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the TIMBERJAY



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989

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\$1⁵⁰

REAL ESTATE

Getaway turned rental property

Lengthy county permitting process has been streamlined

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Addie and Ben Wales, of St. Paul, were just looking for a getaway place near Addie's hometown of Ely when they found a log cabin on 40 acres of land in Eagles Nest Township in September 2020.

"I grew up in Ely, I loved the area, and I wanted a place

to stay when I come to Ely," Addie said.

But what was a getaway for them turned into a getaway for others, as Addie and Ben decided to join the burgeoning community of short-term rental owners.

"We quickly realized that we wouldn't be able to use it as often as we'd like, and we wanted to share it during the

downtime," Addie said.

To make the property more livable and also more marketable to prospective renters, the couple renovated the property by installing a well, a septic system, and solar-generated electricity before going through the process of St. Louis County permitting and licensing by the Minnesota Department of Health.

Right: Addie and Ben Wales, of St. Paul, during a recent visit to their Eagles Nest cabin and rental property.
submitted photo

"Once we were all cleared, we listed it on Airbnb and VRBO. And we were able to start hosting guests," Addie

See...RENTALS pg. 10



MINING

Walz signs Northshore unemployment extension

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Financial relief is on the way to laid off Northshore Mining workers after Gov. Tim Walz signed the \$10 million unemployment extension package on Wednesday.

The House version of the bill, sponsored by Rep. Dave Lislegard, DFL-Aurora and mirroring the one previously passed by the Senate, passed 127-7 on Monday. The bill provides 26 weeks of additional unemployment insurance for workers at the Babbitt mine and Silver Bay pellet processing facility whose original benefits ran out late last fall. Workers at the facilities were laid off in May 2022 after Cleveland-Cliffs closed the facilities. The extended benefits are available to those who have used up their original 26-week benefits and are retroactive to when those benefits ran out.

About 490 Northshore Mining employees and five employees of the Dyno Nobel mining explosives company are expected to benefit. The workers have been in limbo since last May when Cleveland-Cliffs idled both facilities in response to changing company needs and an ongoing dispute with the Mesabi Trust over royalty payments on ore extracted from Babbitt.

In a compromise with Republicans, the company will pay an increased future amount into the state's unemployment fund based on the addi-

See...WORKERS pg. 9



COUNTY SCHOOLS

Programs take new approach to learning

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

REGIONAL- The new classroom furniture in the first, second, and third-grade classrooms at Tower-Soudan Elementary may seem a bit untraditional. But according to research on young brains and how they learn, the furniture, which facilitates rhythmic move-

Above: Elius Strong and Boone Broten appear fascinated with a book they're reading together.

Right: Neiko Stellmach is content on his rolling chair, part of an effort to allow students more opportunity for movement during the school day.
photos by J. Summit

ment, is an essential tool for a modern classroom.

As students in Jo Holen's first grade classroom scattered for some free reading time, students perched, rocked,

and wiggled, all while intensely concentrating on their chosen books.

The furniture was purchased as part of a
See...SCHOOLS pg. 10



WATCH YOUR MONEY

Fraud and scams are all around us. What can you do?



by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Did you know your Amazon account has been frozen? And that a subscription for your computer security program just renewed at a price of \$499 without your permission? Did you know you just won a fancy vacuum cleaner

than can be yours for the mere price of shipping?

If any of these claims sound familiar, you're in good company with the millions of other Americans who are bombarded almost daily with a seemingly endless variety of scams.

Some scams, like the now infamous Nigerian prince who

wants to send you millions of dollars (and all you need to do is hand over your bank routing information) have become the butt of jokes. But for those who have been taken by far craftier cons, the loss, stress, and inconvenience is no laughing matter.

Just ask Steve Markkula, of Virginia, who spent \$25,800 for a 1969 Hemi Roadrunner

that he found posted on a car sales website that appeared to have a credible reputation. He emailed back and forth with the owner, who told him the car, title, and keys were already in the possession of an automobile wholesaler, who would hold his funds in escrow until he took

See...FRAUD pg. 9



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Community notices

Celebrate 85th Annual Laskiainen Finnish Sledding Festival Feb. 2-5

PALO - The 85th Annual Laskiainen Finnish Sledding Festival kicks off with the Queen Coronation at Loon Lake Community Center at 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2. The festivities continue on Saturday, Feb. 4 - Sunday, Feb. 5. Saturday's activities start at 7:30 with the Ethnic Kropsu Breakfast from 7:30 - 11 a.m. From 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. festival attendees can check out artisans and demonstrators in Laskiainen Tradition. From noon to 4 p.m. Moijakka (Finnish stew) will be served. Also on Saturday are the girls' and boys' youth basketball games from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. followed by the "Old Timers" basketball game at 6 p.m. and the Laskiainen Lakers play at 7:30 p.m.

On Sunday Laskiainen fun continues starting at 7:30 a.m. with the Piggies & Pancake breakfast. There will be an Ecumenical Church Service at 9:30 a.m. From 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. attendees can check out artisans and demonstrators and enjoy a bowl of Pea soup from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sunday's action concludes with the introduction of the Royal Court and a performance by world class bluegrass band, "Monroe Crossing." Tickets for Sunday's Monroe Crossing performance are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students.

There will be sliding both days. No saucers or sleds with runners allowed. Preferred sleds are toboggan style made of plastic or wood.

National "Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast" Day Saturday, Feb. 4 in Embarrass

EMBARRASS - I scream. You scream. We all scream for ice cream! Join us at the Embarrass Timber Hall for all-you-can-eat pancakes, choice of ham or sausage links, fruit cup, juice, a bottomless cup of coffee, and a scoop of ice cream Feb. 4 from 8 to 11 a.m. Attendees can also take home donated books and puzzles for those long winter nights. Adults \$6, children 6-10 years \$3, and under 5 years free. Sponsored by the Embarrass Region Fair Association.

New racial justice group to meet Jan. 29

ELY - Come gather with us as we support each other in our individual journeys of exploring white privilege, becoming antiracists, and ending white supremacy. The first meeting will be Sunday, Jan. 29, from noon-1 p.m. at Ely Presbyterian Church. The group will meet monthly. For more information, please contact Carolyn Dehnbostel at carolyndehnbostel@gmail.com.

Sons of Norway Haarfager Lodge 40

VIRGINIA - The Sons of Norway Haarfager Lodge 40 will meet on Thursday, Feb. 2 at 5:30 p.m. in the Virginia City Club Room. Come and enjoy playing Norwegian Bingo. The evening's serving committee includes Pat Sleeman and Sharon Crep. Anyone interested in Norwegian culture and heritage is welcome to attend.

The first End of the Road Film Festival runs Feb. 9-12 at the State Theater

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- Ely's very first film festival is right around the corner, overlapping with the Ely Winter Festival.

Why a film festival in Ely?

Jacob White is the director of the End of the Road Film Festival. He explained how the film festival was born at the Jan. 10 Tuesday Group meeting at the Grand Ely Lodge. "The idea for the film festival came from some of the work that my colleagues in Duluth have been doing," White remarked, explaining how Duluth is now home to two film festivals. "Just attending those events over the last couple of years was super-inspiring to me ... and I thought, why can't we do something like that here?"

White began to sound out the local arts community as to the feasibility of a film festival in Ely, "I approached the board (of Ely's Historical State Theater) in late 2021 with the idea to apply for some grant funding to try to start a film festival with the State Theater, and they were all very excited. In fact, they had the idea before I had met any of the board members back in 2015."

As the saying goes, great minds think alike. With the encouragement and backing of the theater, White started looking into and applying for grants to launch Ely's first film festival. White was enthused that the theater's board shared the idea to use the

LOTS OF MOVIES



Jacob White speaking at Tuesday Group earlier this month.

theater as the anchor for a festival.

"We're excited that we have access to the (State Theater) venue," White stated. "We've got the state-of-the-art equipment there to screen films, to bring the community in, and to have live music and other events going on in conjunction to the event."

What's with the name?

The *Timberjay* asked White about the origin of the End of the Road Film Festival. The name really came about because of geography and local usage.

"We wanted filmmakers to know that it really is a long trek to make it out here," White said. "It's also something some Ely businesses and residents use."

Ely is where the pavement ends and the Boundary Waters and the wilderness begins. After Ely, the next town is on the other side of the border in another country.

Thematic content

A film festival is simply a lot of films shown over a short time, but not in the sense of holding a

big feature film marathon of blockbuster movies. Most film festivals have a theme.

"It's our first year," White remarked, "and I would say our theme is bringing the community in contact with the film community. There's a variety of types of films. There are educational and documentary films, because I was thinking our community loves to learn from the stories that other people have to tell. There's narrative films as well. There are short films and feature films which spread a wide gamut of stories."

The festival also has a strong Minnesota flavor to it. "We are excited to align our film festival with the momentum happening in the northeastern Minnesota community of filmmakers," said White in a film festival statement. "With the new state and regional tax incentives for film production, there have been some really exciting projects being shot in Duluth and on the Iron Range."

We're excited to provide a platform to showcase the work of those filmmakers and connect them with our art-loving community in Ely."

Included in the festival programming is a block of Minnesota-themed short films as well as documentaries on Minnesota people and events. The festival also includes a block of Indigenous short films, the feature-length "Bring Her Home," about the tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women and an Indigenous Students Day on Feb. 10.

Student outreach is also a part of the festival, with student workshops on film making, free ticket for students from festival-partner high schools, and Q&A sessions for both students and the public with filmmakers after selected feature films.

"Maybe by attending the End of the Road Film Festival," White stated, "we will inspire young people to pick up a camera and learn to tell their own stories. That would make all of our team's hard work worth it."

Where, what, when

The location for the festival will be Ely's Historic State Theater and the smaller Greenstone Theater next door. The event will be held Feb. 9-12. The event will showcase 75 feature and short films made by 35 filmmakers, including many that are from the Iron Range.

See **FILM**, pg. 5

A unique opportunity for military camaraderie at the United for Veterans Family Winter Retreat

ELY - Local veterans, service members, and their families are invited to a winter veteran family retreat Feb. 24-26 at Grand Ely Lodge for United Way of Northeastern Minnesota (UWNEMN)'s fifth family weekend retreat.

The purpose of the retreat is for each military hero and their family to build community, gain recognition for their service, and learn about available resources.

The retreat includes two nights' lodging, all meals, speakers, as well as indoor and outdoor activities like ice fishing, snowshoeing, birchbark basket weaving, pine needle braiding, and sled dog demonstrations.

Registration closes on Jan. 31. Priority will be given to veteran and service members' families living or working within UWNEMN's service area. The cost is \$25 per veter-

an, \$50 per non-veteran adult, \$20 per child ages 6-17, and children 0-5 are free.

A wait list is available for those outside UWNEMN's service area and will be contacted if space is available.

For more details or to register, visit: www.unit-edwaynemn.org/ufv-family-retreat

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ANNUAL UPDATE

Bois Forte gathers for State of the Band celebration

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

Event returns to Fortune Bay after two-year COVID hiatus

VERMILION RESERVATION- The ballroom at Fortune Bay Resort Casino on Thursday, Jan. 19 was packed with Bois Forte Band members attending the annual State of the Band festivities, a most welcome change from the past two years when COVID-19 prevented the gathering.

And no one was happier to be back together in person than Tribal Chairwoman Cathy Chavers.

"The turnout tonight is just overwhelming and tremendous, because we haven't done this for two years," Chavers said. "It's taken away from our culture, in a way, by not being able to gather and be together. By having everybody here tonight together, it's just overwhelming and it warms my heart so much to see. It's nice to hear the laughter, the talking, everybody talking about good times, bad times. This is wonderful."

Minnesota U.S. Sen. Tina Smith attended the event and spoke to the assembly about important accomplishments in Washington, D.C. that have benefitted the Band.

"Over these last two years, Congress, along with President Biden, has done remarkable work," she said. "I'm very, very proud of historic investments in tribal nations, beginning with the work on roads and infrastructure and broadband."

Smith noted support for tribal colleges, drinking water, traditional infrastructure like roads and bridges, for climate resilience, and also what she called "the highest ever funding for needed housing."

Smith also talked about how Congress has bolstered the Indian Health Service, a long underfunded program relative to the need.

"This year, we were able to increase funding for the Indian Health Ser-



Left: Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers. Above: Sen. Tina Smith
photos by D. Colburn

vice, and for the first time ever, we were able to treat Indian Health Service just like we treat other crucial federal government agencies like Social Security and Medicaid by making sure that if there's a disruption in the federal government's work, that Indian Health Service will have advanced appropriations so that your work will not be interrupted," she said.

Smith also noted the upcoming work on the 2023 Farm Bill.

"What does that have to do with the work here in Bois Forte? Well, I will be working hard to make sure that the rural economic development parts of that bill reflect the needs of tribal nations, that Native farmers have an opportunity to participate in the programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. And most importantly, I think we understand that food is medicine, and it is essential that tribes should have the power to run your nutrition assistance programs."

Smith got the biggest response from the crowd when she talked about protecting the Band's wild rice.

"Manoomin is your way of life," Smith said. "It is important that we do not allow producers of wild rice in other plac-

es in the country to claim wild rice as an Indigenous product and do that with the help and support of the federal government. I will fight against that with everything that I have."

Chavers said she was gratified that Smith arranged her schedule to attend.

"Sen. Smith and I have been friends for years," she said. "I really admire her and her leadership, and to have her here tonight was just kind of icing on the cake. It's not very often you get a senator to come to your state of the band."

Chavers opened her remarks by commending the work of frontline workers and health care and emergency personnel during the COVID pandemic.

"COVID-19 and the term pandemic are somewhat behind us," she said. "However, it is still and always will be there, like the flu. I want to acknowledge that everyone at Bois Forte, along with the other ten tribes in Minnesota, led the way in many aspects of battling this pandemic. When I say led the way, state and federal officials have seen and acknowledged what the tribes have done better when tasked to do so. We all protected our communities, our elders, our

children and those with underlying health conditions. But we also helped out our neighboring communities."

Chavers noted that the Band has increased opportunities to influence decision-making at state and federal levels after the passage of laws mandating consultation with tribes before decisions are made.

"It's getting the tribe a seat at every table before these important decisions are made," Chavers said. "It's also giving us tremendous opportunity as tribes to move forward in a very positive way and productive way. Many of you may not believe this, but tribal leaders have never been so busy, or meeting so much, since tribal consultation has come forward."

Chavers talked about the benefit of American Rescue Plan funds in securing the services of Native-owned consultant Blue Stone Strategy Partners to help identify all the funding sources available to the Band and to work on leadership and planning activities.

One key initiative the Band needs to address is how its aging population will affect potential development activities, Chavers said.

"Our workforce is aging, and we need people to work," she said.

Chavers noted that adult tribal members received \$3,200 economic relief payments. In addition, she said the Band has implemented two emergency rental assistance programs and is developing a Bois Forte Homeowners Assistance Fund to help Band members who are struggling with late payments, insurance, and taxes. A Small Business Loan Program will soon be available to Band members and their descendants, she said.

The Band received \$29 million from the federal government through the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan, and 52 percent of that money, \$15 million, has been invested "to ensure that we are looking forward to not only our current tribal members' needs but also the next seven generations to come," Chavers said.

ARPA funds were also used to jumpstart the replacement of the damaged Nett Lake Dam.

"We were at a crisis stage hoping our dam would not break and then lose our water and our rice in Nett Lake forever," Chavers said.

High water levels decimated last season's rice crop, forcing a difficult but necessary decision to cancel the ricing season, Chavers noted.

The Band has received approximately \$80 million in grant funding, Chavers said, and she highlighted some of the significant projects, such as the \$19.8 million for broadband development not only for reservation land but for land adjacent to reservation boundaries, and a \$9 million grant to build a new transit facility.

Bois Forte is one of three tribes selected to participate in a pilot project to assess and upgrade

its finance department, which includes a \$50,000 grant to obtain new accounting software, Chavers said.

Chavers also talked about two historic accomplishments for the Band last year, the first being the repurchase of more than 20,000 acres of land from Potlatch Deltic that was formerly reservation land. The purchase was funded from nongovernmental sources.

"The land falls within the Nett Lake area and Deer Creek sections of Bois Forte and accounted for 21 percent of our total combined acreage. No other tribe has ever done this but Bois Forte in the United States," Chavers said.

Chavers also acknowledged Band member Tadd Johnson being named to the University of Minnesota Board of Regents.

"There's never been a Native American on the Board of Regents ever in the University of Minnesota system," she said.

Chavers included much more about the Band's accomplishments and initiatives in her remarks and concluded her speech by encouraging members to focus on issues important to the Band's future.

"We are struggling with workforce issues, and we need that drive to be successful and productive in life," she said. "There's also the issue of constitutional reform of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe constitution to deal with enrollment, historical trauma from the boarding school era, and the list goes on and on. There's just so much we need to get our communities back together, and we need to come together, put our differences aside to keep moving forward for a successful future for our children and the unborn."

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OPINION

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“CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW...ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS;”

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

Editorial

Figments of accounting

The Tower Ambulance Service has never been that profitable. Dubious accounting rules helped hide that fact.

For years, conventional wisdom in Tower had it that the city's ambulance service was highly profitable. For years, at least on paper, it appeared that the service was regularly generating surpluses of \$100,000 a year. The *Timberjay's* own reporters had even accepted this conventional wisdom for a time.

Not anymore. While the service was, perhaps, marginally more profitable in the past than it is today, past profits were significantly overstated due to vastly different accounting methods.

Those apparent profits have vanished over the past three years in part due to the full implementation of a very costly paid on-call system established by the prior ambulance director. Yet, perhaps the biggest factor behind the suddenly disappearing profits is improved accounting of the ambulance service's true costs and revenues. Profits of the service appear to have declined significantly since the city established the ambulance service as an enterprise fund. That change came along with the implementation of business accounting rules and it is the accounting changes, more than actual operational costs or revenues, that have put the ambulance service into the red.

Here are a few examples:
 > Prior to the changes implemented three years ago, the city did not calculate the cost of depreciation on its ambulances. Depreciation is a very real business expense, but the city apparently wasn't required to track it before the transition to an enterprise fund. Depreciation alone now adds almost \$70,000 to the expense side of the ambulance service's financial ledger. In the past, that amount was zero, which made the service's margins appear much larger than they actually were.

> The ambulance service no longer counts contributions from area townships and the city for ambulance replacement as operating revenue, as it did in the past. This past practice has long struck this newspaper as inappropriate because the contributions from the townships were dedicated exclusively toward the purchase of new ambulances or certain expensive types of equipment.

In other words, these were capital funds, not operating revenue, and they should never have been included in calculating the ambulance service's operating margins in the past. Doing so inappropriately added \$35,000-\$40,000 annually to the ambulance service's operating revenue, padding the appar-

ent profits by an equal amount.

> Currently, the ambulance service is required by the Ambulance Commission to pay \$1.66 for every mile they drive the ambulance for a transfer. The rationale for this was never entirely clear, although the charge comes quite close to the actual depreciation cost for every mile the ambulance is driven. Which means the ambulance service is essentially doubling up on its depreciation, since it is already calculating depreciation for all miles driven, including for transfers. By forcing the service to then pay a portion of that expense in actual cash, it effectively doubles the depreciation expense for transfer miles. This charge added about \$18,000 to the ambulance service's operating expenses in 2022, even as it bolstered the service's ambulance replacement fund, which is a separate capital account.

In prior years, before the ambulance service was treated as an enterprise fund, the ambulance service commonly showed a \$100,000 operating margin. Yet, had the true revenues and expenses been properly accounted for, that margin would have been whittled down to a modest loss. Had the service been required to pay for transfer miles driven, the service would have shown a loss of close to \$25,000.

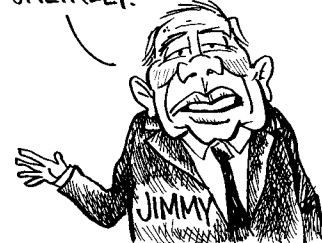
Which certainly helps to explain where all the missing surplus dollars went. They never actually existed in any significant amount. The city's accountants may show a large fund balance, but that's only because they were using complicated and often inexplicable government accounting rules, not the business accounting rules with which most of us are familiar. In the sense that most of us think of profit, the ambulance service has been marginally so at best, for years.

What the ambulance service generated in the past was cash flow, largely because one of its major expenses— depreciation— was a balance sheet expense that did not reflect an outflow of cash— until it became time to replace an ambulance again.

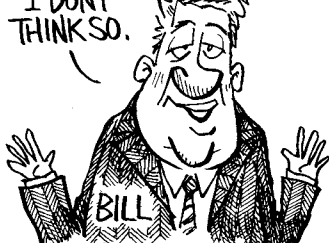
So, before anyone thinks to criticize the ambulance service's apparent lack of profitability these days, we should all keep in mind that the notion of past profitability is a figment of dubious accounting. What we have today are numbers that provide far more transparency and accuracy, which is a vast improvement over the fictions of the past.

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I DON'T THINK SO.



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PROBABLY NOT.



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Letters from Readers

Rangers need to act now on broadband

If I were to ask 100 people across the Iron Range if they have heard of the Broadband Line Connection Extension Program, I would bet my next Social Security check that less than 10 percent would say yes. Anyone want that bet? One of the few bills to pass in the 2022 legislative session was a bill with an allocation of \$15 million dollars to fund a program that would help people in more remote locations get connected to broadband. I know many people in rural communities that are aware that there is fiber broadband located in the ditch across from their home, yet to connect to that fiber the provider who owns the fiber wants the homeowner to pay the entire cost of trenching the fiber to their premise. Depending on the length of your driveway, and geographic barriers like ledge rock or wetlands, the cost is usually prohibitive, so life goes on with lousy internet or using your cell service for a connection.

Well as a member of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband, and the MN Rural Broadband Coalition, I am pleased to share with you some simple steps to hopefully get you connected to high speed, quality broadband at reasonable pricing. This new program requires that you as a homeowner fill out an online application (available at this address or for online subscribers click on this link) <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/extension/#1> or you can submit a written request to the MN Office of Broadband 332 Minnesota Street Suite E200 St Paul, MN 5510; or you can call the OBD at 651-259-7610 and they will fill out the request over the phone. You have to let them know that you do not have a WIRELINE broadband or internet provider to your home, and you wish to be connected. That is really all you

have to do.

Now in full disclosure the Office of Broadband will collect all the request for connections each 6 months. After that period, they will contact any and all providers in your area and let them know of the request for connections. The provider may claim that they have service available, or they will indicate a desire to provide the connection. The legislation allows up to \$25,000 for each individual connection to be installed, but if there are more than one provider willing to connect, there is a reverse auction process. Let me be clear, this is not a quick, sure-fire process, but it should allow more rural, remote residents to get connected than waiting for a larger community or township project to develop. One more positive note, the minimum service that a provider can connect you to is 100 Mbps down/100 Mbps up. Symmetrical service is incredibly better than what many of us have today. Any questions, feel free to contact me. To date 545 requests are on file with the OBD so don't delay. Get your request in now!

Steve Giorgi
Mt. Iron

There are solutions to substance abuse and addiction

Thousands of creative and imaginative minds helped our country grow and prosper. Wouldn't it be wonderful if those brilliant minds could come up with a solution for substance abuse and addiction? If so, what kind of changes would occur in a society without drug-related crime, people dying from overdoses, and the resulting financial burdens? It may seem like a utopian dream that can't come true, but let's try to imagine what life in a drug-free society would look like.

The following are some of the most noticeable changes

we could expect if substance abuse and addiction didn't exist:

- > Safer, cleaner streets, especially in bigger cities.
- > A dramatic reduction in crime rates.
- > Decreased domestic violence and child abuse or neglect.
- > Overcrowding in Emergency Rooms would decrease.
- > Jails and prisons would no longer be overpopulated.
- > Law enforcement could spend more time on other needs.
- > Funds used for drug-related issues would be available for other things.

Of course, these are only a fraction of the ways society would improve without substance abuse or addiction. Could all this be wishful thinking?

Dreams can come true, but society has to realize that there has never been a drug-free society in the history of human civilization. Add to this, the "War on Drugs" has been a complete failure. Instead of focusing all our attention on these issues, shouldn't we be focusing our attention on community awareness and educating people on the effects that drugs have on them? Could some of the money that we are currently spending on the "War on Drugs" be put to use in ways that would reduce substance abuse and addiction?

This is not wishful thinking!! It is a more realistic way at looking for a solution to substance abuse and addiction. How would your community and/or personal life be different if our imaginative and creative minds found solutions to address these issues?

Your comments would be appreciated. You can contact me at gottahavehope38@gmail.com or by letter to 559 W. Broadway St., Winona, MN 55987.

Mark Jacobson
Peer Support Specialist
Winona

The AI revolution sweeps ahead of our understanding

If Ronald Reagan was alive to read my column this week, he'd undoubtedly shake his head and smile and utter his famous debate phrase, "There you go again."

I have to admit that I'm fascinated by the phenomenon of artificial intelligence. Our understanding of computers was greatly diminished back in the day when Microsoft introduced Windows and hid the operating system from PC users. It made PC's immensely more user-friendly, but vaulted computing into the realm of the magical for the

average user, and it's only gotten more mysterious and elusive since.

Artificial intelligence is just as magical to me these days in how it can analyze immense amounts of data and make decisions independent from humans about what to do with it.

Most recently my attention has been focused

on ChatGPT, the artificial intelligence chatbot that debuted last fall that can compose emails, blog posts, lists, essays, computer code and more from a simple user direction or question.

It's taken the computing world by storm. Nearly every time I try to log in to the ChatGPT server during working hours I get the message that the server is at capacity, a common occurrence these days for the millions of people trying it out. With persistence one can get in during the day, but I find it easier to log in late at night.

It's caused quite a stir among those who depend on

written text to conduct their chosen pursuits. Educators fear, with good reason, that the text it generates will be used by students as a substitute for their own work. Seventeen percent of Stanford University students reported using ChatGPT for their classwork last fall, most to generate outlines for papers or conduct basic research, but some did report using the text for essays. Colleges are racing to revise their student codes of conduct to define how it can and can't be used in higher education. Public schools are doing the same.

Techies who get industry

news from the website CNET found out this past week that many of the articles they've been reading in recent months were generated wholly by ChatGPT and not by CNET human reporters. The subterfuge was discovered when people began noticing errors in the articles, something ChatGPT is prone to because of how it was developed. For the moment, CNET has stopped the practice of using AI-generated articles.

I've found ChatGPT to be quite adept at writing those

See CHAT...pg. 5



DAVID COLBURN

What is the point of Stauber in Congress?

I have noticed a recent phenomenon in opinion letters; the frequent use of exclamation points. I have come to the conclusion that these symbols are not being used in a grammatical sense, but as place holders for missing facts.

Let's take the Infrastructure Bill for example. This multi-year investment in roads, bridges, electric charging stations, repairing water systems and other structures and services we do and will use in the future, has just begun to be spent. Inflation predates this spending and is a global issue and thus unrelated to a single piece of legislation in the United States. In fact, America has a lower rate of inflation than most other countries. Global prices rose quickly post-COVID due to pent up demand and external factors such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which disrupted global oil and food supplies as noted by the Federal Reserve.

Decisions made by Big Oil to idle refining capacity is also factor in the spike in gas prices. Pete Stauber, of course, voted against legislation to prevent price gouging by Big Oil, and criticized President Biden for releasing oil on the market to ease prices, which it did.

With regard to the price of food, there is record drought in a large part of the U.S., a shortage of field workers to harvest crops, and avian flu that caused producers to cull millions of birds creating a short supply of eggs. So, inflation is not the reason

or excuse for Pete Stauber's vote against fixing our roads and bridges, or his reason for standing with Big Oil rather than the average person. In fact, he must think the Infrastructure Bill is quite good as he takes credit on a regular basis for the investments and improvements that he opposed.

Stauber is probably too busy to figure out that he is claiming credit for something he didn't do, because he was skipping Congressional votes after the election on a donor funded trip to Spain, and is currently threatening to cause a global recession through a debt default so he can cut your Social Security and Medicare. The simple fact is that fixing roads and bridges didn't cause inflation, and Stauber refused to do anything about gouging at the gas pump. I don't know what he does other than collect his taxpayer funded check and benefits.

**Kelly Dahl
Cook**

Greenwood firefighters shouldn't quit now

Years ago, there was a farmer who told his landlord, "tell your son to STOP trying to tell me what I can or cannot do and when." Nothing changed so the farmer rented a different farm and moved. Did the landlord not speak with his son? Or did the son ignore his dad and kept trying to bully the farmer.

It saddened me to read the minutes of the last Greenwood Township meeting. I don't drive af-

ter dark any longer so I was not at the meeting but having read the news article and speaking with two people who were there, I have questions. If you are really "there for the community," why do you not put the community ahead of one individual who only did part of his job? In every position of authority there is responsibility to see that everything is maintained and taken care of. Why was there no record of maintenance done on the trucks? Was it because no one thought it their responsibility? Do you ignore that on your personal vehicle? Did everyone rely on Pat to do everything after returning from a fire and now no one thinks they are responsible for it?

A few weeks ago, I saw and spoke with one of our retired firefighters. He quit the department because Fazio was named chief... I wonder why? Please do not get me wrong. I deeply appreciate the commitment of all firefighters, EMRs, and law enforcement and I pray for you every day. If so many of you quit because you can't pick your own boss (who can?), who will come to your aid if/when you need help? Please reconsider and stay with the department. In September, a 911 call was placed for me at 8:40 a.m. on a Sunday morning. Jeff Maus was the only Greenwood EMR who responded. Thank you, Jeff!

For the record, the farmer in the first paragraph was my Dad. Don't be bullied into quitting!

**Marilyn Mueller
Greenwood
Township**

Your bobcat photos are hanging on my fridge

Dear Mr. Helmberger, thanks for sharing your "kitty" visitor story. The article was fun to read and the pictures were awesome. I have never seen a bobcat, and it was like I was sharing your experience.

I look forward to the *Timberjay* and like to read the outdoor section. Your bobcat, whether a "he" or a "she," is now in a magnet frame on my fridge!! Makes the winter days shorter to have fun stuff like that to look at!

**Mary L. Miladin
Virginia**

Bakk letter overlooks the progress in renewable power

I'm writing to respond to Lake Country Power General Manager Mark Bakk's comments in last week's *Timberjay*.

I'm an electric cooperative member in the East Central Energy service area. While we all want dependable, low-cost power, how we get there and when, is the challenge of the day.

The planet is now caught up in an almost monthly barrage of climate driven natural disasters. They've become so common we've become numb to the true cost in lives and economic destruction.

So, it's disheartening to read pushback on the need to rapidly, and

completely, end the use of fossil fuels. This legislative session we have the opportunity for once to make a difference, by setting limits and timelines for ending the use of all fossil fuels. Not some, but all fossil fuels. Anything less is likely to create even greater climate havoc.

The 100 percent Clean Energy legislation currently before the Legislature endorses the expansion of free, homegrown, renewable energy here in Minnesota. This includes wind, solar, and energy storage. Before someone says, "Storage isn't ripe for commercial viability". Well, that just isn't true.

Rural electric coops and rural utility services are already taking the lead in making electric service cheaper, more reliable and carbon-free. Grand Rapids Public Utility is partnering with MN Power and US Solar to very soon unveil a utility-scale battery system to make solar energy reliable when the sun isn't shining.

Connexus Energy broke away from Great River Energy to free itself from restrictions on encouraging renewable energy. Connexus Energy has won awards for its utility-scale solar+battery system that hasn't had a rate increase in over five years.

To see the potential of renewable energy+storage, consider that there was approximately 9.1 GW of storage at the end of 2022. That will double in 2023, and hit 28.4 GW in 2024. Like smart phones, the growth of this industry will continue to accelerate.

For now, however, we need to deploy all technologies that lead to less CO2 in the atmosphere.

We need to invest in more research and development to find solutions that will not just end CO2 emissions, but withdraw CO2 already in the atmosphere. We need to encourage adoption of clean energy by utilities, business and industry, and families, because failing to do so is at our own peril.

President Lyndon Johnson once addressed the threat of climate change attributed to the use of fossil fuels, during his State of the Union Address. That was over 55 years ago. Since then, elected officials, regulators, corporate America, and citizens, have either dismissed the threat or failed to act, accomplishing only a fraction of what is needed to avert a climate disaster.

Had steps begun all those years ago, by weening ourselves gradually off fossil fuels, the on-ramp to a renewable energy economy could have been gradual. But procrastination and a ravenous appetite for petroleum, has made that ramp much steeper, more daunting, and possibly costlier than it might otherwise have been.

Rural utilities and electric coops are showing that reliability and affordability can be achieved while eliminating fossil fuel sources and investing in renewable energy solutions at both the utility and individual scales. We should be celebrating these path-finders and encouraging innovation in moving to 100 percent clean energy by 2040.

**Craig Sterle
MN Div. Past
President, Izaak
Walton League
of America**

CHAT...Continued from page 4

"Ten reasons why ..." type of lists often found on blog sites or in popular magazines. I've given it numerous such queries and have generated samples that match or exceed the quality of many blogs I've visited. Bloggers, and freelancers who generate blog posts to sell, could definitely see some competition from ChatGPT in the days ahead.

True to the magical nature of computing, many of the reviews I've read of ChatGPT don't seem to have a grasp on what it is. I recently read an article by a sportswriter about how ChatGPT won't ever replace him because it doesn't know anything about current sports teams and gave many examples of its inability to answer questions about players, games, and statistics. He's a good illustration of someone who has a fundamental misunderstanding of what ChatGPT is.

ChatGPT is a language model that has been trained on a huge amount of language input to respond in a human-like manner to a human's questions and directions. Its neural network was trained on 300 billion words fed into the system from books, web-based text, articles, and other writing sources. The neural network analyzes a

request from a human and creates a contextual response from all of the data it has, data that only goes up to the year 2021.

Given the level of use, ChatGPT is making millions of decisions every second about what words and phrases to use to craft its responses, which usually take only a few seconds to start appearing. It doesn't evaluate facts, it evaluates language it's been programmed with. So ChatGPT generates human-like responses that sometimes are nonsensical or inaccurate, much like some of the internet language it was trained on.

What ChatGPT is not, as the sportswriter and CNET found out, is a program that searches the internet in real time to get information for what it writes. If one asked ChatGPT to write an article about the trials and tribulations of Kevin McCarthy's recent bid to become Speaker of the House, it couldn't produce an accurate response because it doesn't do a real time search of articles written about that. It does have a search engine that looks for websites in response to someone's query, but it isn't actively reading those sites for data to use for answers.

But despite some of

its limitations, ChatGPT is a formidable piece of artificial intelligence. It knows enough to pass the MBA exam at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. It's a whiz at generating accurate computer code. And when I asked it to describe five drawbacks to copper-nickel mining, it made me wonder if some of Marshall Helmberger's writing was included in its database. It wasn't nearly as good or detailed as Marshall's writing, but it was accurate as a basic overview.

I'll admit I was tempted to have ChatGPT write my column this week and just clue you in at the end what I'd done. It might not have had my style, but I suspect it would have been good enough to make you think you were getting the genuine Colburn and not an artificially generated one.

And ChatGPT is already generating spin-offs, such as a site that promises to integrate current information into what ChatGPT writes. Another company is touting its ability to take the "best selling book" that you "write" using ChatGPT and turn it into a e-book for sale. One could even choose to illustrate the book with AI-generated art from a site like

DALL-E or Midjourney.

It seems AI technology like ChatGPT is racing ahead of our readiness to deal with it, and as with most technology there are practical and ethical matters to address. If you "write" a book or a poem on ChatGPT, who owns it for copyright purposes? Much of the written material ChatGPT was trained on was copyrighted material, so do the original copyright owners of a phrase get a stake in what it produces? Is it ethical to produce a book and list yourself as the author when it was actually written and illustrated by artificial intelligence? Does ChatGPT have an ethical responsibility to make sure the material it produces is factual? The questions are many, complex, and largely unanswered right now.

And the same can be said for artificial intelligence in general as it wriggles its way into ever more of our daily lives. A continual question posed by advances in artificial intelligence is this: if we can do it with AI, should we do it?

Artificial intelligence is expanding rapidly our society, making decisions humans used to make and using their immense computing capacity to make decisions humans can't

make. It's moving at a rate faster than most of us are aware of, with implications we can't fully fathom. As with all technolo-

gy, there will be benefits and there will be pitfalls. Is it moving too fast for us to keep up? Only time will tell.



the
TIMBERJAY

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FILM...Continued from page 2

Live entertainment at the event includes performances by Iron Range favorite Christopher David Hanson, Minnesota rockers Rich Mattson & The Northstars, and several local musicians.

Tickets for both feature-length films and blocks of short films will

be \$10. A festival pass is also available for \$75, good for the entire event, though movie goers with the pass will still need to make a seat reservation for the specific films they wish to watch. Holders of the festival pass can also purchase tickets for individual features or short

film blocks for \$5. The pass also includes all the live musical performances and access to the festival lounge.

The festival is also a competitive event. Prizes will be awarded including for best film, best cinematography, and a people's choice.

A complete guide to the films, live entertainment, and other programming at the film festival is available at the festival website at elyfilmfest.com. Ticket and the festival pass can be purchased online or at Ely's Historic State Theater.

Week of Jan. 30

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 Feb. 21.

Greenwood Fire Dept.- Meetings on the first and third 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.

Correction
The Greenwood Fire Department year-end report had an incorrect number for fire calls in 2021. The correct number was 48 fire calls.

Skating parties underway in Soudan
SOUDAN- Skating parties are held at the Soudan Skating Rink every Tuesday and Saturday, weather permitting. There is free food, games, and lots of fun for all ages. Loaner skates in almost every size are available in the warming shack.
Hours are Tuesdays from 4 – 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 12 – 2 p.m.
Sponsors this week are Tower-Soudan Joint Powers Recreation Board, Leonard Stefanich, St. James Presbyterian Church, Dick Johnson, and Coke Products. If you are interested in helping sponsor this event, please contact Jim “Chimpy” Tuominen at Zup’s in Tower, 218-753-2725.

“A New Journey” for St. James
TOWER- With the retirement of Pastor Doug Workman at St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower, the Session has supplied the pulpit with the following speakers for January: Jan. 29, Rev. Rebecca LeMenager.
Worship services are at 10 a.m. on Sundays, with coffee served before the service, and coffee an’ afterwards in the social room. All are invited to attend.
Every Sunday, during the service, there is special music with Greg Kuchan on guitar and his wife, Denise Kuchan on electric drums.

PLAY BALL!



Afterschool basketball continues at Tower-Soudan Elementary, with help from Principal John Jirik and parent volunteers.

Left: Coach John Jirik practices a drill with Raymond Boshey. Below: Vincent Chosa (left) tries to get the ball away from Levi Clemenson.

Bottom: Shelby Troop practices ball handling.

Bottom left: (from left) Lily Russell, Ayva Anderson, Cecelia Majerle, and Zaija Schroeder practice passing the ball.

photos by J. Summit



Finlander Bocce Ball set for Saturday, Jan. 28 at Your Boat Club



TOWER- Finlander Bocce ball will be held on Saturday, Jan. 28 at the Your Boat Club on Marina Dr. Start time is 9 a.m. sharp and the registration deadline will be Jan. 27 at 5 p.m. Registration is \$15 per person and teams must consist of two females and two males. Please note the change in location from last year.

Finlander bocce ball is played with wooden stumps with handles, that are slid on ice lanes. Scoring is the same as traditional bocce ball. There will be cash prizes for tournament winners.

Registration sheets will be available at Good Ol’ Days, D’Erick’s, Benchwarmers, Fuel and Food, and with Jolene at 218-255-2131. Fees can be paid at the marina the day of the event.

Spectators are welcome to stop by and cheer on the teams and enjoy the fun.

COMMUNITY NOTICES



Anastashia Chavez seeking sponsors for her stock car racing season

BABBITT- Anastashia Chavez, a senior at Vermilion Country School, is seeking sponsors for her upcoming racing season. Chavez has been working with her grandfather, John Dahl, who has been involved in racing for over 40 years. The two have purchased a 1995 Acura that is ready to race. Chavez is working on sanding the car and repainting it this

winter. She and her grandfather are also making sure the engine is in racing shape and looking to see if any parts need to be upgraded. She will be racing at the Hibbing Racetrack in the Hornet Division. Her racing number is 13K.

Anna is looking for sponsors at the \$200 and up level. These sponsors will have their names/logos on the car. Donations at any level are also welcome!

For more information, you can contact Anna’s mother, Kimberly Day, at 218-235-4346.

UMD announces fall semester Dean’s List

DULUTH- The University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) has announced its Dean’s List for Fall Semester 2022. Students on the Dean’s List have achieved a grade point average of 3.50 or higher while earning a minimum

of 12 letter-graded credits.

Area students named to the Dean’s List include:

Maude Lenz, of Embarrass, Senior, Swenson College of Science and Engineering (SCSE), Civil Engineering B S C E

Sophie Lenz, of Embarrass, Senior, Swenson College of Science and Engineering (SCSE), Civil Engineering B S C E

Maxson McDonough, of Tower, Sophomore, Labovitz School of Business and Economics (LSBE), Pre Business

Mia Severson, of Tower, Senior, College of Education and Human Service Professions (CEHSP), Psychology B A Sc.

St. Martin’s Souper Bowl Sunday set for Feb. 12

TOWER- St. Martin’s Catholic Church’s annual fundraiser for the Tower Area Food Shelf, Souper Bowl Sunday, will be held on Sunday, Feb. 12. The

church will be serving a booyah dinner from 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. (or when the booyah runs out) in the church social hall. Those attending will have the option to eat in or take out. The cost is a free-will offering, and all proceeds go to the food shelf.

This is the 19th year that St. Martin’s has hosted this event. The event began as a youth project but has now evolved into a parish project; youth still participate but the adults of the parish have joined in to assist. The work begins on Friday with the cutting of the vegetables, then on Saturday we make the booyah and the desserts; and finally on Sunday we serve the delicious meal.

We hope that you will join us to lend support to the Tower Area Food Shelf.

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online at www.timberjay.com

EDUCATION

Ely students show their art

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The first show of the 2023 Northern Lakes Arts Association art show season was entitled "A Night at the Theater," and featured cardboard sculptures by the students in Kelly Chick's art class at Ely Memorial High School. The sculptures were shown in the exhibition space in the lobby of Ely's Historic State Theater from Jan. 16-22. NLAA held a reception for the artists showing their works at the theater on the evening of Jan. 20.

Art display at school library

Prior to the art show at the State Theater, the sculptures were displayed along with other student art in the library of Washington Elementary School from Jan. 9-15. The display was open to the public for viewing before the high school band concert held at Washington Elementary School auditorium on Jan. 12.

The evening of the band concert was also the first occasion in which the public could view the historic Workman murals, which were rehung over the winter holiday break above the school offices and library in the new hallway which connects the elementary school to the high school.

Inspiration

Ely art teacher Kelly Chick led her high school art students to create sculptures using cardboard, paper and paint using movie theaters as a theme. In conceiving the "Night at the Theater" project, she was inspired by the work of Swedish-American modern artist Claes Oldenburg, who passed away recently in July 2022.

Oldenburg was best known for his sculptures of ordinary objects using materials like cardboard, burlap, and newspaper. "I based the project on Oldenburg's exhibition 'The Store,'" Chick said at the NLAA reception.

"The Store" (1961-1964) was one of Oldenburg's most famous bodies of work. It featured brightly painted sculptures of everyday items like hamburgers and articles of clothing. Many of the works from "The Store" are at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Using Oldenburg's work as a starting point, Chick's students produced a wide variety of theater-inspired works, including the State Theater facade, giant boxes of popcorn, and huge boxes of movie concession candy.



Left: Ninth grader Lyla Kelley shows off her sculpture of popcorn, Coke and M&Ms at the NLAA art show reception while mother Suzanna Kelley captures the moment on her cell phone camera. Center: Families viewing the art display at the school library prior to the Jan. 12 band concert. Right: The Workman murals recently rehung in their new space above the school library and offices at Washington Elementary School in Ely. Photos by C. Clark

This ain't no disco Ely dean's list students



Ian Lah leads thespian hopefuls in a dance routine at the "Little Shop of Horrors" auditions on Jan. 23 at the Vermilion Fine Arts Theater. Photo by C. Clark

Shuster-Dahlin

SUPERIOR, Wis.- Jen Shuster-Dahlin of Ely was named to the dean's list at the University of Wisconsin-Superior for the fall 2022 semester. The university issued the announcement on Jan. 5. Students on the dean's list at UW-Superior must have a minimum 3.50 grade point average on a 4.0 scale for a minimum course load of 12 semester credits.

Schwinghamer

DULUTH- Julia Schwinghamer of Ely was named to the fall 2022 dean's list at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth. Schwinghamer's intended ma-

ior is nursing. The college made the announcement on Jan. 12. Students on the dean's list at the college must achieve a minimum grade point average of 3.75 on a 4.0 scale.

Pointer

DURHAM, N.H., Gabriel Pointer of Ely was named to the 2022 fall dean's list with high honors at the University of New Hampshire. The university made the announcement on Jan. 23. Students on the dean's list must take 12 or more graded credits and achieve a minimum grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale. Students with a 3.65 to 3.84 GPA are awarded high honors.

Residents evacuated at Carefree

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The staff in the middle of Carefree Living's three buildings manually pulled the fire alarm just after 2 p.m. on Jan. 20, after observing what could have been smoke coming out of the facility's boiler room. At the same time, they evacuated all the building's assisted living residents.

"They did everything right," said Dave Marshall, the chief of Ely's fire department, complimenting the Carefree Living staff

on how they calmly and efficiently evacuated everyone to predetermined gathering areas away from the building and made sure that everyone was accounted for. "There was no panic. Everyone was calm. The staff had a plan, they knew what to do and they did it."

The fire department determined that what was coming out of the boiler room wasn't smoke. "It was steam," Marshall stated at the scene. "The boiler overheated."

After inspecting the malfunctioning boiler sys-

tem, a boiler repair technician dispatched by Starkman Oil remarked, "oh yeah, there's a part that's busted."

Carefree Living has three buildings at 140 S. 2nd Ave. next door to the Ely Bloomenson Community Hospital and the Boundary Waters Care Center. The facility provides both memory care and assisted living services. The facility is owned and managed by Spectrum Health Companies, a Minnesota-based business specializing in a variety of senior care services.



The Ely Fire Department responded to a manual alarm on Friday, Jan. 20, at Carefree Living Ely due to an overheated boiler. Photo by C. Clark

Upcoming Events

Ely Public Library

ELY- The monthly board meeting for the library will be on Wednesday, Feb. 1 from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

On Thursday, Feb. 2 at 1 p.m., the Get Crafty with Tricia program (age range: adults) will make glitter votive candle holders for Valentine's Day. Please register in advance so the library can order supplies.

The library will hold its annual Hogwarts Mid-winter Ball (age range: grade six to adult) on Feb. 4, starting at 2 p.m. The event has a murder-mystery party format and will last three hours. Participants should plan to stay for the entire event since leaving early will affect

the ability of attendees to solve the mystery. Come dressed in your best wizard attire. Each participant will be assigned a custom-written role to play while solving the mystery. Pre-registration is required before 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 30.

Preschool Storytime is held every Friday from 10:30-11 p.m.

Ely Folk School

ELY- The Ely Folk School will hold a free Artist Meet & Greet event on Saturday, Feb. 4 from 2-4 p.m. at 209 E. Sheridan St., where the public can meet the local artists displaying works in the Ely ArtWalk.

The Ely Folk School will offer a one-time class in snow sculpture on Saturday, Feb. 11, from 2-5 p.m. in the pocket park next to the school's 205 E. Sheridan location.

Makers Mornings at

the Ely Folk School are held every Thursday morning from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. for makers to meet, talk, craft, and have coffee. Makers' Mornings are free community events.

Ely Winter Festival

ELY- It's only one week until the 30th Ely Winter Festival, held Feb. 2-12. The complete schedule of events is listed online at elywinterfestival.com and on the festival's ad in this edition of the Timberjay.

The 2023 Ely Winter Festival pin is available at Northern Grounds, Zup's, Grand Ely Lodge, Potluck Kitchenware, Piragis Northwoods Company, and online at the festival website for \$6.00. One dollar of that amount will help fund the production of school musical production of Frozen. The festival needs

volunteers to help run the event. Please email snow@elywinterfestival.com if you can help.

For more information contact Shauna Vega at 218-365-SNOW or Shauna@elywinterfestival.com

Dorothy Molter Museum

ELY- The museum will hold a silent auction beginning at 12:15 p.m. on Feb. 1. Bidding will end online at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 9, which is during the museum's annual fundraising dinner at the Grand Ely Lodge. Bidders do not need to attend the dinner to win items in the silent auction. Those attending the dinner can pay for and take any items won in the auction at that event. Most items include shipping options for bidders outside the Ely area. Winner

bidders can also pick up their items at the museum when it's open. The link to the auction site is on the museum's Facebook page, under the events tab.

Minnesota North College – Vermilion Campus

ELY- The college will offer a "Minnesota Tree Steward Training" workshop for those wanting to become certified as an official Minnesota Tree Steward Volunteer. Primary focus will be the care and pruning of young trees. The course will be on Feb. 3 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on the Vermilion Campus, Room CL 110. The cost is \$25. Discounts are available for enrolled students. Register at z.umn.edu/MNTreeSteward. Contact Claudia McBride for questions at scenic61@daoil.com.

In Brief

Tuesday Group schedule

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

2023 Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

► Jan 31: Source to Sea by Canoe, Expedition Report by Lisa Pugh (this is a scheduling change).

► Feb. 7: Understanding and updates on the War in Ukraine with Elyite Tatiana Riaboki

► Feb. 14: Clean Energy Resource Teams with Melissa Birch

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2023



a raven meeting outside the winter window

a brief discussion

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	10 am-6 pm
Tuesday	10 am-6 pm
Wednesday	10 am-6 pm
Thursday	10 am-6 pm
Friday	10 am-6 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, 5:30 p.m. Thursdays, Wellbeing Development, 41 E Camp St. 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. Conference Room B.

NORTH WOODS SCHOOL

Native culture infuses school's first ever Heritage Week

Fun educational activities range from duck and dive to authentic powwow

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- The North Woods School calendar picked up a new designation for the last full week of January this year. Thanks to the initiative and creativity of the school's new Native American Student Association (NASA), Jan. 23-27 has been marked as "Heritage Week."

Indian Education Interventionist Stacy Palmer said the focus of NASA is to take awareness of Native culture outside of the Indian Education classroom to the broader school facility and population.

"The students aren't only Native in the Indian Ed classroom, they're Native when they walk out the door, when they walk in the building, everywhere they go," Palmer said. "Roughly 30 percent of the whole school identifies as Native American. NASA is aiming to bring Native American culture items outside the room to be in the hallways and public places where everyone is."

NASA members came up with the idea of Heritage Week to introduce students and staff to aspects of Native culture, in addition to having an opportunity to celebrate their own heritage. And it gives Indigenous students the chance to exhibit pride in their Native heritage.

Two activities kicked off the week on Monday – Wear Red Day and a middle/high school pep fest.

Wear Red Day was intended to raise awareness about the plight of missing and murdered Indigenous women and relatives.

"Red sort of symbolizes missing and murdered indigenous women," Palmer said.

The activity associated with it took the approach of practicing personal responsibility and awareness. North Woods art teacher Rachel Betterley created a large poster inscribed with the pledge "Be aware of yourself, your worth, and your surroundings." Students were invited to take the pledge by signing the poster or placing a red handprint on it, also a symbol for missing and murdered Indigenous Women and relatives.

Bois Forte Band member and drum circle singer Terry Goodsky provided the program at the pep fest. He talked about the practice of smudging and why it is done, as Native students at North Woods can participate in smudging at the school on Monday mornings and Friday afternoons, Palmer said.

"Sometimes we get comments about it from not knowing about it or sometimes being rude about it, so we figured we'll teach them about it," Palmer said.

Goodsky also talked about powwow etiquette, as a powwow was on the schedule later in the week.

"Then when he got done talking about the serious stuff we got to have some fun and games," Palmer said. "We played musical chairs, one round for students and one round for staff, with Terry singing and playing his hand drum. We also had a duck and dive competition for students. The origins of that go way back when



North Woods student Kiana LaRoque, top, holds up a hand painted red that she's ready to use on the poster pictured below to make her handprint pledge to "Be aware of yourself, your worth, and your surroundings," a Heritage Week activity at the school.

there was warring against Natives. They would shoot, so Natives would duck. That's what the dance is about, and they duck to the beat of the drum. It's a workout, and students had fun."

The theme Tuesday was to "Rep your band or your background," where students and staff wore clothing related to their own heritage. For Native students who needed something to wear, the Bois Forte Band donated

Bois Forte t-shirts left over from the State of the Band gathering the week before. Palmer said there were a lot of different cultures represented.

"I saw students and staff going around with sweaters that have the Finnish flag on them, another lady had her St. Urho's Day shirt on. It was a nice day just to show where you're from," Palmer said.

Interviewed by the Timberjay on Tuesday,

Palmer was looking ahead as she talked about the rest of the week, beginning with Wednesday's "Dress Your Best" theme, with the encouragement to Native students to wear ribbon skirts and shirts that often only come out for ceremonies.

"We wanted to give a day for students to take pride in how they look and what they wear," Palmer said. "A lot of times you don't have a good time to wear your ribbon skirt. So we thought let's make a day of it, and with dress your best everyone can participate. We'll see a lot of snazzy looking students and staff tomorrow."

Thursday had another color clothing theme, this one orange to bring awareness to the children that didn't come home from Indian boarding schools.

"The one at Lake Vermilion has yet to be searched," Palmer said. "The day is not about bringing sadness or the trauma of the boarding schools. It's more about bringing the kids home."

Thursday is also the day for the powwow, with individual sessions for younger students and older ones. Palmer and NASA needed extra help for all the arrangements necessary to conduct a powwow, and they got that from Ruth Porter, who teaches Anishinaabe at the school and is from Nett Lake, and ISD 2142's cultural liaison Adrienne Whiteman, who has been key to recruiting drummers and dancers for the event.

"We're trying to do everything by the book," Palmer said. "I'm glad we have Adrienne to help. We

have the Night Sky group, and I believe that's directed by Jordan Gawboy, and we have the Lake Vermilion drum group, which is led by Jeremy Wilson."

Wilson will also serve as master of ceremonies for the powwows, which will be a mixture of instruction, demonstration, and participation.

"We're going to have quite a few dancers in regalia of different types and we're hoping to show different dance styles and explain different regalia," Palmer said. "We want to do sort of half and half, with half being instruction and then the other half actually inviting students down, which is why Terry talked about powwow etiquette. We're hoping they'll come down and dance."

Heritage Week was scheduled to conclude on Friday with "Spirit Day," where people were encouraged to wear Native attire or Grizzlies gear.

"I started Spirit Day as a sort of play on words for school spirits and cultural spirits," Palmer said. "It will be cool to see what all and who all dress up as what."

NASA will continue on after Heritage Week to find ways to visually represent Native culture in the school.

"We've gotten a lot better at getting Native American culture into classrooms," Palmer said. "We want to get it into the common areas where it's not being actively taught as part of a class. And we want to make sure that students have a hand in that and that they can feel pride in what they brought us."

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

NWFA mounts February show

COOK- "Friendships and Collaborations: Three Exhibits in One!" is the February show at the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook, opening Feb. 2.

The featured exhibit is The Iron Range Friendship Quilt Mini-paintings. Ten artists created mini-paintings of "Our Favorite Images of the Place We Live" that are used to form a three foot by five foot quilt curated by Mary McReynolds. Contributing artists include

Jim DeVries, Spencer Hahne, Lisa Hesse, Sharron Holmbeck, Margie Kent, Sandra Markovich, Sonya Nelson, Pamela Schulz, Gayle Marie Streier, Jane Weratanen.

"Friends Art", coordinated by Mary Jo Hyland, showcases the talents of members of the Vermilion Watercolor Group. Members each painted subjects which were then assembled creating four original "FRIENDS' ART" paintings.

"Round Robin Quilts" is the third facet of the February exhibit,

featuring four round-robin quilts created by Vickie Lange, JoAnn Anderson, Cheryl Harelstad and Alberta Whitenack. The four NWFA members each created their own original quilt squares, then swapped the squares "round robin" to the next person. Each quilter then added squares before swapping them again and "sew" on.

The public is invited to attend a reception at the gallery on Friday, Feb. 3 from 5-7 p.m., and while there enjoy the hundreds of crafts and original works of art on display.

The NWFA Gallery is located at 210 River Street. Patrons can view the February exhibit on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Annual NWFA photo contest is underway

COOK- It's time to get your camera out of hibernation and start snapping photos for the Northwoods Friends of the Arts annual photo contest.

The cost to enter is \$10 per photo, which includes identical mats and

sleeves for each photo, with the sizes again being 5x7 or 8x10. Students 18 and younger may enter up to three photos without cost.

The deadline for entry, getting your photo to the gallery, is Saturday, Feb 25, 1 p.m.

There will be one contest winner receiving \$100 and a runner-up is awarded \$50.

The voting exhibit is March 2 - 31. Open gallery hours are Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Those viewing the exhibit will

vote for two favorite photos, making winners "the peoples' choice."

The public is invited to attend a reception at the gallery on Friday, Mar. 31 at 5 p.m. at which the winners will be announced.

NWFA Gallery is located at 210 S. River St.

**Read It
HERE**

NORTH WOODS ARCHERY



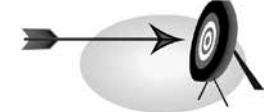
Among the 370+ archers who participated in last Saturday's archery meet at North Woods School, 47 of them were members of the Grizzlies team. Archers participated in both bullseye and 3-D game animal target shooting.

Above: Sixth-grader Tikka Debeltz moves in close to the bullseye to determine scoring at the end of a round.

Left: Senior Anya Pearson takes an arrow from a quiver in preparation for a shot in the bullseye competition.

photos by D. Colburn

THANK YOU!



North Woods Archery Club hosted its annual tournament on January 21, 2023. The Bullseye event saw 379 archers, grades 4-12, competing for top honors. New this year was a 3-D archery event where 163 students aimed at 3-D game animal targets. This successful event was made possible by community support and volunteers. North Woods Archery would like to thank those who donated products, space, and money to our club:

Bois Forte Cultural Healing Program, C & B Warehouse Distributing, Inc., Cook Building Center, Como Oil & Propane, Cook Lions Club, Cook Timberwolves Snowmobile Club, Dawn's Hidden Shears, DreamWeaver Salon & Day Spa, Frank's Marine Boat Sales & Service, Girl Scout Troop 1203, KGM Contractors, Inc., Little Blessings Gift Shop & Beauty Bar, Lumber Orr Hardware, Minnesota Deer Hunters Association Sturgeon River Chapter, Minnesota Power, Muskego Point Resort, North Woods School, Northern Comfort Company, North Woods Auto Parts, Rose Cottage Baking Co., Richardson's Shangri-La Resort, Riley Las, Ryan's Rustic Railings, Side Lake Store, Spring Bay Resort, Sugarlicious Cheesecakes & More, The Crescent Bar and Grill, The Old Muni, Tire Shop, Tom Long Trucking, Virginia Surplus, Melgeorge's Elephant Lake Lodge and Resort, Zup's Food Market of Cook, and the Timberjay.

Special thanks to the Archery Club volunteer coaches and supportive families!

COUNTY SCHOOLS

Board hears pushback over Vukmanich transfer

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

Speakers allege others won't speak out for fear of retaliation

VIRGINA- Four residents of the North Woods School attendance area expressed their displeasure to district officials here on Tuesday over the recent reassignment of former North Woods Principal John Vukmanich to Northeast Range School in Babbitt.

Vukmanich was moved to Northeast Range and NER Principal Kelly Engman was reassigned to North Woods effective Jan. 1. The swap was announced just prior to the schools going on winter break in December.

Leah Rogne and Fred Schumacher have been engaged with 2142 for many years, as parents of two children who graduated from the Orr school in 1996 and 2001 and as community advocates.

"I want to express my concern and distress at the lack of transparency and lack of respect for our communities, for staff and students embodied in the abrupt transfer of Mr. Vukmanich to another school," Rogne said. "This was done just before Christmas break. Most people didn't know about it before break, some students came back to school didn't know about it, even after break."

Superintendent Reggie Engebritson told the *Timberjay* on Dec. 12 that the rationale for the midyear switch was to give each principal time to learn about their new schools ahead of bringing in new support staff next year, including a new assistant principal at North Woods.

"Having two new administra-

tors start at the same time at North Woods would not be beneficial," Engebritson said.

Rogne took issue with that rationale.

"It takes time to develop relationships with the community and the students and understand the culture of the school at North Woods," she said. "We have three distinct communities, Cook, Orr and Nett Lake, that come together, and especially Nett Lake, who come at seventh grade and where they come as outsiders at a vulnerable time in child development, where they are looking for who they are and how and where do they belong. We worked very hard in Orr to bring those two communities together, and now we join in Cook. It's not overnight, it's not just in one semester that a new person gets to know what this culture is like in the school, and who the people are, and develops relationships with the people that are needed to make that school a success. So, it looks to me like we'll have two new (administrators) in the fall, a principal who's only been there a few months and a new assistant."

The dynamics of the switch are further complicated by demographic changes happening in the communities of both schools that should have been considered, Schumacher said.

"Twenty years ago, I did some substitute teaching in Cook and Orr. Cook had over 600 students, Orr had about 280. And we could see it back then we were going into demographic decline," he said. "The community at

greatest risk in the Arrowhead right now is Babbitt. That mine is not going to open up again. I don't know if any of you have talked with Lourenco Goncalves from Cleveland Cliffs, but he's not interested in opening up that mine. And you've brought in a principal from an end of the road community that's going to go into serious demographic decline."

Schumacher highlighted the difference in the Native student populations of both schools.

"Babbitt only has 11 percent minority in its middle and high school and at North Woods it's 41 percent. Right now, your only area of demographic increase is Bois Forte, so you're going to have to treat those people well."

Schumacher also noted the stark difference in the median age of Babbitt, 53 years, and of Nett Lake, 27 years.

"Here at North Woods the Nett Lake percentage of students is going to continue going up, and that's what's going to keep the school open. I think you need to be thinking about those things."

Rogne said she believes the board is unaware of the level of distress being felt over Vukmanich's reassignment because the community, and particularly those in the school, are afraid to say anything.

"People aren't speaking up," she said. "I talk to people in the community, to students, staff, and they are upset and stunned at this action. But they won't speak out on the record because of fear of retaliation. And retaliation has occurred in the

in the past, you know that well. So, this kind of abrupt, arbitrary and capricious action undermines trust in the administration and in the school board. I can see after 30 years, this district has a very strong culture, even decades before I came into the community, and it's so powerful, and it pretty much does the same thing of running roughshod over common people. And the students and faculty members get caught in whatever this is, you don't know what it is, and get arbitrarily removed. And I'm sad to see that."

Michelle Manick amplified Rogne's comments.

"I think this needs to be said – no one who works at the school, no one who has any affiliation with the school will stand up and say anything when something happens because they live in fear of what will happen to their job, because it could disappear," Manick said. "Or they could get sent to Babbitt to go to a dying school. And I don't think that's okay. I think that that's something that the board needs to look at. People should not be afraid at their workplace to voice their opinions and to say what they think."

Manick emphasized to the board their responsibility in providing safe places for kids who may need extra help because of challenging circumstances.

"It's our job as adults, as elders, to be there for these children that don't have somebody to be there, so that they have that safe place to fall," she said. "And Mr. Vukmanich made North Woods a safe place for them to fall, and

a lot of them didn't have that anywhere else. They were comfortable going in to talk to him, they were comfortable telling him if they had a problem."

Missy Roach spoke to the board about Vukmanich's positive impact on her children.

"My kids are really great kids but occasionally they have had problems at school, and they have developed a really great relationship with Mr. Vukmanich," she said. "He's such an asset to the community and I just I see it in so many ways. My son connected with him and my daughter did and it is just such a shame to lose him because, in particular, we've dealt with some mental health issues and he's been just really supportive of that."

In line with their regular practice for the public comment portion of the meeting, board members did not respond to any of the remarks presented.

In other business, the board:

► Approved the shared services agreement with the Mt. Iron-Buhl school district for 2023-26.

► Approved a memorandum of understanding with Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College to allow students in their nursing and allied health programs to use district schools as placement sites for practical experience coursework.

► Hired Jennifer Fredrickson as a long-term special education substitute at Tower-Soudan.

► Hired Courtney Field as Site III Secretary and Health Office Assistant at NER.

FRAUD...Continued from page 1

delivery of the vehicle and found it to his satisfaction. All he had to do was wire the money, which Markkula had received as part of an inheritance, to the wholesaler's account.

Even so, Markkula was wary, but when a staff member at his local credit union told him the account looked legitimate, he wired the funds to a bank account in Florida. At first, all looked fine. A few days later, he received an email with a tracking number and for the next few days, he could watch the progress of the truck that was supposedly hauling his car. Then the updates suddenly stopped. Markkula tried calling the trucking company, but never got any answers.

In the end, the car never arrived, and Markkula spent the next two years trying to get his money back.

Local police had no answers and little interest in his case, which is a fairly common response from law enforcement, which has few tools to address such crimes. His credit union said there was no way to recover the wired funds and balked at covering his loss through their insurance.

Markkula was simply one of a growing number of Americans who had been outsmarted by the growing legions of fraudsters who devote their creative talents to bilking others.

"There is so much fraud out there," said Sunday Young, manager of the Embarrass-Vermillion Federal Credit Union in

Tower. So much so, in fact, that Young says many of us don't even recognize it for what it is. "A common one is a call or email that your Amazon account has been closed," she said. That's one bound to catch the attention of any regular online shopper, but when a victim calls to find out what happened, they're told they need to clear up their account, preferably with a credit card.

Pop-up windows, telling you your computer has been infected with a virus is another common scam, says Young. The pop-up offers to scan and clean your computer, but it's really intended to download malware that will leave your computer hostage to the scam artist.

Young said she's aware of at least three local area customers who have fallen victim to that con in the past six months. "If you click on it to allow them to scan, it gives them access to your computer and they can get all your information," said Young.

These are so-called phishing scams, which lure victims by either promising help or threatening harm if you don't do what they say. "We see it all the time," said Young, who said the elderly are more likely to fall victim to such scams. "In many cases, they just panic."

Another common grift comes as an email or a phone call, supposedly from an IRS agent, accusing their mark of owing thousands of dollars in federal taxes. Often, they'll

threaten the unsuspecting individual with arrest.

"I had someone come in recently in a panic, needing a loan for \$6,000 for the IRS, because the person on the line told them they were going to be arrested. They had this person totally believing it."

IRS officials note that they don't make phone calls and they don't threaten individuals with arrest if they don't pay. "The IRS is not going to call you," said Young. "So, if you get a call like that from them, you know it's fake."

Scammers rely on that sense of panic that many people feel when facing an unfamiliar or apparently threatening situation. "They prey on that knee jerk reaction," Young said.

They also prey on the unsuspecting. Scarlet Stone, of Soudan, is still kicking herself for having been suckered by a text she received one evening, announcing she had won a high-end vacuum cleaner from Home Depot. All she needed to do was pay for the shipping. In her excitement, she forwarded the payment, but the promised vacuum, not surprisingly, never arrived.

"It looked so legitimate," said Stone. "It had their logo and everything. It makes you want to put your money in a can."

Credit card security

Of course, most of us these days don't keep our money in a can – we keep it connected to a little plastic card. Credit cards and debit cards are incredibly convenient, but they come with

their own host of potential security concerns. For fraudsters, getting access to your credit card number is a major score but it can be a huge headache for victims. Fortunately, said Young, credit card companies have gotten increasingly sophisticated in their efforts to fight credit card fraud. And if and when false charges are incurred, you can often get the charges reversed.

While computer hackers often use the internet to gain access to credit card data, far simpler methods often work as well – and Stone, again, was a hapless victim recently when she pulled out her credit card to pay for a cocktail at a local bar. She later found out that in the moment or two her card was lying on the bar, someone managed to obtain the numbers, probably by snapping a quick photo with their phone. Within minutes of paying for her drink, her card was charged twice, for a total of \$75, for wagers at a sports betting website. In this case, she said the website operators were decent about it and she was able to get the charges reversed. That's not always going to be the case, however. With virtually everyone walking around with a camera these days, Stone's experience makes a good argument for situational awareness whenever you pull the plastic from your wallet or pocketbook.

Protecting yourself

When it comes to online scams, the best way to protect yourself

is to never, ever click on anything sent to you, unless you know the sender and have reason to believe they might be sending you a downloadable item. "If I don't know who it's from, I don't click on it," said Young.

And because fraudsters will also hijack email addresses, you even need to be cautious of emails sent from people you know. If you're wondering why that acquaintance of yours is suddenly sending you a file and urging you to click it, don't do it – at least not until you've been able to confirm that they actually did send you something.

If you receive a phone call promising a prize, cheap travel deals or a low-risk, high return investment, the best advice according to the Minnesota Department of Commerce is to simply hang up.

When you're online, watch for fraudulent websites that may be designed to mimic official government or shopping sites. Always doublecheck the URL's spelling. Often these sites contain a slight variation from the actual URL that are calculated to net traffic from users who make common typing errors when searching for a site, or to appear legitimate in a google search to the unsuspecting.

There are so many variations and new scams come along almost weekly. Young said she regularly receives updates from the Minnesota Credit Union Network alerting their members of the latest grifts.

If there's any single piece of best possible advice for everyone these days, it's simply to be suspicious of just about everything. Stay alert. Always assume that someone out there is trying to scam you. Because they probably are.

Persistence can pay off

If you are scammed, it sometimes pays to be the squeaky wheel. Steve Markkula learned that lesson, and ended up recovering the \$25,800 he had plunked down on that '69 Roadrunner. It was actually thanks to one of his in-laws, Victoria Ranua, of Tower, who took on the case last year after he had almost given up hope. He had even contacted a lawyer, who wanted \$5,000 up front and told him he'd probably spend more by the time he was done than he had lost. Markkula describes the experience as one of the worst periods of his life. Everywhere he turned, he hit roadblocks. "Everyone just said I was a dumb ass," said Markkula. "Everyone but Victoria."

Ranua undertook her own investigation of the case and assembled Markkula's claim and sent it to the credit union officials and elsewhere "Vic acted as my lawyer and within a month, I got a call from the credit union president, telling me the money is back in my account. To this day, I still don't know how it mysteriously came back. But I can tell you how great it felt."

WORKERS...Continued from page 1

tional benefits provided in the bill. Both the Senate version, authored by Sen. Grant Hauschild, DFL-Hermantown, and the House version originally sought to exempt Cleveland-Cliffs from the additional unemployment tax payment based on precedent with prior extended mining layoffs.

Rep. Roger Skraba, R-Ely, signed on as a co-author of the House bill and issued a statement on Monday praising the bipartisan effort to help the workers.

"Today's vote shows that we can accomplish great things when we work together and put the needs of Minnesotans first," said Skraba. "This bill is going

to help hundreds of miners in our area that have faced significant financial hardships through no fault of their own. It's the right thing to do for these folks and their families and I am encouraged that we could get this done in the first month of the legislative session. It is my hope that this can bridge the gap until both the Peter

Mitchell Mine in Babbitt and the processing facility in Silver Bay can get up and running."

Based on prior statements by Cleveland-Cliffs, the earliest Northshore can be expected to resume operations is April, but as of yet the company has not issued any further information.

PESHEL



ACCOUNTING

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CHECK OUT askjean.net for current TAX TIPS!

SCHOOLS...Continued from page 1

five-year federal grant to the St. Louis County School District for a program called "Project Aware."

The program is being led by Alicia Dick, a social worker hired to lead trainings for teachers, staff, and parents, as well as working one-on-one with students as needed. Over the summer, teachers and staff had the option of participating in trainings and book study groups that focused on how brain development influences a child's ability to learn and successfully navigate their day in the classroom.

Dick has been leading a book study based on the research of Dr. Bruce Perry, whose best-selling, recently-published book, co-written with Oprah Winfrey, is titled "What Happened to You? Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing."

"Kids are less developed in some motor skills," Dick said. She talked about strategies used to comfort an infant like rocking and singing, and she said these same strategies can be used for students in the classroom.

"Rhythmic, patterned, repetitive movement is important," she said. "Engaging in sensory activities also increases test scores."

So, a classroom environment that encourages rhythmic movement, like

rocking, and enough time set aside for large-motor outdoor or indoor play is essential, she said.

She explained that brain development research shows that a child needs to have certain brain-based needs met before they are able to engage the parts of their brain needed to learn academics.

Dick met with a small group of parents at Tower-Soudan last week as part of the district's new Parent Advisory Committee outreach program, teaching parents how to recognize their own regulatory states, and giving tools for dealing with their child's difficult behaviors at home. She also gave an overview of the Project Aware program.

Tower-Soudan Elementary Principal John Jirik said he and his staff are impressed with the program and the tools being given to teachers to help their students day-to-day in the classroom. Teachers are learning about the neurobiology of stress and the brain, and are given tools and strategies for getting kids back on track so they are able to learn.

Jirik said the teaching staff at Tower-Soudan has truly embraced these trainings, and almost all have been participating in the voluntary trainings and book studies. He said he uses these strategies when dealing with students

Right: Guest speaker Alicia Dick talks with parents on the Tower-Soudan Parent Advisory Committee about Project Aware, which she is overseeing.

photo by J. Summit

who are disruptive in the classroom and get sent to the office.

"Sending kids to the principal's office is traumatic," Jirik said. "The goal needs to be getting the kid back to class as soon as possible."

Jirik said strategies for getting students to focus and regulate their breathing helps them listen to what an adult needs to tell them, and also gets them calmed down so it is safe to return to their classroom and not disrupt the other students.

"It's all about getting kids where they need to be to learn," he said.

Tower-Soudan teacher Michelle Anderson said she has really appreciated the training and book study sessions, and has been implementing the ideas she is learning in her classroom. She keeps a basket of sensory-calming items on her desk that students can borrow as needed or when she suggests they need them. She was also excited to show off some learning tools she was given for her music classroom, including a set of singing bowls. She is using the bowls to get students calm and focused



at the beginning and end of each class, having them sit still and listen, breathing in and out, to the rhythmic chiming sounds the bowls create.

Kim Jordan, who oversees federal grant programs for ISD 2142, said they are one of only two rural schools in the state who received the Project Aware funding, which totals \$1.8 million over five years. She said Superintendent Reggie Engebretson spearheaded the grant-writing effort. The grant is funded through federal programs and in Minnesota is a collaboration between the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and partnering school districts to support the implementa-

tion of school mental health systems.

"People don't realize how fortunate we are to get this opportunity," said Dick.

Dick is working with teachers and staff throughout the district, and also in the Mt. Iron-Buhl system. She started working with teachers over the summer, and said for the program to succeed, it needs to start in the classroom.

"It needs to be teacher led," she said. "Strong relationships are important."

In addition to trainings for teachers and staff, she is working on training some staff at each site to work one-on-one with students, with different types of brain-based interventions to assist in learning.

"We want this to grow in each school building," she said.

Parent Advisory Committee

The Project Aware program is being introduced to parents through the new Parent Advisory Committees being organized at each district school site.

"We want to increase communication and collaboration with parents," said Jordan.

The Parent Advisory Committee started up in Tower-Soudan just prior to this school year, and have included monthly after-school meetings the third Thursday of each month.

"The hardest part is getting the word out to parents," she said. "We want parents to realize they can come and have a voice."

The Parent Advisory Committees will be starting soon at both Northeast Range and North Woods, with meetings for parents to meet the buildings' new principals. The meetings offer free childcare for parents who are attending.

Anyone wanting to learn more about the Project Aware program or the Parent Advisory Committees can contact Kim Jordan at 218-749-8130 ext. 1123 or kjordan@isd2142.k12.mn.us.

RENTALS...Continued from page 1

said.

The Wales's cabin is among approximately 150 short-term rental properties now registered with the county, according to Jenny Bourbonais, Land Use Manager in the county's Planning and Community Development Department.

"That would be just in St. Louis County zoning jurisdiction, so that's outside any of the cities and municipalities," she said. "Those are their own entities and do their own permitting or licensing. We've been proactive and reached out to all the properties that we were aware of to make sure that they knew they needed to get a permit. It's been a challenge because a lot of these existed prior to any of the standards being put into place. It's been a bit of a catch-up."

Going through the process

St. Louis County permitting of short-term rentals covers all properties that are subject to county zoning ordinances, and Addie said she found it to be a lengthy process when they went through it.

"It's not for the faint

of heart, for someone who gives up easily," she said. "The county has a long list of rules and regulations. There are standards around how big the property is, the sewage and septic must meet standards and code, there must be sufficient on-site parking, there must be a visual demarcation of property lines. All local, state and federal taxes and licenses must be followed. The county really does try to account for everything, from trash to property lines to liability insurance for hosts to make sure that renters are safe."

Short-term rentals are licensed by the Minnesota Department of Health, and they had to obtain pre-approval from MDH before applying for county registration, Addie said. Once those processes were complete, MDH conducted an on-site inspection confirming that all sanitation, building, lighting, linen, furnishing, cleanliness, water, waste, and fire protection requirements were in place.

"They especially cared about fire safety," Addie said. "Once all that is checked you can get your

Minnesota license."

The permitting process also required a public hearing at which neighbors could ask questions or make comments about whether they thought the short-term permit should be granted, Addie said.

The county recently revised and streamlined its permitting process, so new applicants won't face some of the back and forth between agencies that the Wales's did, Bourbonais said.

"It's going to be more streamlined where property owners will come to St. Louis County first to get our permit, and then we forward that on to the Minnesota Department of Health and then they will go through that process," Bourbonais said. "It's going to be a much more consistent process."

Good demand

Addie said they were surprised by the number of people wanting to use their cabin.

"The demand is much higher than I originally anticipated," she said. "At first we thought we would just try it out in the summer and fall, but then we had



The Wales' rustic rental cabin in Eagles Nest Township.
submitted photo

some people requesting if they could stay in the winter, so we made quite a few upgrades in order to make that possible. I was a bit worried that it wouldn't be worth it, but we ended up being almost fully booked last winter as well as this winter. So demand is about 80-90 percent occupancy year round."

In fact, demand has been so good that they decided to build a second cabin this past summer, a modern one quite different from the rustic log cabin, also in Eagles Nest Township.

"It's just now finally ready for guests," Addie

said. "We just got our county license and we're finalizing our MDH license, and we'll be hosting guests really soon here this winter."

Living in St. Paul, the couple uses a local cleaning service to turn the property around for new renters, and they have a couple of locals to do maintenance and check on the property. And in a pinch, Addie can call on an uncle or her mother, both of whom live nearby.

"For us, it's really nice to have a vacation home in Ely, and this is the way that we're able to afford to do so," Addie said. "We're thankful that guests are able to use it when we can't. It

helps to cover the mortgage for us."

More information about the Wales' short-term rental business, Ely Cabin Collective, can be found on their website at elycabincollective.com.

Current information about the county's short-term rental permitting regulations and process is available online at <https://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/departments-a-z/planning-development/land-use/short-term-rentals>.

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Minnesota North College – Vermilion Campus in Ely, MN is seeking to fill a temporary, part-time, .75% FTE (30 hours per week) College Lab Assistant 1 – Academic Support Coordinator position.

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This position is 30% institutionally-funded and 70% funded by a TRIO Student Support Services grant from the U.S. Department of Education to serve students who are first generation, low-income, or having a disability and persons who are from these groups are encouraged to apply.

For position details, qualifications, and application procedures, please view the postings at: <https://minnesotanorth.edu/about/human-resources/employment-opportunities/>

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INACCURATE REPORTING

City frustrated with wild claims in a local paper

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER—City officials here are expressing frustration over the willingness of the editor and a regular contributor of a tiny weekly newspaper in the city to continue to spread misinformation and false claims to readers. The latest case was an astonishing front page story that accused Dena Suihkonen, the city’s ambulance director of “fraud” and of “black-mailing” the city to leverage the council’s approval of a union contract for her position.

It further accused the director of overseeing a financial loss for the Tower Area Ambulance Service of \$200,000.

The claims, which city officials say bear little relationship to fact, appeared on the front page of the Jan. 20, 2023 edition of the *Tower News*, a paper with fewer than 400 regular subscribers that appears to be seeking attention through its hyperbolic reporting. That includes opinionated “news” stories written by contributor Steve Altenburg, who was fired in 2020 from his position as the city’s ambulance director and fire chief. Altenburg, whose byline appears with the latest broadside against his successor, has spent the past three years leveling a variety of accusations against the city and individuals he blames for his dismissal, without apparent fact-checking by his purported editor, Terry Carlson.

Altenburg’s latest claim of fraud against the ambulance director is baseless, say city officials. “There has not been any fraud that has taken place when it comes to pay or the reporting of hours,” said Mayor David Setterberg. “The hours were worked, time cards were submitted and paid accordingly.”

If there’s an issue, it’s over the number of hours that were originally authorized by the city council when Suihkonen was named as Altenburg’s successor in June of 2020. According to the job description, the hours were supposed to be limited to a combined 40 hours for both EMT and director duties over a biweekly pay period. The position paid \$22 per hour for

administrative duties and \$25 an hour when she was performing as an EMT. That would have put her annual combined pay at just under \$24,000 a year.

That’s nearly half of what the city had been paying for the same duties under Altenburg and his two assistants, and appeared to continue a pattern of undervaluing Suihkonen’s work for the service.

Altenburg, in 2019, was paid a salary of \$23,700 as director and took home an additional \$9,771 for EMT time, for a total ambulance service compensation of \$33,471. At the same time, the city paid for two assistant directors at a combined cost of \$9,600, which pushed the total compensation for the service’s administration and Altenburg’s EMT time to over \$43,000 a year.

Suihkonen, who was hired as an hourly employee rather than salaried, was expected to do the service’s administrative work without any assistants, and respond to emergency calls, for far less than the previous director.

The hours authorized proved to be unrealistic, particularly as the ambulance service was still scrambling to adjust to the impacts of the COVID pandemic and the implementation of new safety protocols. Without any assistants, all that work fell on Suihkonen and the hours added up.

Former city clerk-treasurer Victoria Ranua said Suihkonen provided her with detailed records of her work time, showing what kind of administrative work she was doing throughout the workday. “I never had any concerns about her hours,” said Ranua. “Her timecards detailed her activities. I never received anything from Altenburg when he was director. I never knew what he was doing.”

Based on her reported hours, Suihkonen was paid \$45,217 for administrative work in 2021 and \$42,906 this past year. Like Altenburg, she was also paid separately for her EMT time. That increased the combined cost of her administrative duties and EMT response to \$52,543 in 2021 and \$50,145 in 2022. City contributions for holiday

and vacation pay added almost \$6,000 to her wages in 2021 and about \$850 last year.

In the past, the city had paid salaries for the administrative work totaling \$33,600, but never had any record of how many hours any of the employees actually worked and pay rates were set on a largely arbitrary basis. That was one reason that Ranua had pushed to transition the position to hourly, to help the city better understand the actual time involved.

The change proved illuminating. In addition to dealing with COVID, Suihkonen notes that the city began work to create a first-ever business plan for the service, something Altenburg had resisted, which consumed additional administrative hours. The state’s Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board (EMSRB) also did a review of the service in 2021, for which Suihkonen had to compile data and meet regularly with EMSRB staff. “And I spent a lot of time trying to fix all the things that were wrong as a result of the previous director,” said Suihkonen. She also oversaw the transition to a fulltime on-call roster, something required by state law that the service had failed to do in the past. She also took on some payroll duties that had been done by the city clerk-treasurer before her tenure.

In the end, all of her time sheets were reviewed by the clerk-treasurer and approved by the city council, contrary to Altenburg’s charge that the extra pay was “unapproved.” Suihkonen’s job description did allow paying overtime with prior approval, which certainly suggests a recognition that her hours could exceed 40 hours per biweekly pay period.

As has been the pattern of both Altenburg and Carlson, neither sought any clarification from Suihkonen nor offered her an opportunity to respond before splashing Altenburg’s accusations across the front page of the *Tower News*. Nor did they run Altenburg’s concerns past city officials.

“I hate to use the term, but it’s just ‘fake news,’” said Tower Clerk-Treasurer Michael Schultz.

Ambulance losses overstated

City officials say they’re concerned about more than Altenburg’s false charges of fraud. His story also claims that the ambulance service lost \$200,000, although he doesn’t state the time frame for that claim, nor does he acknowledge that it was his decision to implement a paid on-call program, with an exceptionally high rate of pay, that contributed to undermining the department’s profitability. What’s more, under Altenburg, the service never accounted for depreciation on its ambulances, something that the service has done under Suihkonen. Depreciation has been adding about \$68,000 annually to the service’s expenses, according to city records, a cost that was not factored into the financial reports under Altenburg or previous directors. The service is also transferring \$1.66 for every mile the ambulance is driven for an inter-hospital transfer to the service’s ambulance replacement fund. The Tower Ambulance Commission lobbied for that contribution, which the city agreed to make. That added \$18,553 to the service’s expenses in 2022.

What’s more, under Altenburg and previous directors, annual contributions to the service’s ambulance replacement fund from area townships were counted as operating revenue, which also helped pad the “profits.” That changed under Suihkonen as Ranua established a separate account for those capital contributions, which are no longer included as operating income. Had these expenses and revenues been calculated this way under Altenburg, the service would have showed losses of tens of thousands of dollars each year he led the department.

Even so, city officials aren’t sure where Altenburg’s figures come from. Clerk-treasurer Schultz said the service’s 2022 profit or loss won’t be known for sure until the city’s auditors complete their work later this year, but the preliminary estimate shows a loss of \$22,967, not including depreciation.

“He did not ask and I did not provide the 2022 numbers to him,” said Schultz, referring to Altenburg. “So, I have no idea where the \$200K loss statement came from.”

The service did show a \$133,058 loss in 2021, \$68,272 of which was due to depreciation. Under the accounting methods used under Altenburg’s tenure, the 2021 financials would have come in close to break-even.

Union contract


Altenburg claims in his Jan. 20 story that Suihkonen somehow “blackmailed” the city into accepting a union contract, although he fails to explain what leverage she might have over the city. In either case, the union contract recently approved by the council reduces her hours to no more than 32 hours per week and requires that she take 16 hours of on-call time each week during her regular work hours without additional pay.

That puts her base pay at approximately \$39,000 a year, but the on-call requirement saves the city \$9,568 in on-call pay, leaving the net cost to the city less than \$30,000 annually.

The job does not provide any insurance benefits, as would normally be required under the city’s personnel policy for any employee working 30 hours or more.

Setterberg said he has not heard any suggestion that Suihkonen had blackmailed anyone to obtain a union contract. When asked to respond to Altenburg’s claims, he was diplomatic. “As with many topics, a viewpoint of the situation can take information and slant it towards a certain direction to make a desired point,” he added. “We are not trying to hide the fact that all ambulance services are struggling to make ends meet including TAAS (Tower Area Ambulance Service). This is one of the reasons we have been getting help from the EMSRB, Northland Small Business Group, and creating the ad hoc ambulance committee.”



The *Timberjay* provided emailed questions to Altenburg for this story. He did not respond as of presstime.



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Ely building project focus of board meeting

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- School board members here received an update on their ongoing building project during a notably brief board meeting held Monday.

Tim Leeson, the director of facilities for the district reported that the project was “winding down now.” He said that the contractor was “half-way through” the punch list of items that needed completion. Efforts are currently focused on finishing the caulking on windows. He added that the locker rooms “would be done by the end of next week or sooner.”

School board member Tom Omerza, also an assistant girls basketball coach, was away at a game, but he had given board chair Ray Marsnik a list of questions for Leeson, which Marsnik asked on his behalf.

In response to his first question, Leeson said that all the permanent wash stations now have hot water, while the temporary wash stations installed after the arrival of COVID-19 only had cold water. There are currently no plans to remove these wash stations. Anne Oelke, the K-5 principal, remarked that the temporary wash stations are still being used by her students.

Omerza’s other three questions focused on security for the new addition.

“Some of the wiring (on the security system) got cut during construction,” said Leeson, who added that fixing the wiring was on the punch list. Leeson said that he was getting the help he needed to get the security system up and running. He also

told the board that he did not have a back-up in case of his absence, but that alarms from the security system went to the police department during off-hours.

Athletic director Tom Coombe mentioned that the new gym, which was part of the project, enabled the school district to host a junior high school girls basketball tournament last weekend.

That was good news to board members. “Every time we host a tournament in Ely, it helps the economy, noted board member Tony Colarich.

In other business, the board:

- Approved the memorandum of understanding between the school district and Arrowhead Head Start for services between July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. This is a standard contract for the Head Start

program which renewed annually.

- Approved the payment of \$4,500 for Dan Hinzmann of SEH for engineering work in support of the school district’s \$245,000 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant for fixing the water and sewer lines in front of the schools.

- Granted permission to the Ely Historical Preservation Commission to evaluate the outside entrance lights outside the Ely Memorial High School building.

- Approved the hiring of the Colosimo Patchin & Kearney law firm of Virginia to work with the district’s law firm, Klun Law of Ely, to research a possible legal action.

- Accepted an anonymous donation of \$1,825 for special education and a \$1,000 donation to the elementary school PTO

for field trips from Frank away on Oct. 8, 2022. Lekatyz as a memorial for Jan Lekatyz who passed



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MON, JAN 30 - SAT, FEB 4 AMATEUR SNOW CARVING CONTEST

WED, FEB 1 - TUE, FEB 28 ANNUAL ELY ART WALK ELYARTWALK.ORG



FRIDAY, FEB 3
10-4 HOT COCOA BAR
4-7 A TASTE OF BLACKSMITHING
4-6 SPAGHETTI DINNER
6:30 ELY WINTER FESTIVAL KICKOFF

SATURDAY, FEB 4
10-4 HOT COCOA BAR
10 DOWNTOWN ARTS MARKET
10 & 4 LISTENING POINT SNOWSHOE TOURS
10-1 VCC OPEN HOUSE
11-2 DOROTHY MOLTER WHIRLWIND COMMUNITY EVENT
12-2 & 2-4 A TASTE OF BLACKSMITHING
2-4 ELY ARTWALK ARTIST RECEPTION
7-9 COURTNEY YASMINEH CONCERT

SUNDAY, FEB 5
9-3 MAKE A BEAVER HAT
10-12 & 12-2 A TASTE OF BLACKSMITHING
10 & 1 LISTENING POINT SNOWSHOE TOURS
11-1 COURTNEY YASMINEH CONCERT

MONDAY, FEB 6
10 & 4 LISTENING POINT SNOWSHOE TOURS

WEDNESDAY, FEB 8
6-8 WINES OF THE RHONE VALLEY

THURSDAY, FEB 9
END OF THE ROAD FILM FESTIVAL
2:30-5 BEADED SNOWFLAKE CLASS
5 DOROTHY MOLTER ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DINNER

FRIDAY, FEB 10
END OF THE ROAD FILM FESTIVAL
10-4 HOT COCOA BAR
4 SUNSET SNOWSHOE AT BURNTSIDE ISLANDS SNA
7-11 LIVE MUSIC AT SAMZ' PLACE

SATURDAY, FEB 11
END OF THE ROAD FILM FESTIVAL
10-4 HOT COCOA BAR
10 & 1 LISTENING POINT SNOWSHOE TOURS
10-1 MAKE A BEAVER CELL PHONE POUCH
5 CANDLELIGHT SKI

SUNDAY, FEB 12
END OF THE ROAD FILM FESTIVAL

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BY ELY FLOWER & SEED

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ARCHERY

North Woods, Ely notch shooting medals



Nearly 400 archers compete as part of National Archery in the Schools program

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- Archers from 13 regional schools descended on North Woods School on Saturday for the annual tournament sanctioned by

Left: Kaidence Scofield, of North Woods, is poised for release during archery competition this past Saturday. photo by D. Colburn

the National Archery in the Schools program.

A total of 379 archers from fourth to twelfth grade stepped to the firing line for competition in traditional bullseye shooting, and 163 of them also shot in a new category for the tourney this year, 3-D game animal targets.

North Woods and Ely both had teams entered in the tourney and came away with numerous top five division medalists in each style of shooting.

In bullseye competition for the Grizzlies, Cadence Nelson took second in the high school girls division. North Woods middle schoolers won their division on the strength of Merilee Scofield's and Brady Swanson's second place finishes, along with Cooper Long notching third and Laurin Glass placing fifth.

Ely's Laydan Hart was the
See ARCHERY...pg. 2B

BOYS BASKETBALL

A mixed week for the Grizzlies

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- The North Woods boys got back on the winning track last Friday, scoring a convincing 76-47 win over Kelliher-Northome on their home court, halting a three-game losing streak.

The Mustangs scored the game's first bucket, but after the Grizzlies' Jared Chiabotti answered with a fast break basket at 14:40, North Woods never looked back. The Grizzlies got early productivity down low from Kaden Ratai and rode treys by Jared and Brenden Chiabotti to a 19-9 advantage nine minutes into the game. The Mustangs were rattled by the Grizzlies' stifling man defense as North Woods built a 30-16 lead with Ratai doing much of the damage in the run. With Jonah Burnett getting into the scoring mix, the Grizzlies went into the half leading 36-22.

Louie Panichi sparked the Grizzlies early in the second half with a pair of buckets, but the Mustangs held their ground for the first eight minutes of the period, trailing 51-35. A trey by Ratai gave the Grizzlies a 21-point advantage. Burnett capitalized on a technical foul against K-N by knocking down a pair of free throws and then scoring on the ensuing possession to put the Grizzlies up 67-39, their largest lead of the game. North Woods coasted from there for the 27-point win.

It was a big game for senior Ratai, who pumped in 19 points and snagged 15 rebounds for the double-double. Burnett also notched a double-double with 19 points and 10 rebounds, and Jared Chiabotti knocked down 16 points.

Loss to Cherry

The Grizzlies went on the road Tuesday to face Cherry, a team riding a six-game winning streak. The Tigers made it seven in a row with an 84-65 win. North Woods kept the game competitive early on, and trailed 49-35 at the half. But the Tigers reeled off a 19-6 run after the break to lead 68-65. Cherry was up on the Grizzlies by as many as 30 points in the second half, but North Woods cut into that lead after the Tigers got well down into their bench in the final minutes. The loss dropped the Grizzlies to 7-8 on the season.



BOYS BASKETBALL

Wolves upended by Mt. Iron-Buhl

Second half Ely scoring drought allows Rangers to rally to 56-52 win

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ELY- When Ely basketball fans refer to the "drought of '23" in future conversations, they won't be talking about the weather. They'll be referring to the disastrous eight-minute second-half scoring drought last Friday that allowed the Mt. Iron-Buhl Rangers to come from eight points down to snare a 56-52 victory on the Timberwolves' home court.

It was a battle royale from the outset in a first half that featured six ties and nine lead changes. Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald knew he needed to find a way to slow down MIB's career scoring leader Asher Zubich and the Rangers' high-octane offense, which came into the game averaging 77.5 points a game. To do that, McDonald turned to a diamond-and-one zone configuration with one player shadowing Zubich everywhere he went, and the ploy was effective, limiting Zubich to just four points in the first period. Ely sharpshooter Jack Davies canned a pair of late treys to break a 29-29

Above: Ely senior Jason Kerntz grimaces as he tries to thread the needle between two MI-B defenders.

Below: Ely sophomore Caid Chittum tries to take a shot under heavy pressure.

photos by D. Colburn



GIRLS BASKETBALL



The Grizzlies' Hannah Kinsey eyes the bucket during a big win over Nashwauk-Keewatin, during which Kinsey topped 1,000 points in her high school career. photo by D. Colburn

Kinsey cracks 1,000 points in 48-point game

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- Grizzlies senior Hannah Kinsey got by with a little help from her friends on the North Woods girls basketball team last week as she eclipsed the 1,000-point career scoring plateau in the Grizzlies' 72-33 home win over Nashwauk-Keewatin.

In pregame warm-ups it was clear the Spartans would have problems matching up with the Grizzlies' size, particularly 6'1" Kinsey, and from the outset North Woods took advantage of that edge. Kinsey scored the Grizzlies' first two baskets on short jumpers as the Grizzlies quickly opened up a 13-5 lead, eight of those points coming from Kinsey. Helen Koch knocked down a three-ball that ignited a 21-6 North Woods run in which Kinsey scored 12 more points, and the Grizzlies held a comfortable 37-17 lead at the half.

Kinsey had 21 points at the break, and a milestone that was 47 points distant at the beginning of the game suddenly appeared to be within reach.

"Last year against Nashwauk she had 32, and she had 30 the other night," North Woods Head Coach Liz Cheney said. "Now we were going on the road for a while, so at halftime we gave her the choice - do you want to do it, because we'll feed you the second half until you do it. And she decided yes. So that's what we did."

The Grizzlies came out running disciplined offensive sets that put Kinsey into scoring position, and she responded with sharpshooting accuracy, locked in on mid-range jumpers in the lane and along the baseline. She picked up a few putbacks on Grizzlies misses, stepped out beyond the

“We were going on the road for a while, so at halftime we gave her the choice.”

North Woods
Head Coach
Liz Cheney

See WOLVES...pg. 2B

See GRIZZLIES...pg. 2B

HOCKEY

Timberwolves win two straight, ending losing streak

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- After a bitter six losses in a row, the Timberwolves notched two well-earned wins over the past week. They include an 8-2 victory against the WSFLG (Wis.) Blizzard on Jan. 14.

This past Saturday, they avenged their Jan. 13 loss to Lake of the Woods, edging the Bears 5-4.

Head Coach Jake Myers said his team had struggled with three key skills last time against the Bears. “We put a lot of time into those three parts of the game at practice, and it paid off,” Myers stated. “The team really worked hard, and capitalized on their scoring chances. They also held onto a third period lead this game, and came away with a big win and our second win a row.”

Ely put three points on the board in the final four minutes of the first period, with goals by Jaksen Hegman, Kadein Zupancich (assists Chase Anderson and Kole Macho), and



Ely senior Kole Macho emerges with the puck from a pile-up on the board. photo by C. Clark

Hegman (assists Alex Merriman and Drew Marolt).

The Bears bit back early in the second period with two goals but Ely responded with two more goals, by Marolt (assist Deegan Richards) and Richards (assist Marolt).

A third period rally added two more goals for the Bears, but it wasn't enough as Ely held on

for the win.

In their Jan. 14 matchup with the Blizzard, the Wolves came away with a convincing 8-2 win in a highly physical game. Penalties were more of a factor for the Blizzard as numerous cat fights broke out over control of the puck. Refs dinged the Blizzard for a total of five penalties, while three Ely players spent their own

time in the box, all in the second period. At one point, the Blizzard had a 5-3 advantage on the ice as two Ely penalties overlapped, but the Wolves were able to fend them off until they got back to full strength.

“We were able to keep the damage on the scoreboard to a minimum,” said Myers. “Consistency was an issue again in this game, as the first two periods we kept WSFLG within striking distance. Ultimately in the third period we found our game and put up four unanswered (goals) to finish off the much-needed win.”

Macho scored both first period goals for Ely, with assists from Ben Leeson, and Logan Loe and Jace Huntbatch on the second.

Sophomore Alex Merriman scored the first of the second period goals with an assist from sophomore Blake Schaller.

Ely notched four goals in the third period by Richard (assist Wes Sandy), Marolt, Loe (assists from Huntbatch and Macho), Macho (assist from Zupancich)

and Loe (assists from Macho and Huntbatch).

Overall, the team took 43 shots at the goal vs. 27 by WSFLG.

The loss to Lake of the Woods on Jan. 13 was the last one of the Timberwolves' losing streak. The game was notable for its clean play and only two penalties, both made by Lake of the Woods during the second period.

“We struggled with consistency in our game... We gave up two goals back-to-back late in the game because of a few mental breakdowns and that made the difference in the game.”

Overall, Ely had 42 shots at the goal vs. 34 by Lake of the Woods.

The Wolves were headed west for the weekend, with a Friday night contest at Park Rapids and a Saturday matchup at Bagley.

They'll be home next Friday and Saturday, Feb. 3-4, hosting St. Paul Johnson.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Wolves run roughshod over bucking Broncos

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY— In a game that occasionally resembled bumper-cars at the state fair midway, the Timberwolves corralled a 70-31 win against the Broncos last Thursday. The win improved the team's record to 12-1.

Despite aggressive efforts at steals, rebounds, blocks and fast breaks, the Broncos couldn't keep pace – and not for lack of trying against a stingy Ely defense.

The Timberwolves had to work to get around the Broncos' in-your-face approach in the paint, but that did not stop Ely from racking up the points. The Broncos also lost steam late in the game, scoring only 11 points in

the second half.

The Broncos showed a preference for passing the ball down the court rather than dribbling. And their aggression on defense resulted in multiple trips, falls and collisions.

Play stopped nine times in the first half and seven times in the second for penalty free throws.

In the first half, Ely racked up

seven fouls to International Falls' eight. The second saw a reversal, with Ely getting tagged for 10 fouls to just two by the Broncos.

Junior Hannah Penke was the top Ely scorer, with a total of 19 points. Junior Grace LaTourell added 16 points, while senior Madeline Kallberg tallied 12 points. Senior Madeline Perry added eight.

Overall, the Timberwolves sank 22 shots from inside the arc and added six treys and eight free throws.

The Wolves host Duluth Denfeld on Friday night. They travel to Nashwauk on Monday.

ARCHERY..Continued from page 1B

top scoring archer among middle school boys, and Hayden Weidemann equaled Hart's winning feat in the elementary boys division. Cylvia DeBeltz placed third in the high school girls division.

North Woods had eight top-five finishers in 3-D game animal shooting and again claimed the middle school championship. In the high school division, Cadence Nelson took fourth among girls and Blaze Markwardt and Riley Las placed third and fourth for the boys. Middle school girls with high placements included Merilee Scofield, second, and Laurin Glass,

fourth. Brady Swanson led the middle school boys in second place, with Jacob Towner placing third and Buckley LeForte finishing fourth. Clark Danielson took second place among elementary boys.

For Ely, Hayden Weidemann took first place in the elementary boys division and Cylvia DeBeltz took third among high school girls.

Right: North Woods archers Khloe Holland and Sophia Hoffman take aim.

Far right: Ely's Milo McClelland removes arrows from a target.

photos by D. Colburn



WOLVES..Continued from page 1B

tie and give the Wolves a 35-29 lead at the half.

Both teams got off to a sluggish start in the second stanza, with Ely not collecting its first bucket until a baseline jumper by Gunnar Hart dropped in at the 14-minute mark. The Wolves grew their lead to 48-40 on the strength of baskets from Joey Bianco and Erron Anderson and three-balls from Davies and Caid Chittum. MIB called a time-out to regroup with 9:32 remaining.

When the teams came back onto the court the

Rangers cranked up their defensive pressure on the Wolves, zeroing in on shutting down Bianco and Davies while mounting a comeback. MIB held Ely scoreless on 12 consecutive trips down the floor during a 12-0 scoring spurt that put the Rangers on top 52-48 with 2:45 remaining. Chittum finally broke Ely's scoring drought with a pair of free throws with just 52 seconds left, and the Wolves had the ball with a shot at the lead in the final minute, but a Davies three missed the mark. Bianco

would score a layup in the final seconds, but Zubich sealed the game from the free throw line for the 56-52 win.

The Rangers won this one by effectively taking Bianco and Davies out of the game in the second half. The duo combined for 26 first-half points including six threes by Davies, but could only muster seven second-half points between them.

“(Bianco) had to work really hard for what he got,” McDonald said. “They clamped down on Jack in

the second half, which I figured they would because he had six threes in the first half. We weren't able to free him up at all in the second half.”

But the Wolves did accomplish their defensive goal, holding MIB 21 points below their team average and limiting Zubich, who put up 53 against North Woods, to only 14 points.

“We needed to keep the score down against this team. We knew they were explosive,” McDonald said. “We tried to take Asher away because he's

that good of a player and I thought we did a really good job on him. We kept battling and kept playing defense, so it was good. We didn't get too far down even though we were playing poorly.”

Turnovers were a problem for the Wolves, and while the offense couldn't get on track in the second half, McDonald was still pleased with the team's overall effort.

“We put ourselves in a position where we had a chance tonight and I thought we played really, really well against one of the better teams in the section,” he said.

Davies led the Wolves in scoring with 21, while Bianco and Chittum each scored 12.

GRIZZLIES..Continued from page 1B

arc to drain a three, and led a fast break score as the Grizzlies' lead continued to build. Kinsey was five points shy of 1,000 when the running clock kicked in at 62-24 with nine minutes to play, but with 5:38 left she took a pass down low from Kiana LaRoque on a pick and roll play and banked home the bucket that put her over the top with 1,001 points and 48 for the game. Officials stopped play to give Kinsey, the Grizzlies, and the crowd the opportunity to celebrate her achievement.

“I wasn't expecting to hit it tonight, but my team

helped me out a lot. They were amazing at feeding me,” Kinsey said. “They were awesome.”

But while her teammates got her the ball, Kinsey still had to knock down the shots, and she attributed her improved shooting this season to her offseason training.

“We shoot a lot in practice, but throughout the summer I worked really hard on my shots because I knew coming into the season, I was close to getting 1,000 and that was one of my long-term goals. But honestly, I wasn't expecting to hit it

this school year.”

Because of Kinsey's huge game, no other North Woods players scored in double figures as the Grizzlies moved to 8-9 on the season. The Grizzlies hope the win will be a

springboard to more victories in a lengthy five-game road stretch. North Woods won't be back on the home hardwood until they host Mesabi East on Feb. 13.

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GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

Greenwood review finds study lacking

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

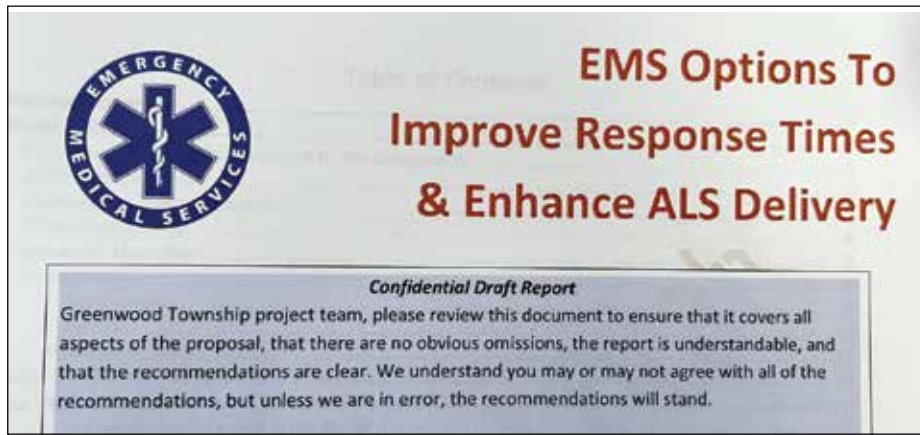
GREENWOOD TWP- A committee formed by the Greenwood Town Board had little good to say about the McGrath Consulting Group study done for the township that came with a price tag of almost \$55,000.

The group held its second meeting to review the study and finished with more questions than they had started with. The draft of the study, which is labeled confidential, had numerous typos, misspellings of names such as Breitung and Vermilion, as well as mis-naming the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa as the Bois Forte Indian Nation.

Bois Forte Tribal Council member Robert Moyer Jr. attended the meeting and said that either he, or other tribal employees, would try to attend upcoming committee meetings to keep informed on the topic.

The committee is tasked with reviewing the draft report and submitting changes to McGrath. But the committee spent most of the meeting reviewing items that McGrath had promised in their proposal that were omitted from the draft report.

"We asked for a recommendation on consolidation of existing services or the creation of a new service," said committee member Lee Peterson. "We wanted estimated costs and



timelines." Peterson noted the proposal McGrath gave to the township included these topics.

The committee discussed numerous other items that they felt were going to be addressed but were not part of the draft report.

"That is why we bought into this," he said. "It read just what we wanted."

The committee also bristled at the inclusion of topics in the report they felt were irrelevant to the question of improving ambulance service, specifically the controversies encompassing the town board the past few years.

The committee unanimously passed a motion stating the study had failed to fulfill its stated commitments as to the scope of the study and objectives, outcomes, and options.

The group will have Hib-

bing Fire Chief Erik Jankila attend a special town board meeting set for Monday, Jan. 30 at 6 p.m. at the town hall. Jankila will speak on the topic of emergency medical services and give his input on the draft plan. A question-and-answer session will follow.

Ambulance service issues like funding and staffing are an issue throughout the state, the committee noted.

"St. Louis County needs to be involved with this," said Rick Stoehr, who is also a town board member. "Everything is so backwards. We had 131 medical calls last year and 50 fire-related calls. But the focus isn't on EMS people, it's on the fire department."

The committee brought up the idea of dissolving the Cook and Tower ambulance services and bringing in a private ambulance service to serve the area,

or creating a regional ambulance service to oversee a much larger area than the current ambulance districts.

"You can't have an ambulance service every 25 miles," said Stoehr. A regional service, they said,

would still require ambulances stationed in the area communities, but would share administration, training, and staffing.

While the committee has discussed the city of Buhl and their hiring Essentia to run their ambulance service, there has been no data provided that shows that the private ambulance model could work in the much larger and more rural area that encompasses Greenwood, especially with the drive times to area hospitals and the need for frequent transfers to Duluth.

"We are beyond patching up the status quo here in Greenwood," said Peterson. "It's too late for that."

"Greenwood has to get used to the idea we are doing this ourselves," said Peterson. "We have the leverage and the means to do it."

The group noted that McGrath consultants met with the directors of the ambulance services in Tower and Cook, but neither expressed interest in adding ALS-level service. But the township, as part of the study, never consulted with the Tower or Cook city councils, which oversee their respective ambulance services.

The costs of upgrading to an ALS service are very high and depend on finding trained paramedics to staff the service 24/7.

Greenwood Township is mostly located in the Tower Ambulance service area, with some of the western portions of the township covered by Cook. Ambulance service areas are set by the state's Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board (EMSRB), and while that board has come under scrutiny in the past few years over its management and oversight practices, any changes would need to come through more comprehensive legislation. While the Office of the Legislative Auditor compiled a report on the EMSRB and made numerous recommendations, it is not clear that any of these changes are in the process of moving through the legislature.

Obituaries and Death Notices



Gary G. Gornik

Gary G. Gornik, 63, of Dixon, Ill., passed away suddenly on Sunday, Jan. 22, 2023, at KSB Hospital in Dixon. Visitation was held on Friday, Jan. 27 with a recitation of the Rosary at Jones Funeral Home in Dixon. Funeral services will be held on Saturday, Jan. 28 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Dixon, with a funeral luncheon to follow at the Dixon Knights of Columbus Hall. Burial of cremains will occur at a later date. A memorial has been established.

Gary was a kind, generous, and tenderhearted man who always put others first and didn't stop until the job was finished. Gary loved his friends, Minnesota sports, the Knights of Columbus, and his family, especially his grandchildren. He was born on Feb. 23, 1959, in Virginia, the son of the late Jack and Winifred (Krall) Gornik. Gary married the love of his life, best friend, and constant companion, Jean Wallin, on Jan. 8, 1982, in Virginia.

Gary was a charter member of the Fayal Township Volunteer Fire Department and worked for U.S. Steel in Virginia, before joining the Pamida store franchise. Pamida moved Gary and his family to multiple cities in Minnesota, then to Omaha, Neb., and finally to Dixon, where Gary

and Jean decided to make their permanent home. Gary was the manager of Culver's in Dixon prior to joining the Dixon Walmart as an assistant manager, where he was employed for the last 15 years.

Gary was a proud member of St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Dixon. Gary was also a dedicated member of the Dixon Knights of Columbus, a past Grand Knight, and a Fr. Boland Assembly of the 4th Degree member. Gary devoted every Thanksgiving as a Knight of Columbus to serving the annual Knights of Columbus meal to his community, including ensuring the meal was available during the pandemic.

Gary is survived by his wife, Jean; children, Amelia "Amy" (Joshua) Hemmen of Dixon and Patrick (Erin) Gornik of Dunlap, Ill.; and was the proud grandpa to five grandsons, Lincoln Dillavou, Landon Dillavou, Jason Hemmen, Jackson Hemmen and Jacob Hemmen. He is also survived by three sisters, Wendy Pfeffer of Cloquet, Laurie (Ron) McDowell of Eveleth and Becky (Mike) Dall of Mt. Iron; as well as nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; two brothers, Roderic Gornik and James (late Candace) Gornik; and brother-in-law, Rodney (Wendy Gornik) Pfeffer.

Michael J. Pechek

Michael John Pechek, 67, a lifelong resident of Ely, passed away peacefully on Sunday, Jan. 22,

2023, at the Ely-Bloomsen Community Hospital, surrounded by his family after fighting a long and very courageous battle against lung cancer. His daughter would like to thank all of the medical staff at EBCH and Virginia Regional Medical Center for the care he received. A celebration of life will be held at Kerntz Funeral Home in Ely on Saturday, Jan. 28 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. All who knew and loved Mike are invited to join in sharing stories and celebrating a life very well-lived. Food and beverages will be provided.

He is survived by his daughter, Jamie (Andy Linden); grandson, Alex;

granddaughter, Hailee; brother, Louis (Monica) and their daughters Shari, (nephews Alec and Brenden) and Michelle (Ken Madison) and their children Alexis (Nate Starke), Hannah and Andrew; niece, Kristy (Tony Cummings) and their children Chloe, Tony and Lucy; aunt, Natalie DeGuisti; and many other nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Eugene I. Ferweda

Eugene Ivan Ferweda, 77, was found unresponsive in his home in Angora on Monday, Dec. 26, 2022, due to a massive heart attack. Per his wishes, cremation services were provided by Mlaker

Funeral Home in Cook, with no public service to be held. If you would like to share your colorful personal story about Eugene, it can be mailed to the family in care of Vicky Anderson, 20408 County Road 445, Bovey, MN 55709.

He is survived by his six children, Jesse, Vicky (James) Anderson, Aimee Nugent, Andrew, Christi (Paul) Abrahamson and Carla (Charlie) Jesness; and eleven grandchildren.

Ruby D. Rasmussen

Ruby Delores Weum Rasmussen, 91, of Babbitt, passed away peacefully in her sleep on Sunday, Jan. 22, 2023, at Care-free Living in Babbitt. A

celebration of life will be held this spring at the Assembly of God Church in Babbitt. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by her sons, Steve (Laurie) and Jerry (Pam); daughters, Julie (Bob) Smith and Chris (Bill) Stupica; grandchildren, Chad Stupica, Jim (Melissa) Smith, Janelle (Andy) Butler, Michael (Theresa) Rasmussen, Mark (Kylee) Rasmussen, Matthew Rasmussen, Michelle (Chris) Schally and Paul (Amanda) Rasmussen; eleven great-grandchildren; one great-great-granddaughter; brother, Gordy (Bonnie) Weum; and many nieces and nephews.

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12:00-4:00 pm	Mojjakka (Finnish stew)
10:00am-5:00pm	Girls' and Boys' Youth Basketball Games
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7:30 pm	Laskiainen Lakers Basketball Game

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9:30 am	Ecumenical Church Service
9:00 am-4:00 pm	Artisans & Demonstrators in Laskiainen Tradition Laskiainen Shoppe Bakery (Finnish breads) Museum Old Co-op Theatre
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Outdoors

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Study: Freshwater fish pose major health risk

EPA data suggests eating fish is a major source of toxic “forever chemicals”

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — A new study, based on data from the Environmental Protection Agency, finds that fish caught in lakes and rivers in the U.S. contain dangerously high levels of toxic synthetic chemicals known as PFAS.

PFAS is short for perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, part of a family of synthetic chemicals known to bring a wide range of health concerns. PFAS and other closely related synthetics such as PFOS, are widely known as a “forever chemicals,” known to be persistent indefinitely in the environment. The chemicals appear to concentrate in fish tissue, among other places, and they’ve become increasingly common in the environment since their use in the production of firefighting foam and many other products became more commonplace beginning in the 1950s. EPA testing between 2013-2015 showed that even infrequent consumption of freshwater fish was linked to higher levels of this toxic family of chemicals in human blood.

The median levels of the chemical detected in freshwater fish was 278 times higher than levels found in most commercially harvested fish, which are

typically from the ocean. The higher dilution factor in the ocean is believed to be responsible for the lower levels of the chemical found in fish there.

The study found that just a single serving of freshwater fish per year with a typical concen-

“Exposure to PFAS has been associated with many health harms, including cancer.”

Authors of a new study

tration of the chemical is enough to cause “a significant increase of PFAS in blood serum,” states the study.

The study’s authors state that the situation represents a case of environmental injustice “that especially affects communities that depend on fishing for sustenance and for traditional cultural practices.”

The study cites data that points to food as the primary source of PFAS exposure in humans. The same likely holds true for wildlife, although the study did not explore those impacts. The study cites research

that suggests levels of PFAS currently found in most humans may suppress the immune system. “Additionally, exposure to PFAS, has been associated with many health harms, including an increased risk of cancer, high cholesterol, thyroid disease, and reproductive and developmental harms,” note the study’s authors.

The study also cites data that indicates that those who regularly catch and eat fish had levels of these related forever chemicals in their blood ranging from 9.5 to 26.9 times that of the general U.S. public.

“The U.S. EPA recognizes that eating locally caught freshwater fish is a significant source of exposure to PFOS, yet there are no current federal policies or regulations providing guidance on fish consumption specific to PFOS or other PFAS,” states the authors of the study, which was published last week in the journal *Environmental Research*. “A closer evaluation of PFAS as a source of dietary exposure from fish, specifically freshwater fish, is urgently needed. Towards this goal, the present study provides the first analysis to estimate the relationship between fish consumption and PFAS in serum in the U.S. population and to compare PFAS in freshwater fish with commercial seafood samples in the U.S.”

At least 44 different species



Above and right: Taking photos and releasing freshwater fish like this Lake Vermilion walleye may be the healthier choice based on a new analysis of contaminants found in fish tissue.

file photos

of fish were tested by the EPA, with channel catfish, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, yellow perch, and walleye being the most commonly tested species.

The study found that commercially-caught seafood contains far lower concentrations of PFOS and PFAS, but notes that the cost of those products may put them out of reach for lower-income segments of the population. “Self-caught fish are an important source of subsistence for many individuals who cannot afford to replace self-caught fish with purchased fish,” wrote the authors.

“At the same time, knowing that high levels of PFOS present



in freshwater fish could impact serum levels is concerning and should warrant the creation of national consumption advisories and an awareness program.”

Minnesota-based 3M, a major producer of these toxic chemicals, announced last month that it would phase out the production of PFAS from its manufacturing and products by the end of 2025.

BIRDS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Canada jays may be a victim of a warming climate

Another one of northern Minnesota’s iconic wildlife species appears to be in trouble, a likely victim of a changing climate. Area Christmas bird counts around the region have confirmed an increasingly apparent trend of declining populations of gray jays, recently renamed officially to Canada jays. It’s a trend that researchers in parts of Canada have confirmed as well.

Research at Ontario’s Algonquin Provincial Park strongly suggests that milder autumns, with frequent freeze and thaw cycles, are having a particular impact on the Canada jay’s ability to successfully cache food supplies.

While many bird species are known to cache food, the behavior is particularly important to the survival of Canada jays, which live primarily in cold boreal forests where food is scarce in winter.

The birds rely on cached food, which they gather and cache in the fall, to not only survive the winter but also as a primary food source for their nesting young. Canada jays nest much earlier than most other birds, often when there is still snow on the ground and when food sources that most other birds use to raise their young — such as insects — are not available.

In a 2021 study in the journal *Global Change Biology* (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/gcb.15445>), a team of researchers have correlated a long-term decline in the Canada jay population in Algonquin Provincial Park with more frequent freeze-thaw cycles in the fall, which accelerates the deterioration of the caches that Canada jays distribute throughout their territories during that time period.

As the *Timberjay* has previously reported, tem-



The Canada jay population, otherwise known as gray jays and timberjays, appears to have been declining the past few years here in the North Country.

photo by M. HelMBERGER

peratures in September and October in northeastern Minnesota have warmed more quickly in recent decades than other times of the year, and that may be a contributing factor to the apparent decline of Canada jays.

“Gray jays are a bellwether species for winter-related climate disruption because the food caches that they rely on to raise young in late winter

rot if temperatures are too high,” notes Steve Wilson, a longtime bird researcher who lives in Tower and Isabella. Wilson, who has coordinated the Isabella Christmas bird count for 40 years, stated in a recent post-count wrap-up that the Canada jay numbers in their Jan. 1 bird count were at a 40-year low. The Isabella count had previously set the North American record for the most Canada jays

on a count, with 154. This year, however, counters in Isabella found just 19.

Other area counts found similar low numbers of Canada jays. At the same time, the blue jay population appears to be on the rise, and that could be contributing to the decline in the number of Canada jays. Julie Grahn, who coordinates the Cook area Christmas bird count, said she’s noticed that blue jays

in her yard appear to follow Canada jays at times, and postulates that they may have learned to rob their caches.

Blue jays also cache food, but they do it differently than Canada jays and aren’t as dependent on their wintertime caches as their more northerly cousins. Canada jay caches are somewhat unique among birds. They’re essentially little packets, typically about the size of a pea, that Canada jays attach to branches all throughout their territories using their sticky saliva that dries almost like glue. These packets are likely more exposed to sun and warm temperatures than food stashed in a log or hollow tree, which means they’re more subject to deterioration if temperatures are too warm. That’s not traditionally been an issue for Canada jays, but times are changing.

Canada jay numbers have proven to be on the decline elsewhere in the southern parts of their range. “Our numbers suggest northern Minnesota may be seeing the same unfortunate phenomenon,” said Wilson.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather



Location	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.
Ely	32	25	0.00	
Emb.	33	28	0.00	
Cook	33	26	0.00	
Orr	34	27	0.00	
Tower	33	28	0.00	

Fishing reports

Ely area

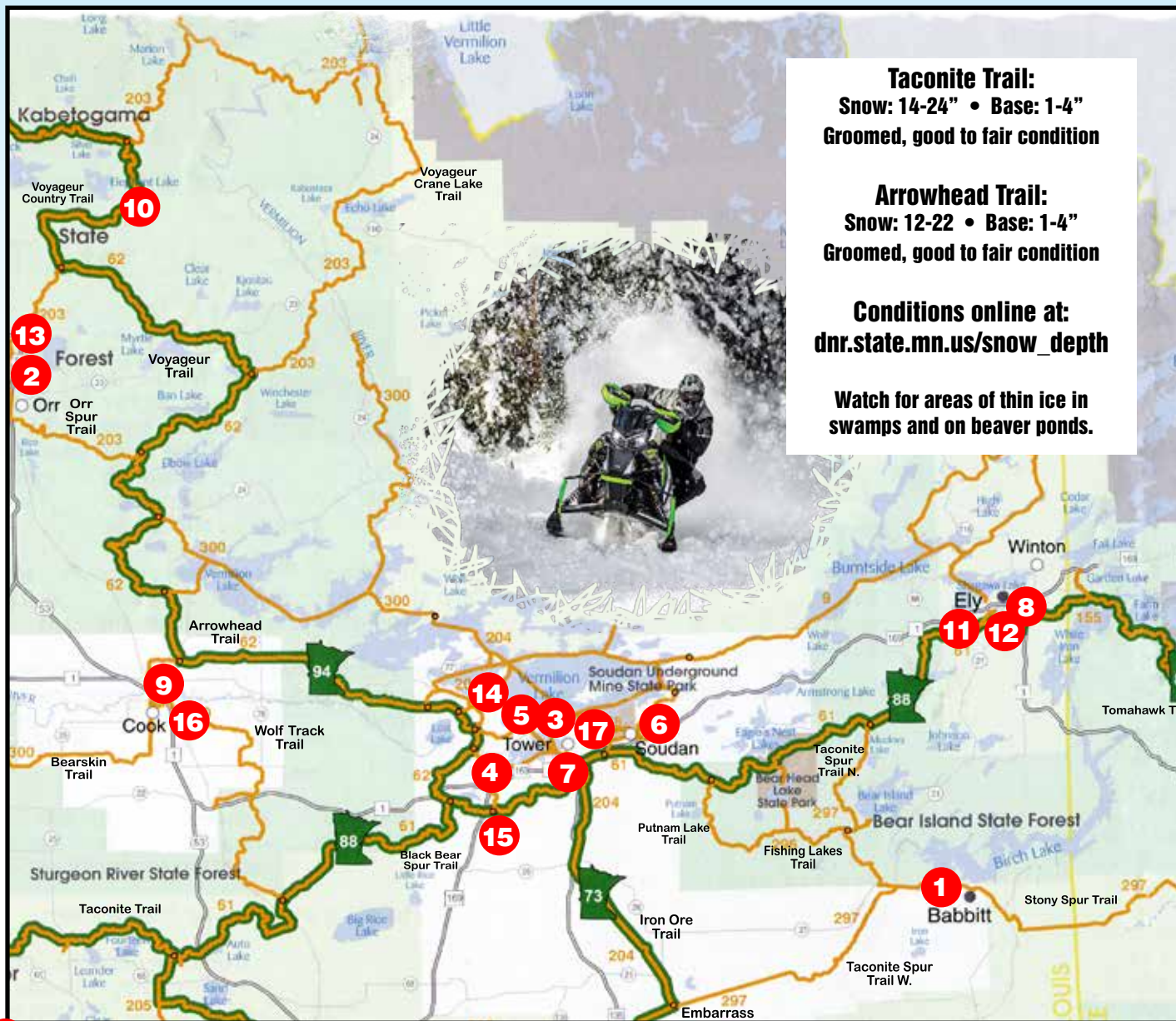
As unusually warm temps continue, unusually slow lake trout fishing also continues. While anglers continue to see good numbers of trout, they have been reporting that lakers have been very uninterested in their presentations. Anglers seeing the best numbers have been fishing close to very sharp dropoffs, in 40-60 feet of water. Small bucktails in

the 1/2oz or smaller and small spoons have been accounting for the majority of fish caught.

Rainbows continue to be active and continue to be caught on shallow flats. Dead minnows laid on the bottom have been very effective, as have small spoons and jigs tipped with wax worms.

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Watch for areas of thin ice in swamps and on beaver ponds.

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For more information or to submit a resume, contact Wade Backstrom, St. Louis County Attorney's Office, 100 N. 5th Avenue West, #501, Duluth, MN 55802; backstromw@stlouiscountymn.gov Resumes will be accepted if emailed or postmarked by January 27, 2023.

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Casual Radiologic Tech (Independent Contractor)

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**SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE
GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MONDAY JANUARY 30, 2023
6:00 PM
GREENWOOD TOWN HALL**

PURPOSE: Presentation of Erik Jankila, Hibbing MN, Fire Chief, on the topic of Emergency Medical Services and a discussion of the draft study the Greenwood EMS Committee is considering. A question and answer session will follow. All are welcome.

Dr. JoAnn Bassing, Interim Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 27, 2023

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Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 27 & Feb. 3, 2023

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

Date: January 12, 2023

by said mortgage and taxes, if any actually paid by the mortgagee, on the premises and the costs and disbursements allowed by law. The time allowed by law for redemption by said mortgagors, their personal representatives or assigns is **twelve months** from the date of sale, unless reduced to five (5) weeks under Minnesota Statutes, Section 582.032.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT:

Default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage:

DATE OF MORTGAGE: May 31, 2007
ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$103,500.00
MORTGAGOR(S): Christopher Lopuski, a single person
MORTGAGEE: American Bank of the North n/k/a Park State Bank
DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Recorded on June 8, 2007, as Document No. 01053424, in the office of the Recorder, St. Louis County, Minnesota.

ASSIGNMENT(S) OF MORTGAGE: None

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:

That part of the Northwest Quarter of Southeast Quarter, Section Twenty-one, Township Sixty-four, Range Twenty, described as follows: Beginning at the center of said Section 21; thence East along the East-West Quarter line 535 feet; thence South parallel with the North-South Quarter line of said Section, 535 feet; thence West parallel with the East-West Quarter line 535 feet to the North-South Quarter line of said Section 21; thence North to the point of beginning.

COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: St. Louis County, Minnesota

THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE AS OF THE DATE OF THIS NOTICE: \$62,293.11

THAT no action or proceeding has been instituted at law to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; that there has been compliance with all pre-foreclosure notice and acceleration requirements of said mortgage, and/or applicable statutes including the requisites of Minn. Stat. § 580.02;

PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property in St. Louis County will be sold by the Sheriff of St. Louis County at public auction as follows:

DATE AND TIME OF SALE: March 15, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.
PLACE OF SALE: St. Louis County Sheriff's Office, 100 North Fifth Avenue West, Room 103, Duluth, MN 55802,

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NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE FORECLOSURE DATA

Street Address, city and zip code of mortgaged premises: 11368 Nett Lake Road, Orr, Minnesota 55771

(2) Transaction agent (if applicable); residential mortgage servicer; and lender or broker: Park State Bank f/k/a American Bank of the North

(3) Tax parcel identification number(s): 425-0030-02515

(4) Transaction Agent's mortgage ID number (MERS number): Not applicable

(5) Name of mortgage originator: American Bank of the North n/k/a Park State Bank

Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 20, 27, Feb. 3, 10, 17, and 24, 2023

CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR
is **LONGFELLOW**

One letter stands for another. In this sample, **A** is used for the three L's, **X** for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

VJNDSOLUNGL YTJS TS CUD
VNDWO TV ZCUWDCNE LCJNVD
ZJD CUD JDZW KTWO TV
ETHGDCNNTS.
— BDLLD TADSL

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Super Crossword

Answers

O	N	E	S	E	C	H	O	L	Y	W	A	R	S	H	I	F	T	S	
R	A	K	I	S	H	A	N	I	M	A	T	O	T	O	R	E	R	O	
C	H	E	L	S	E	A	L	E	A	C	H	E	S	E	M	E	R	I	L
K	E	R	R	A	R	A	A	B	L	E	M	A	O						
E	L	V	I	S	V	E	I	L	S	B	A	S	I	L	B	A	I	L	S
S	A	S	E	I	S	M	S	R	E	N	E	A	R	L					
T	R	I	G	L	O	B	B	U	S	T	E	R	R	E	B	U	T	S	
A	G	G	I	E	A	W	A	I	T	E	D	D	U	V	E	T			
S	O	N	D	R	A	A	D	O	R	N	S	I	D	S	M	E	R	E	
C	E	A	R	N	M	D	S	A	T	R	E	E	A	S	P				
C	E	S	A	R	R	A	C	E	S	E	D	S	E	L	D	E	L	E	S
L	A	O	D	A	M	O	N	P	G	A	G	M	A	N					
A	S	I	N	Y	E	N	S	E	A	M	U	S	A	M	U	S	E	S	
N	Y	L	O	N	G	U	A	R	D	E	D	E	F	I	L	E			
G	A	S	T	O	N	T	A	N	G	O	S	A	N	A	S	N	I	L	
E	T	C	H	I	A	N	A	L	O	U	G	A	E	L					
T	E	S	S	A	S	E	A	T	S	S	I	L	A	S	S	A	I	L	S
A	R	I	S	T	E	N	A	O	L	I	T	A	R						
L	A	T	O	Y	A	K	R	I	S	T	E	N	R	E	K	N	I	T	S
U	S	E	N	E	T	L	I	M	E	T	E	A	R	E	E	S	E	S	
S	E	D	A	T	E	E	C	O	T	O	N	E	E	S	T	A	T	E	

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Choir voice
5 Right angle
8 Dallas team, to fans
12 Check
13 Sheep call
14 Out of the storm
15 Rub with an emery board, perhaps
17 Speck
18 Author Fleming
19 T-shirt fabric
21 Primitive
24 Spartan queen
25 Hamilton-Burr showdown
26 Criticize again and again
30 Nabokov novel
31 Two-tone cookies
32 Ms. Thurman
33 Road marker
35 Help a crook
36 Temporary calm
37 Steinway product
38 "With any luck"
41 Fragrant tree
42 2004 on a cornerstone
43 Color akin to turquoise

DOWN

1 "Bow-wow!"
2 Island garland
3 Up to
4 "Anna Christie" playwright
5 Black, in verse
6 Murphy's —

7 Guinevere's lover
8 Rum cocktail
9 Oodles
10 Presidential power
11 Penn or Astin
16 Calendar box
20 Praiseful pieces
21 Dutch cheese
22 German car name
23 Authentic
24 "The Sound of Music" teenager
26 Drags out
27 Hefty horn

28 Portent
29 Peacekeeping org.
31 Piece of work
34 Football team
35 Boeing rival
37 Chart format
38 Med. plan options
39 Skip
40 Tower city
41 Change
44 — pickle
45 Baton Rouge sch.
46 Exploit
47 Hosp. parts

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

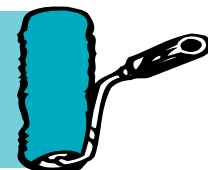
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CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: **M** equals **S**

JUC HOR AOVJRM, UVRM HZL
MQHLRM DVFFVZ YARFM YZ
ZVBRIM HZL FVBYRM?
AURC'OR QIVA LRBYDRM.

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CryptoQuote
answer
Friendships born on the field of athletic strife are the real gold of competition.
— Jesse Owens

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