his dock, located next to the landing, is currently several inches underwater.

We made our way to our typical first stop, just off the northeast tip of Birch, a well-known and popular early season spot where we typically join a cast of thousands (okay, maybe a few dozen) on a pleasant opener morning.

“Where is everybody?” asked Rob as we pulled in to find just one other boat bobbing in the usual spot offshore.

We weren’t sure what to expect as we dropped our jigs and fatheads into the water. Unlike many anglers on opener, we had plenty of bait. Rob’s a longtime fishing guide and has been trapping his own minnows for years, helping to avoid the ongoing escalation in the price of bait.

I still remember Bob Cary’s 1980 run for president on the Independent Fisherman’s Party label. The high price of bait was

Above: An angler near Fectos Point lifts a little walleye that was quickly returned to the water.

Right: Just off Birch Point, an angler releases a nice walleye that landed within the protected slot limit.

Lower right: Debris, mostly logs, floating in the water in Frazer Bay. The recent flooding has brought large amounts of debris into some area lakes.

photos by M. Helmberger

one of his top campaign issues. It didn’t catch on in 1980, but I think Cary was just ahead of his time. At some bait shops in the Twin Cities ahead of this year’s opener, minnows were selling for as much as \$12 a dozen. That’s a buck a minnow, for those who never learned simple division. Cary must be turning over in his grave.

But I digress.

A tug on the line woke me from my reverie on bait inflation. It was a nice 16-inch walleye, the first fish of the morning, which, as usual, put Rob in a funk. He reminded me that I had boated the first fish last year as well, while he caught almost every other one the rest of the day.

Moments later, the other boat off the point, pulled in a gorgeous walleye that fell in the protected 20-26-inch slot, so after a quick

See **OPENER**, pg. 5B




MARSHALL HELMBERGER



Another spectacular North Country sunset as viewed from the West Two River, near Tower.

photo by M. Helmberger


LAKE KABETOGRAMA



Pine Tree Cove Resort guest David Bernick hoists a nice 22-inch walleye he caught opening day. photo by D. Colburn


LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST from NOAA weather

Friday




54 31

Saturday




48 31

Sunday




54 32

Monday



58 39

Tuesday



59 40

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.
05/09	53	45	0.16		05/09	54	47	0.19		05/09	54	44	0.24		05/09	70	50	0.38		05/09	54	47	0.22	
05/10	72	50	0.02		05/10	71	50	0.05		05/10	70	44	0.24		05/10	70	48	0.10		05/10	71	50	0.06	
05/11	75	34	0.00		05/11	74	30	0.00		05/11	70	38	0.01		05/11	73	37	0.00		05/11	71	31	0.00	
05/12	75	39	0.02		05/12	75	31	0.91		05/12	72	38	0.68		05/12	55	48	0.89		05/12	74	47	0.86	
05/13	62	49	0.92		05/13	62	48	1.25		05/13	57	46	0.69		05/13	75	55	0.95		05/13	62	47	0.76	
05/14	76	41	0.00		05/14	77	38	0.00		05/14	77	46	0.00		05/14	66	48	0.01		05/14	75	38	0.00	
05/15	74	44	0.00		05/15	75	40	0.00		05/15	70	45	0.00		05/15	64	43	0.03		05/15	73	44	0.00	
YTD Total			6.22	93.4"	YTD Total			7.64	58.0"	YTD Total			9.37	100.9"	YTD Total			NA	NA	YTD Total			10.45	76.6"

APRIL...Continued from page 4B

topping the previous record of 4.53 inches set in 1925. In an average April, the border city typically receives just 1.53 inches of total liquid precipitation.

Much of April’s precipitation fell as snow. The Falls reported nearly 18 inches of the white stuff during the month, while Ely and Orr both reported more than 23 inches.

While April was exceptional, it was part of an unusually active weather pattern that set in across the region shortly after the first of the year. The Falls reported 11.26 inches of total liquid precipitation from Jan. 1-April 30, which was 50 percent wetter than the first four months of any previous year on record.

All that precipitation has left water levels at near-record highs across much the region, particularly in the Rainy River basin, where the high water is posing an additional challenge to resort owners and operators, who have been unable to get docks in the water in some cases. The late ice-out and snow that lingered into May also put many resort owners behind schedule in their other preparations for the season.

Even lakes that don’t normally experience large fluctuations in water levels are dealing with high water this year. On Friday, a day ahead of the fishing opener, the docks remained up at Melgeorge’s Resort on Elephant Lake. “We can’t get docks in right now,” said Daniel Koch, at the resort. “All the abutments are well under water.”

The nearly constant parade of storms in April meant the month was exceptionally gloomy. In fact, at the University of Minnesota climate observatory in St. Paul, it was the gloomiest April since records on solar radiation have been tracked, starting way back in 1963.

It was also extraordinarily windy, further adding to April’s misery index. While most weather stations around the state don’t track wind gusts, the Twin Cities International Airport reported 24 days with at least one hourly 30 mile-per-hour wind gust. And the climatology office reported that weather stations across the state reported numerous days with wind gusts of 50 mph or more.

One thing is for sure. April 2022 is a good month to finally have in the rear view mirror.

OPENER...Continued from page 4B

round of photos, it went back in the water. Turns out one of the guys in the other boat was also a guide out with friends from the Cities and we started chatting while tending our lines. He shared our theory that the high winds, which damaged many docks, boathouses, and shore stations on the lake as the ice went out along with the exceptionally high water, had kept many folks off the lake for opener. Getting boats on the water wasn’t the only challenge. Dock fishing was largely impossible as well for many since most docks on the lake were either damaged or underwater.

After a dry spell at our first stop, I suggested to Rob that we head to Frazer Bay. We’ve had luck there in the past on opener and I’ve had my best luck with the camera there as well, since it’s usually a popular spot. After all, I was here to report the news, as well as pull in walleye, so I was looking for likely photo opps of anglers filling their live wells.

ter, or barely visible. And don’t expect buoys... they weren’t out as of opener and if they’re on the usual rock piles, they won’t do much good anyway. At least until the water level recedes, heading out on Vermilion is a venture into the unknown.

Along the way, we did find a concentration of anglers in the usual spot off Fectos Point, but Rob figured it was about a third the number of boats as in a typical opener. We found Frazer Bay nearly empty, except for all the floating debris, which seemed to have collected in the bay’s southwest end. Rob picked up a walleye as we dropped our lines on the sand flats on the west end of the bay, but that was it, so we moved to another spot, closer to the public landing.

That’s where we found the best action of the morning, in about 35 feet of water. They were mostly little ones, though we still hooked enough eaters along the way to put our limits in the live well by about 9:45 a.m.

We eventually headed over to a spot on the south shore of Pine Island that is one of Rob’s early season favorites. He likes it, but I can’t say we’ve ever caught fish there when I’ve been in the boat and this time was no exception. We abandoned it after striking out, and headed over to Moose Island, another early season spot that we had to ourselves. It seemed the morning bite had faded by then, and with the wind picking up, we opted to call it a success and head home, where we both had fresh walleye dinners on the agenda for that evening.

If there’s a nutshell here, it’s that the conditions may be challenging right now on Vermilion, but the fishing is tough to beat. So, hit the water if you can, but take it easy and be safe. And don’t forget to wear your life vest.



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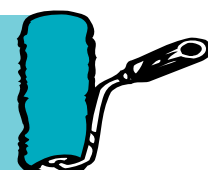
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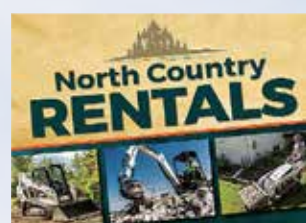
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