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the TIMBERJAY



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989 VOL. 34, ISSUE 11 March 24, 2023 \$1⁵⁰

TASING INCIDENT

Park Service continues stonewalling on Ebel case

Regional officials appear to be blocking a response; Park Service faces massive FOIA backlog

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK- The *Timberjay's* eight-month long quest to uncover details behind an apparent assault by two park rangers on a local businessman on Lake Kabetogama continues to be blocked by federal officials. Based on the limited communication provided by the National Park Service, it appears

that much of the resistance to the newspaper's inquiries is coming from regional Park Service officials in Omaha, even though officials there deny they have issued a gag order on the incident.

The *Timberjay* has been seeking details of the assault against houseboat rental business owner and operator Justin Ebel, who was tased by park rangers on his own boat last

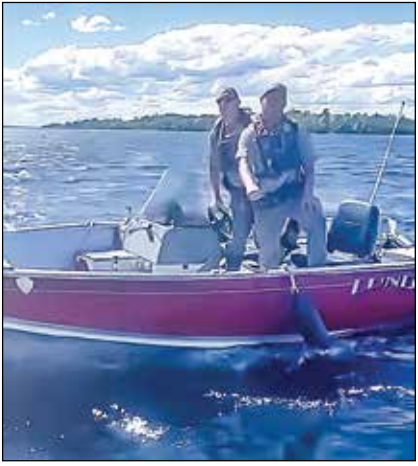
June while attempting to assist an elderly couple who had run their rented houseboat aground in high winds.

Despite numerous requests by the *Timberjay* for details on the incident, including the probable cause for the boarding of Mr. Ebel's boat and the use of force against him, the Park Service has provided no information other than the last names of the rangers involved

Right: Park rangers Steve Pederson and Ryan Houghton on Lake Kabetogama shortly before boarding a boat being operated by Justin Ebel. photo courtesy J. Ebel

and their dates of employment. Initially, the *Timberjay* submitted its questions to

See...VOYAGEURS pg. 9



NORTHERN LAKES ARTS

Beware the man-eating plant

NLAA'S production of Little Shop of Horrors runs March 23- April 1

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY— After two months of production and rehearsal, the curtain goes up Thursday on the Northern Lakes Arts Association's stage production

of *Little Shop of Horrors*. The musical, staged at the Fine Arts Theater at the Vermilion college campus, opens at 7 p.m. on March 23, with additional evening performances set for Friday and Saturday, along with a 2 p.m. Sunday matinee. The

show will repeat the following week, Thursday through Saturday, March 30-April 1, with 7 p.m. performances. Tickets are available online at northern-

See...HORRORS pg. 10

Above: Ian Lah, in his portrayal of Seymour Krelborn, reacts as he discovers that the carnivorous plant, Audrey II, is devouring a human victim. photo by C. Clark

CITY OF ELY First read for city's cannabinoid ordinance

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The Ely City Council approved the first reading of an edible cannabinoid ordinance at its March 21 meeting. The proposed ordinance contained a surprise: it included a provision for the "on-sale" purchase of edible cannabinoid products at a limited number of businesses such as restaurants.

While the council gave the new ordinance its first reading, it won't be the last, and changes may still be in store. "We can change this between readings," Mayor Heidi Omerza reminded the council after the vote to approve the first reading, "and we can change it when we discover what the public says about it."

No matter what is currently in the ordinance, there are several opportunities to advocate for change in what was proposed at the March 21 meeting. The public hearing for the cannabinoid ordinance is scheduled for 5 p.m. on April 4.

On-sale included

Ely's ad hoc committee to study the edible cannabinoid issue surprised everyone when their proposed ordinance included licenses for both "on-sale" and "off-sale" purchases. On-sale refers to

See...CANNABINOID pg. 9

TOWER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Major charter school renovation plan approved

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER— The Tower Economic Development Authority (TEDA) has approved the first phase of a renovation plan designed to significantly reduce energy usage and improve the learning environment at the Vermilion Country School. The grades 7-12 charter school, located in Tower, is now in its tenth year of operation and has seen a significant

enrollment jump in the past year.

The school's state-approved authorizer recently approved renewing the school's charter for another five years, expressing considerable satisfaction with the school's performance. Students at the school have shown steady growth in academic achievement, according to standardized testing.

"I'm thrilled that the TEDA Board unanimously approved the upcoming Vermilion Country

Right: Students working under the guidance of VCS teacher Karin Schmidt this week. The school environment will be changed for the better following planned renovations set to take place over the summer.

School renovation project," said TEDA President Joe Morin. "The improvements will greatly enhance the school's learning and working

See...RENOVATION pg. 10



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Community notices

Author Douglas Wood to speak to Mesabi Unitarian Universalist Church, March 26

VIRGINIA- “Earth Songs and Stories” will be the topic of Douglas Wood on March 26 at Mesabi Unitarian Universalist Church. Join a morning of sharing and celebrating the beauty of the Earth and our spiritual connection to it. Douglas Wood is the author of *Old Turtle* and many other books, a songwriter, Minnesota wilderness guide, and teacher.

The service is at 10:30 a.m. at 230 7th Street S, Virginia; the building is handicap accessible. All ages are welcome. For questions visit <http://www.mesabiuu.info/>.

The North St. Louis County SWCD tree and native plant sale on now through May

REGIONAL - The North St. Louis SWCD tree and native plant sale will continue in 2023. If you would like to order trees, shrubs, native plants, or seed mixes from the North St. Louis SWCD, be sure to check out the website at www.nslswcd.org. It's recommended to order promptly as there is limited availability.

Each year from January through early May, the SWCD sells native trees, shrubs, plant kits and seed packs to local landowners. These plants are sourced from greenhouses and nurseries including Schumacher's Nursery, DNR Badoura Nursery, and PRT (Pacific Regeneration Technologies Inc.). Trees are to be picked up right before fishing opener at the Eveleth DNR office. Orders can be placed on the website at www.nslswcd.org.

The 2022 Sale was record-setting with more than 15,000 trees and shrubs sold, and 93 native plant kits and seed packs sold. The top sellers in 2022 were Red pine and Red oak. The proceeds support the conservation efforts in forestry management, aquatic invasive species control, community education/outreach, watershed protection, and many more projects.

Trees are generally sold in bundles of 20-25 seedlings or transplants. Both conifers and deciduous are available. Native plant kits contain 36 plants designed to grow well together. Seed mixes for septic mounds or buckthorn replacement are also offered.

The North St. Louis SWCD is thankful for each customer, the Eveleth DNR staff and their cooler, and for the trees that will keep Minnesota beautiful for future generations. If you have questions on what kind of trees, shrubs, plants or seed would best suit your property, visit the website to read descriptions or contact District Forester Natalya Walker at 218-288-6146.

USDA Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants Webinar on April 13

REGIONAL- Keeping up with maintenance and critical home repairs can be difficult, but it is key to loving and staying in your home. The Arrowhead Area on Agency is Partnering with USDA Rural Development to sponsor a webinar on USDA Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants on Thursday, April 13 from 10 - 11:00 a.m.

USDA Representatives will discuss the key elements of the program and how it can assist homeowners in your community. The program provides federal dollars to low-income homeowners to repair, improve or modernize their home or provide grants to low-income older adult homeowners to remove health and safety hazards.

For more information or to register for the webinar, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/single-family-housing-repair-loans-and-grants-tickets-577516245637 or contact Gina at gmarsalla@ardc.org or (218) 722-5545.

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SPEAKING OUT

Awareness...then change

AAUW and EMPOWER sponsoring program on Tuesday, March 28 at noon

ELY - The American Association of University Women (AAUW)-Ely Branch, in collaboration with Ely EMPOWER invites community members to a presentation Tuesday, March 28, from noon to 1 p.m. at The Grand Ely Lodge to learn about treaty promises and Indigenous healthcare.

The presentation by Dr. Linda Bergum will focus on a review of legal agreements made between Indigenous people and the United States government. She will discuss the current implementation of those promises, particularly as they relate to Indigenous healthcare.

Bergum said, “The United States has not upheld its end of the bargain.” Additionally, she said, there is a disparity between other U.S. funded health care and the Indian Health Service. She will discuss the real-world impact of that disparity and some actions that should be taken to improve Indigenous healthcare outcomes.

Dr. Bergum received her doctorate from the University of Minnesota Medical School. After five years as a clinical physician, she joined the University of Minnesota



Image by Shaun Chosa

faculty as an assistant professor in family medicine and community health.

Her clinical practice has always been focused on rural and/or underserved communities. She has worked in multi-ethnic inner-city clinics in Minneapolis and St. Paul, with Alaska Native populations in remote villages north of the Arctic Circle, with the Mandingo, Momo and Gio peoples in war zones in Af-

rica (leading to twice being evacuated) and in Maori communities in New Zealand. Her research interests include “Agent Orange Exposure and Type 2 Diabetes in Vietnam War Veterans” with both publications and international presentations on that topic.

Bergum’s presentation is part of a project launched by the AAUW– Ely Branch in 2021 called Awareness...Then Change. The initiative is designed to increase understanding, honor the heritage of the area, and set the stage for supporting policy and social action to reduce risks and support the resilience of Indigenous woman and children.

Local artist Shaun Chosa created the accompanying image, “Survivor II,” representing the silencing of Indigenous voices and has generously allowed the AAUW–Ely Branch to use his art to create awareness for the initiative.

ELY CHAMBER

Chamber's Celebrate Ely dinner set for April 13

ELY- Last year Celebrate Ely featured a Survivor theme; this year, the Ely Chamber of Commerce is cranking it up a notch higher with Ely-stock. Pull out those bell-bottom jeans, tie-die shirts, mini-skirts, and Gogo boots. Guests will be transported back in time to the groovy 1960s. The Grand Ely Lodge is the host site for the Thursday, April 13 networking event. The evening starts with a 4:30 p.m. social hour featuring a cash bar, hula hoops, twister, and a retro photo booth. Come, visit, and get rocking to some of the 1960s greatest hits.

The dinner buffet will feature roast beef bourbon, butterfly shrimp, and wild mushroom ravioli with all the fixings, plus a delicious dessert. The buffet starts at 5:45 p.m. There will be door prizes and our annual awards, including a Jackpine Bob Cary Spirit, a Good Citizen Volunteer, an Excellence in Customer

Service, and two Good Neighbor Business awards.

The evening is topped off with a special keynote speaker, Kristen Brown, named a top 20 trailblazer by Meetings Today magazine. She has provided leadership training to organizations such as General Mills, Cargill, Minnesota Vikings, EcoLab, and Boston Scientific – to name a few. Synching into our Ely-stock theme, Kristen is sharing a message on energy and positivity for self, family, friends, and work. And, of course, the evening wouldn’t be complete without Energy Bingo.

Tickets are \$30 per person. Businesses and organizations can purchase tables of 8 or 10 to share the evening with employees or clients. To reserve tickets, contact the Ely Chamber of Commerce office at 218-365-6123 or director@ely.org. Don’t miss the fun.



BUSINESS LENDING

Non-Traditional Lenders Forum/Lunch in Ely on April 5

ELY- A group of area organizations is holding a forum to let area business owners learn about opportunities from

non-traditional lenders and the opportunities available for financing projects or businesses. Bankers, lenders, for-profit business owners, and entrepreneurs are encouraged to attend. The program will be held on Wednesday, April 5 from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. in Ely, at the Boathouse Brewpub in Ely.

Presenters include:

ARDC, APEX, Innovate 218, Northspan Group, Inc., Entrepreneur Fund, Great River Energy, Northland Foundation, Northland Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Minnesota Business Finance Corporation (MBFC), and the Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation (IRRR).

The program is free

and lunch is provided. The program starts at 11:30 a.m. but attendees can arrive early to get some food. Email dietary restrictions to Northspan’s Operations Specialist, Caitlin Vander Wal at cvanderwal@northspan.org.

To register, visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NTLFELY>.

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BORDER LAKES

Excessive rains main cause of last year’s flooding

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

Record inflows in 2022 to Rainy River basin fed by April/May storms and snowmelt

REGIONAL-Two months of above average rainfall led to the worst flooding in the Rainy River Basin in history last year, and lake level management prior to the onset of the massive inflow of water had little effect on the situation.

Those are the conclusions reached in a Draft 2022 Post Flood Report issued March 10 by the Water Levels Committee (WLC) of the International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Board, the body responsible for making recommendations to the basin’s dam operators for management of Rainy and Namakan Lake levels. The report presents several key pieces of information used by the committee for its decision to follow the normal lake level rule curve, including meteorological data documenting the unprecedented amount of precipitation, the actions taken by dam operators in response to the flooding, and computer simulations of numerous lake level management alternatives that could have been employed. The report also seeks to answer questions frequently asked by the public.

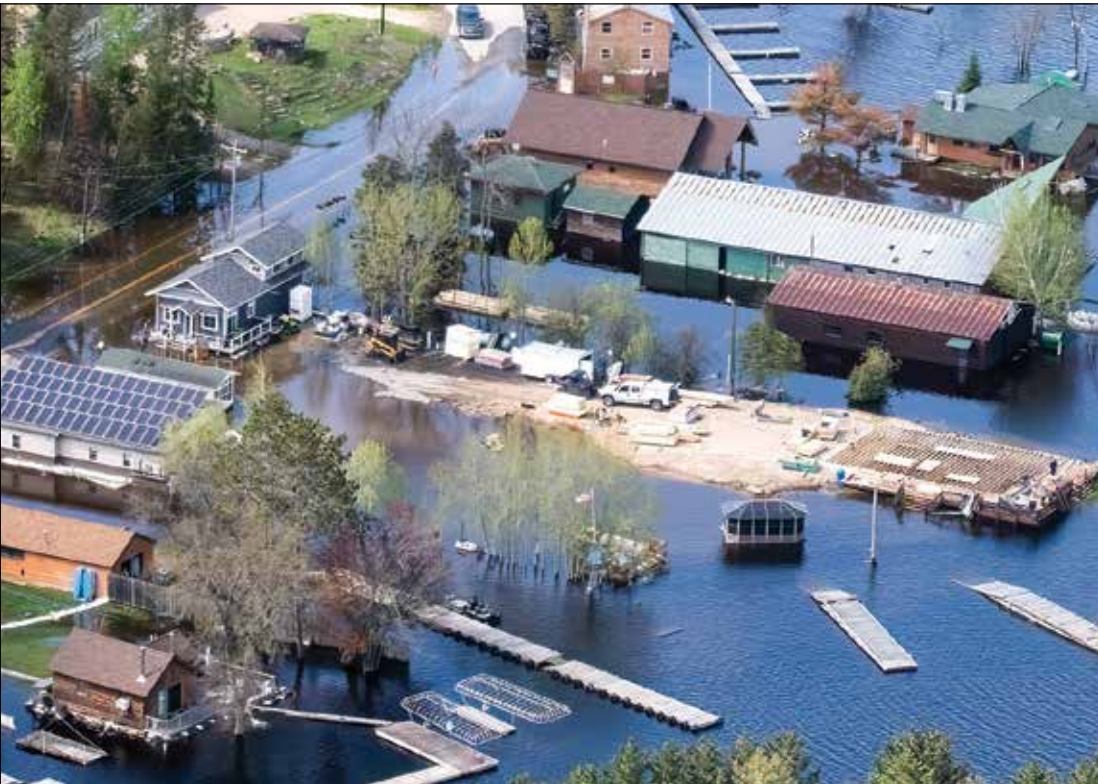
Rainy River basin property owners who experienced significant damage to shoreline properties are all too aware of the historic level of the floods. On June 14, Rainy Lake hit the

highest level ever recorded at 1,113.28 feet, while Namakan’s level on May 31 of 1,122.69 feet was the third-highest on record.

Many blamed the WLC for not managing lake levels for high flood risk and not moving to full-open status of dam flood-gates quickly enough, allegedly leaving the lakes unable to accommodate the massive inflows from snowmelt and rain. The WLC acknowledged this expression of public sentiment in its report.

But using sophisticated computer models of the basin and its dams, the WLC determined that the massive inflows of snowmelt and precipitation in 2022 would have overwhelmed any alternative management strategy they would have employed to try to minimize the flooding. If the WLC had followed a more aggressive scenario of holding Namakan to the bottom 25 percent of the 2018 rule curve and implemented the high flood risk rule curve for Rainy Lake, the peak level on Namakan would have been only one centimeter lower, while the peak on Rainy would have been four centimeters lower. Namakan would have receded below the All-Gates Open Level one day sooner than it did, and Rainy two days sooner.

For comparison, the WLC also ran alternative modeling scenarios for the 2014 and 1950



Flooding caused damage at many area resorts last spring. file photo

floods. For all three floods, the WLC concluded that, “The results indicate that regardless of which rule curve was used, or if no dams existed at all, the level of each lake rises above the All-Gates Open level during these flood events. Furthermore, using one set of rule curves over another has very little influence on the peak level attained by each lake.”

“Flooding has always occurred in the Rainy River watershed and will continue to do so in the future,” the report continued. “No rule curve changes will prevent high water levels in the face of extreme precipitation in the future.”

Initial conditions

Each year in March the WLC is tasked with determin-

ing the rule curve that will be used to guide the management of lake levels headed into the spring. The committee considers current conditions such as the amount of snowpack and its water-equivalent value, base flows, temperatures and their effect on ground frost depth, and short

See **FLOODING...**pg. 5

Klobuchar receives Humanitarian of the Year Award for her work to address Alzheimer’s

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) received the 2023 Alzheimer’s Impact Movement (AIM) Humanitarian of the Year Award for her work to address Alzheimer’s disease from the Alzheimer’s Association and AIM. The Humanitarian Award is given each year to public officials who have made significant contributions to help create a world without Alzheimer’s. Currently, over 6 million Americans live with Alzheimer’s, including almost 100,000 Minnesotans.

Klobuchar is a longtime leader on combating Alzheimer’s disease, and a member of the bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer’s Disease.

Last year, Klobuchar (D-

MN) and Senator Grassley’s (R-IA) bipartisan *Kevin and Avonete’s Law* to help locate missing loved ones with Alzheimer’s disease, autism, and other related conditions was reauthorized.

In May 2021, Klobuchar and Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) introduced the bipartisan Alzheimer’s Caregiver Support Act to provide grants to expand training and support services that improve caregiver health and delay long-term care facility admissions by helping individuals with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias continue living in their homes.

“As a long-time advocate for Alzheimer’s patients and their families and caregivers, I am honored to receive the 2023 Humanitarian of the Year

Award. Alzheimer’s is personal to me, like it is for so many families. My dad was diagnosed with late-onset Alzheimer’s and we lost him in 2021, but he was able to be surrounded by his loved ones in the final chapter of his life in memory care,” said Klobuchar. “His zest for life and his resilience were a source of strength for me. They gave me an example of how to overcome obstacles, and also deepened my commitment to pushing for better treatments for Alzheimer’s, more support for caretakers, and of course, to finding a cure. I will continue fighting for the millions of Americans who are navigating this disease and their loved ones.”

“The Alzheimer’s Association and the Alzheimer’s Impact

Movement (AIM) are proud to honor Sen. Klobuchar’s significant leadership in the fight to end Alzheimer’s and all other dementia by recognizing her with the 2023 AIM Humanitarian Award,” said Robert Egge, Alzheimer’s Impact Movement Executive Director and Alzheimer’s Association Chief Public Policy Officer. “Sen. Klobuchar has been a longstanding Alzheimer’s champion, supporting and introducing critical legislation, including the bipartisan Alzheimer’s Caregiver Support Act. On behalf of those impacted by dementia in Minnesota and throughout the nation, thank you for your steadfast commitment to the Alzheimer’s community.”

Klobuchar has worked with

colleagues on both sides of the aisle to secure significant funding increases for Alzheimer’s and related dementias research. Between 2015 and 2022, Alzheimer’s disease research funding has more than quintupled, helping support efforts to find effective treatments and eventually a cure that will save countless lives.

Alzheimer’s is one of the top 10 leading causes of death in the U.S. In 2022, there were more than 11 million Americans providing unpaid care for people living with Alzheimer’s and other dementias, representing over 16 billion hours of care.

The number of Americans living with Alzheimer’s disease is projected to grow to nearly 14 million people by 2050.

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OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

Editorial

Fighting the last war

The Federal Reserve lacks the ability to fight inflationary pressures outside their control

It’s often said that generals are always ready to fight the last war, and it seems the same applies to the U.S. Federal Reserve when it comes to its ongoing battle with inflation. Central bankers are good students of history, but that doesn’t always provide them with a crystal ball, as their latest efforts to reduce inflation have demonstrated.

Interest rates are a blunt, and occasionally self-defeating, approach to taming inflationary pressures, and that’s particularly true when many of the factors fueling inflation are outside the control of such economic forces, or don’t apply given some of the structural changes that have occurred in the U.S. and global economy.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been extraordinary. The world as we understood it before COVID is gone and is not coming back. Major global events invariably reshape the world in ways that are both profound and unpredictable. COVID is just the latest such event.

COVID contributed to inflation in many ways. It prompted governments to provide unprecedented levels of financial stimulus to ward off some of the worst economic effects of the pandemic. Life changed in a veritable instant for billions of people around the world as lives turned inward for months and many lost jobs or a substantial portion of their incomes. Government stimulus was critical, and it kept the global economy from falling off a financial cliff, but it ran headlong into other COVID-related developments, like supply shortages.

Among its many impacts, COVID changed our buying habits. We stopped going out and instead put money into home improvements at a time when many of the factories that produced the products that went into construction materials and home furnishings were shuttered, operating with far fewer workers, or couldn’t get basic materials they needed for production. The inevitable shortages sent the price of construction materials skyrocketing.

This was one side of inflation that the Federal Reserve could actually address. Higher interest rates have slowed new home buying and construction and the price of building materials have dropped accordingly. Housing prices have dropped as well, which may count as a win on the inflation front, but that doesn’t mean houses are more affordable for anyone who has to rely on mortgage financing. And the construction of fewer new houses won’t help address

the problem of affordability in the longer term, either.

Interest rates may be a weapon in the fight against inflation, but it’s clearly a double-edged sword. That’s particularly true in the aftermath of COVID, since supply shortages resulting from the pandemic fueled higher prices. In a supply and demand system, expanding supply is one way to bring down prices for goods, but that’s increasingly prohibitive given high interest rates. The cost of a factory expansion has gone up considerably due to the Fed’s actions over the past 12 months.

What’s more, a number of factors behind the rising cost of food in the past couple years really can’t be addressed by adjustments in interest rates. The price of eggs and poultry have jumped because of the worst outbreak of avian flu on record, which has devastated many poultry and egg producers and reduced supply.

War in Ukraine, long one of the world’s bread baskets, has pushed the price of many grain-dependent products higher. Fertilizer costs have jumped sharply as well, since Russia was a major supplier and is now under sanctions. Sanctions against Russian oil have kept gas prices higher as well.

At the same time, the impacts of climate change are making themselves felt in terms of inflation. California’s Central Valley, which has long grown the bulk of U.S. produce, has been subjected to everything from extreme drought to unprecedented flooding in the past two years. That means that head of lettuce or salad mix is going to cost you more. And there’s nothing interest rate adjustments can do about that. And don’t expect that situation to get better in our lifetimes. Climate change is going to raise the cost of many things and we’re only beginning to experience the implications.

The bottom line is that we need more creative and multi-faceted solutions to the challenges posed by inflation. There’s a role for government policymakers here as well, not just central bankers, who often don’t consider some of the impacts of their decisions on average people since they don’t regularly face voters.

Unfortunately, effective action out of Washington would take bipartisan agreement, something that seems almost impossible right now, given those currently in charge in the House. Which is why we’ll probably be dependent on the blunt tool of interest rates in the fight against inflation for the foreseeable future.



Letters from Readers

Being woke beats the alternative

At this time, we hear too many politicians make accusations of others being “woke” as if it is something dark and negative. It is not.

According to the dictionary, “woke” means being aware of and actively attentive to important societal facts and issues. It means being aware of systemic and oppressive actions and of bigotry. It means exhibiting empathy and recognizing prejudices that pervade our society. It means being well-informed. It means being a well-educated, responsible person.

However, in the context used in current political rants, there clearly is no “woke.” None. It is a nonsense word concocted in an attempt to manipulate voters, to score political points. Those who spew the word have absolutely no clue as to how to even define it.

It appears that the villains in these accusations of “wokeness” are educated persons. Those who read widely and understand the detailed and accurate history of our nation. Or those who understand the underpinnings of racism, bigotry and prejudice that continue today, or those who truly believe in the promise of liberty and justice for ALL.

Waves of protesters show up at school board meetings and other events accusing our schools of teaching Critical Race Theory, another bogus term. Critical Race Theory is a construct taught in graduate programs in law school. It is a system to assess the impact of racism in the legal system. It is not taught in our elementary or secondary schools. Reading books about people of color or by authors of color, reading books about the history of people of color, about Martin Luther King, Emmett Till, Ruby Bridges or the Japanese-American Internment camps, or about the Trail of Tears and history of Native Americans is not Critical Race

Theory.

Reading books about people “not like us” teaches students to understand those not like them. Nothing develops empathy and understanding as effectively as a good book.

In these past five years, we have watched advocacy groups storm school board meetings, demanding censorship of books not aligned with their beliefs or protesting the teaching of the truth of the history of our nation. Nothing is more undemocratic than that.

What is happening in Florida at this time simply should not be happening in a free, democratic nation. Books are being removed from shelves. Teachers are threatened that they will be fired or even jailed for using any books that have not been approved by a clueless governor whose agenda is alarmingly similar to Hitler’s actions in Germany not that long ago.

Students must have a right to access a wide range of stories and perspectives, especially those students who have been historically marginalized. They must have access to books that speak for them and tell their stories.

I remember developing a unit on the Japanese-American Internment camps for my classes in a teacher education program. The students were shocked and appalled as they had never even heard of the Japanese Internment camps in their high school history classes. The same was true for understanding the history of racism for blacks and Native Americans. None of these stories in the history of our nation were included in their history textbooks.

The increasingly punitive and pervasive surveillance in classrooms will have a chilling effect on teaching and learning. Schools must remain open to nurturing curiosity, discovery and the freedom to read.

There is no “wokeness” but there is war on education as some want to limit access to accuracy, knowledge, critical

thinking, and truth.

The First Amendment rights of teachers and students are violated when access to information and ideas is viewed as a criminal act. The goals and objectives of our education system is to advance student learning and to develop a population of well educated, well informed, knowledgeable students. In other words, the goal of education should be to develop a population of truly “woke” people. That is the foundation of a strong democracy.

Ellie Larmouth
Tower

The most dangerous cities

In a recent editorial, the editor invites those who support counties becoming “sanctuaries” against enforcement of gun laws to move to a country with looser or unenforced gun laws, but then suggests such countries aren’t to be found. Apparently, he’s forgotten about Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, El Salvador and other countries unburdened by the inconvenience of enforced gun laws – and considered among the most dangerous countries in the world. Bon voyage!

Steve Wilson
Isabella MN

We welcome your letters

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

We ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

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

COLUMNIST

Reveling in the annual madness of March

The annual American ritual of March Madness, the popular name for the NCAA Division I men’s basketball tournament, is in full swing, and I am once again caught up in the fray.

As a child of Kansas and the son of a proud University of Kansas alum, it was preordained that March Madness blood would course through my veins. I grew up idolizing Kansas Jayhawk basketball and its



DAVID
COLBURN

rich tradition. The inventor of the game, Dr. James Naismith, was the KU’s first basketball coach (and the only one with a losing record), and in the 125 years since the Jayhawks first put a team on the court, KU has six national championships, a current record 32 consecutive appearances in the NCAA tourney, the most winning seasons

in NCAA history, has the most wins all-time of any Division I schools, and is responsible through its former players Dean Smith and Adolph Rupp for the basketball dynasties at North Carolina and Kentucky (currently coached by former KU assistant coach John Calipari).

As a student there from 1976 to 1985 I was fully immersed in Crimson and Blue hoops mania. It had been decades since the Jayhawks’ last national championship in 1952, but that had little effect on the mayhem inside Allen Fieldhouse, dubbed by ESPN in 2017

as the loudest college basketball arena in the country. Students didn’t have assigned seats, so we’d go early to get in line for games and I’d rush with my frat brothers to claim our preferred seats in the southwest corner of the upper level, a spot with equally good views of the court and the KU cheerleaders performing beside it. I watched the Hawks claim six Big 8 conference championships and saw head coach Ted Owens get fired after two losing seasons, and remember all of the hype when Larry Brown was brought in from the New Jersey Nets pro

team to right the ship, which he did, winning the national championship with Danny Manning. Brown represents my closest brush with KU hoops royalty. Through the invitation of a team manager, I was present the night the team took over a local pub for an evening and Brown was manning the grill in the kitchen. I’ll never ever forget what he said to me – “Do you want cheese with that?” as he passed a burger through the window to me. Of course I responded “Yes, sir! Thank you!” I’m sure he

Letters from Readers

The Stalin Wannabe

What more can be said of Vladimir Putin, the petty dictator with the “little man” complex? After Russia’s brief dabbling in democracy after the fall of the Soviet Union, Putin, the sly former KGB bureaucrat, managed to consolidate power in Russia by bringing under his thumb the three main power structures there: 1) the Russian military, 2) the wealthy oligarchs, and 3) the Russian mafia. And in the process, according to many sources, made himself into one of the world’s wealthiest men. But that wasn’t enough. He has repeatedly stated his belief that the breakup of the Soviet Union was one of the worst catastrophes of the 20th century. Rectifying this has become his unstat-

ed mission in life, leading to repeated brutalities: using chemical weapons to put down rebellion in Chechnya, absorbing by brute force the Ukrainian province of Crimea, and then his direct invasion of Ukraine itself. As the war on the ground has gone from bad-to-worse for Russian forces, he has increasingly resorted to terror tactics against civilian targets, committing universally recognized war crimes on a daily basis. As if there had been any doubt, the mask has been removed, and the whole world is now seeing, firsthand, the true nature of this brutal, cowardly little man (and to think this is the man Donald Trump basically groveled in front of at Helsinki in 2018).

The signs have always been there. Putin has always wanted the world to see him as a

strong leader, especially one to be feared. Why else would he make a point of being seen and filmed doing macho things: playing hockey, riding horseback bare-chested (how pathetic!). He’s always struck me as a cowardly little man desperate to appear manly.

I did some research and, as I suspected, Putin was never in combat, was never even in the military. Everyone knows he was KGB, the implication being that he was a spy, doing dangerous, undercover things, when, in fact, he was nothing more than a rear echelon bureaucrat, a sly one to be sure, but a bureaucrat, nonetheless.

Still, knowing that such a man is in possession of the world’s second largest nuclear arsenal is frightening. A commentator with Foreign Service connections to Russia said

that if Putin were so foolish as to try to use any of that arsenal, his generals would kill him. As reassuring as that sounds, I have my doubts. As badly as his war has gone so far, I suspect his generals would’ve killed him already if they could’ve pulled it off. A cowardly paranoid like Putin must have unparalleled security around him.

With the implicit threat of nuclear war hanging over all of this, it brings to mind the Cuban Missile Crisis, but with one huge difference: in 1962, virtually every American understood who the enemy was. Now, 60 years later, partly because of Trump’s shameless deference to Putin, partly because of Putin-admiring disgraces like Tucker Carlson on Fox News, so many on the far-right have deluded themselves into

thinking that Putin is actually a good guy, instead of the evil monster he really is, and that Ukrainian president Zelensky is somehow the evil one (?). Even worse, so many of Trump’s diehard supporters in Congress, the crazies, apparently feel the same way, or at least are saying so publicly. We live in truly scary times.

Lynn Scott Soudan

Are there least two EPAs?

After reading the latest issue of the *Timberjay*, I have come to a new understanding. There are apparently at least two EPAs.

One, the water quality group, is composed of brilliant scientists and incisive managers. They never err, and any proclamation they make is gos-

pel.

The other EPA, the air quality group, is made up of second-rate scientists and bumbling bureaucrats, who couldn’t find you-know-what with both hands.

Of course, an alternative view is that each is staffed by mere humans, subject to all the shortcomings of that species.

What I, a professional skeptic is trying to say is that you should take everything with a grain of salt, including promulgations from the EPA, whether dealing with sulfate levels in water or wood stove emissions.

Remember, it’s a BS world out there.

Dave Grigal Roseville

FLOODING...Continued from page 3

and long-range weather forecasts and compares that information against similar historical data from previous years to make its choice. Once the choice is made on March 10, the WLC continues to monitor conditions in the basin and can modify its decision and practices as spring approaches.

Drought conditions in 2020 and 2021 created abnormally dry conditions in Canada and moderate to severe drought in the U.S. portions of the watershed, with base flow conditions in the low to normal range in early March of last year. The winter had seen above average snowfall, with snow depths in the 80 to 95 percentile range. The snow water equivalent was measured to range from four to 5.9 inches. A La Niña weather pattern, a pattern correlated with high water years since 1970, was forecasted to continue through May. The long-term weather forecast called for a 40 percent chance of above normal temperatures and equal chances of low, normal, or above normal precipitation.

The Rainy Lake Property Owners Association wrote a letter to the WLC urging caution in its operations, based on multiple factors. The extended

forecast included night temperatures well below freezing, which could push ice-out for the lakes into mid-May, creating the possibility of the snow melt, and spring rains to enter the basin at the same time. The association also cited area forestry experts who indicated higher precipitation rates typically follow drought years. The letter also noted that rain and heavy wet snow in November created six inches of water that was retained in the bush and would enter the watershed in the spring.

On March 10, the WLC determined that “current and forecasted conditions did not support the use of the high flood risk rule curve at this time,” according to the report. The middle range of the normal rule curve would be targeted to balance the needs of the lakes’ fisheries. The WLC met again on March 31 to review basin conditions and decided to inform dam operators Boise Cascade and H2O Power to continue targeting the middle of the rule curve.

Then came more precipitation.

Snow continued to fall across the basin through mid-April, adding to the snowpack. As temperatures plummeted

in early April, a “Colorado Low” dropped an additional 12 to 28 inches of snow across the watershed, with the highest amounts accumulating over the Namakan sub-basin, according to the report.

Torrential rains the weekend of April 22-23 were the triggering event for the flooding, causing a rain-on-snow event that resulted in an almost instant depletion of the snowpack, sending tributary flows soaring to peak levels. The flows continued to be fed by more rain through May, with a combined precipitation total for April and May of 10.2 inches, twice as much as average and including the largest single-day precipitation event of the year at the end of May. The Vermilion River set a new peak flow record and many other tributaries ranked second or third for all-time high flows. The long duration of these high flows created the highest average inflows into Namakan and Rainy Lakes on record for April and May, and the inflows April through July were the second highest, eclipsed by only 1950. These inflows were the driving force behind the flooding, the report concluded.

In response, all logs from the sluices of the Namakan dams were pulled on April 26, and the 15 gates of the International Falls/Fort Frances Dam were progressively opened according to the outflow from Rainy Lake so that all gates were open by May 5. As the outflow from Rainy Lake is constrained by the natural opening that forms the head of the Rainy River, going to an All-Gates-Open position any earlier would not have let more water pass through the dam and lower the lake level.

When Namakan Lake fell below its prescribed All-Gates-Open level on June 30, the Rainy Lake Property Owners Association sent a request to WLC to hold Namakan at a steady level to speed the decline of Rainy Lake. Following a reported discussion between the WLC and Namakan Lake residents, the WLC received a temporary permission to target the upper level of the 1970 rule curve, which remains flat, as opposed to following the 2018 rule curve, which drops gradually. The shift resulted in Namakan Lake being approximately five to 15 centimeters higher than it otherwise would have been, the report says.

Rainy Lake fell below its All-Gates-Open level on July 26, and dam outflows were set to target the middle 50 percent of their rule curve bands. The lakes returned to their standard rule curve levels on Aug. 3.

The report also details the numerous activities the WLC conducted to provide ongoing flood information to the public and its ongoing communications with agencies involved in the flood response. The WLC also held two public listening sessions in early August to hear feedback and answer questions.

Feedback from the community touched on numerous issues. Some expressed concern about the accuracy of snow data across the basin, given that information presented did not reflect what individuals observed locally, especially in remote areas. Several comments related

to concerns about the timing of gate openings for Rainy Lake. The report noted that the term “high flood risk rule curve” is misleading, as the curve is not designed to prevent flooding entirely but only to provide modest mitigation under minor to moderate flood risk scenarios. Concern was also expressed about the possible impact of proposed changes to the Canadian Northern railway bridge at the Rainy Lake outlet and how it could affect outflow, particularly during floods. There were also calls to help communities increase shoreline resiliency for future floods.

A public comment period on the Draft 2022 Post Flood Report is open through April 3. A PDF copy of the report and instructions on how to submit comments to the WLC are available at <https://tinyurl.com/3nrrv68e>.

MARCH...Continued from page 4

must remember the moment as well as I do – it was priceless.

Another equally memorable moment came a few years earlier when I was playing pick-up basketball games at the university’s student gymnasium. Folks began to buzz when Lynette Woodward, star of the women’s team and still the all-time collegiate scoring leader, walked in. My team won our game, and Woodward’s was up next. We turned the ball over and Woodard headed down court on a fast break, with me being the only one between her and the goal. I set up in perfect position to draw a charge, and to this day I have no earthly idea how she shifted in mid-air and glided around me for the easy score. She was incredible.

That college hoops fervor ingrained in my soul doesn’t appear to be part of the culture here in Minnesota, and I must admit that I miss it a bit. It’s understandable, as there’s no outstanding record of success by the Minnesota Gophers to fuel much excitement. Not surprisingly, there’s no NCAA office

pool at the Timberjay, and I was the only one there looking forward to the release of the tournament brackets.

But I’ll admit the intensity of my interest has somewhat waned as money and the era of “one-and-done” players has taken over the game, even for my alma mater, whose coach makes over \$6 million a year telling young men dressed in skimpy clothes how to put a ball through a metal hoop. Once upon a time, I was Mr. Analytic when it came to dissecting bracket matchups. I dug into statistics and ratings like I was prepping for a big test and developed my own formulas for picking winners and losers. It became clear my lust for such analysis had dimmed a few years ago when I picked my bracket using the “which mascot would beat the other one in a fight” method. I’ll still check out the KenPom ratings for a game that looks interesting, but I haven’t filled out a bracket since I moved here three years ago.

I looked at KenPom after KU won it’s first round game last week and

scored a matchup against Arkansas, and wasn’t encouraged by what I saw. So I was prepped when the Razorbacks pulled off the upset on Saturday, sending my defending national champion Jayhawks home without even reaching the Sweet 16, and I wasn’t all that upset about it.

Instead, I just reveled in the competition, and the hope that some small school underdogs would pull off some big upsets. Didn’t have to wait long to witness the biggest upset in tournament history, #16 Fairleigh Dickinson toppling #1 Purdue. FDU only qualified for the tournament because the champion of their conference was ineligible and had to play its way in to the field of 64. This is the stuff that makes the tournament fun, when a group of unheralded players puts together an out-of-this-world team effort to take down one of the “big boys.”

And also a sign of my changing views is the fact that I can eagerly embrace the success of KU’s cross-state rival, Kansas State University, in this year’s tourney. The Wildcats, picked last in the Big 12,

had an unexpectedly terrific year under new coach Jerome Tang, who should be a shoo-in for national coach of the year honors for what he’s done. There was a time I loved hating on K-State, but obviously I’ve mellowed. They’re one of the best stories in college hoops this year, and I love that they’re doing it with a point guard who at 5’8” is only an inch taller than I am. Another underdog scores big story.

I can’t say I’ve banished all of my rivalry demons. I’ll admit I took an undue amount of pleasure when North Carolina failed to qualify for the tournament, I was happy to see Duke and Kentucky exit the tourney, and I’m hoping UCLA will do likewise. I like claiming to be the best of the college hoops blue bloods, even when that claim is tarnished a bit by this year’s performance. But the spectacle of competition at the highest level is still something I revel in, and March Madness always seems to deliver. Rock, chalk, Jayhawk!



the
TIMBERJAY

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ELY AREA ARTS

Art show by Ely High School student

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The latest Northern Lakes Arts Association (NLAA) show features the works in several different mediums by Elyite Lauren Rehbein. Not only is the art remarkable, but so is the artist. Rehbein is a 16-year-old Ely Memorial High School sophomore whose works competed with professionals for a spot in the NLAA art show series.

Rehbein’s two-week show is entitled “Melting Away Winter,” which ends on March 26. Her works in her show include acrylics, watercolors, pencils and linoleum prints. Many of her pieces on

display at Ely’s Historic State Theater use eye-popping bright colors with a mix of still life and more abstract graphic-arts-style arrangements of wildlife, plants, pets, and everyday



Lauren Rehbein

objects. The NLAA hosted a well-attended reception

for Rehbein on the evening of March 18, which at one point filled the corner lobby of the theater.

Rehbein said she’s been doing art “my whole life.” When she was 13, she mentored for a year with local professional artist, Joe Baltich, who has two studios in Ely. She has been encouraged by both her family and by Kelly Chick, the K-12 art teacher for the Ely School District. Rehbein said she planned to study art or art history after high school.

“Ms. Chick told me about the shows and prompted me to apply,” Rehbein said at the reception. “I was super excited to get in. It was like ‘Oh my gosh!’”



Joe Baltich (left) and Lauren Rehbein (right) in front of a display of her artwork at the NLAA art show of her work at Ely’s Historic State Theater. photo by C. Clark

Runners are crazy

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The Ely Fun Run underscored a phenomenon that many non-runners have suspected for decades: long-distance runners may need mental health interventions. Incurable insanity is certainly one explanation for why six runners and their supporters arrived on the Trezona Trail on Saturday, before 9 a.m., in a brisk breeze and a temperature of 7 degrees F for a run in the snow.

The fun run was only one of the several March 18 events hosted by the Ely Marathon. The run was followed by a scavenger hunt through several businesses downtown. The day was capped by three events at the Grand Ely

Lodge: a canoe portage demonstration, a talk by well-known Minnesota-based marathoner Dick Beardsley, and a pasta dinner.

“Twenty signed up for the fun run,” said Wendy Lindsay, who is the race director of the Ely Marathon, the organization that coordinated the fun run. Lindsay was there to start the event, distribute warm hats and energy gel packets, and hand out scavenger hunt directions. “Forty signed up for the scavenger hunt.”

Both the fun run and the Ely Marathon in the fall are sponsored by Sherpa, a start-up which offers an app for runners and other everyday athletes to book an on-demand fully vetted “sherpa” training partner. The founder of Sherpa, Dane Rauschenberg, was



Six runners line up seconds from starting the Ely Fun Run at 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 18. From left-to-right: Dane Rauschenberg, Dick Beardsley, Jo Holen, Wayne Marshall, Wanda Marshall, and Lisa Ledman. photo by C. Clark

one of the runners present on Saturday.

“We started (our sponsorship) last year. I had run the race previously and really loved the town,” said Rauschenberg. “We

sponsored the marathon because we wanted people to know what a gem of a town we have up here in northern Minnesota.”

Dancers left reeling and St. Anthony’s gets fried

ELY - The third weekend in March was notable for multiple events. The weekend Knights of Columbus are serving up fried fish every Friday evening in March from 5 p.m. until they lox things up at 7 p.m., in the dining room downstairs (entrance on 3rd St.). The fish aren’t lent; diners must buy them: adults \$13, kids \$9. The *Timberjay* spotted two Ely City Council members when we dropped by last Friday. We assume they were there for the good of their soles. We asked them

for comment but Council member Angela Campbell clammed up and Council member Jerome Debeltz looked like he just about haddock. Saturday was busy with the Ely Fun Run, the NLAA art reception, and the ever popular annual St. Patrick’s Day Irish Dance, sponsored by the Ely Folk School. This year’s event once again packed the Ely Senior Center where the dance held. Music, dance instruction, and dance calling was provided by the four-person “Friends on the Range.”



The Ely Folk School St. Patrick’s Day Dance packed the Ely Senior Center on Saturday evening. photo by C. Clark



Serving up fish at St. Anthony’s. From left-to-right: John Lekatz, Wade Srock, and Greg Hutar. photo by C. Clark

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Upcoming Events

Ely Area Food Shelf

ELY- The Ely Area Food Shelf will hold a food drive for non-perishable items on Saturday, March 25. The food shelf asks that the public contribute non-perishable food from 10 a.m. to noon at 15 W. Conan St.

Ely Public Library

ELY- The Ely Library Spice Club spice for April will be bill.

A new Kahoot for adults will start on March 31 at 3 p.m. and end on April 3 at 8 a.m. The subject of this Kahoot online trivia game will be the first three books in the Molly Murphy series by Rhys Bowen. Please register in advance since the library will need an email address

for each person who wishes to play to send the link to the game.

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

Ely Folk School

ELY- The folk school will hold a “Paint Techniques for Acrylic Painters,” on Thursday, March 30, from 1-4 p.m. at the Ely Folk School location at 209 E. Sherman St. Emphasis will be on different painting tools to create unique textures. The instructor is local artist Cecilia Rolando.

A complete class schedule, registration and tuition/fee information are linked off the “learn” tab at elyfolkschool.com

Little Shop of Horrors

Ely- The Northern Lakes Arts Association will present the musical

“Little Shop of Horrors” at the Vermilion Fine Arts Theater at the Vermilion Campus of Minnesota College North, 1900 E. Camp St., at 7 p.m., on March 23-25, March 30-31, and April 1, and at 2 p.m. on March 26. Tickets range from \$10-\$22. The March 30 production is a “pay what you can” performance.

You can use the QR code on the Little Shop of Horrors ad in this edition of the *Timberjay* to purchase tickets.

Ely Senior Center

ELY- The Ely Senior Center will hold an Easter Bonnet Parade – not just for seniors, but no pets please. Bonnets must be homemade. Winning bonnets will receive prizes. Coffee and dessert will be served at the event, at the senior center, 27 S. 1st Ave. E., from 1-3 p.m. on April 1.

Gardner Humanities Trust

ELY- The Donald G. Gardner Humanities Trust will accept applications for its 2023 spring grant round with a deadline of midnight, Wednesday, March 29. Apply through the internet grant portal at gardnertrust.org.

Dean’s List

ST. PAUL- Bethel University in St. Paul announced on March 21 that Rosalie Penke of Ely was named to the Dean’s List for the fall 2022 semester. The Dean’s List honors students who achieve an outstanding scholastic record during a semester with a grade point average of 3.6 or greater.



An interesting display on a vehicle parked in downtown Ely on March 18. photo by C. Clark

In Brief

Tuesday Group schedule

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

Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

►March 28: Treaty Promises & Indigenous Health Care with Linda Olson Bergum, M.D.

►April 4: Emergency Response for Heritage Preservation with Jess Edberg

►April 11: U.S. Forest Service Beaver Program with Joel (“Henny”) Jungemann

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2023



more snow than ever trails through to destinations

March in the Northland

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 Ledgerock 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.

COOK CITY COUNCIL

Council moves forward with blight ordinance

Snow dampens attendance at required public forum last Thursday

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- What if you threw a party and no one showed? Would you still have the party?

That’s similar to the situation the Cook City Council found itself in last week with a public meeting they had scheduled for people to provide input about the city’s proposed new blight ordinance. Heavy snow falling in the runup to the 5:30 p.m. meeting Thursday may have kept some away who’d indicated an interest in attending.

“We did have one resident that said they were going to be here, but unfortunately we can’t help the weather,” City Administrator Theresa Martinson said. “It was posted and it was also published.”

But public meetings must go on as scheduled, and there was a bit of a celebratory air to the session as the council crossed off another step in the months-long effort to craft a new blight ordinance that, unlike its predecessor, is clear and enforce-

able.

“The blight committee was formed some time ago and did a great job and a lot of work on the blight ordinance,” Martinson said. “It originally started with some comments from our city attorney who stated that he felt we should have more teeth in the ordinance so we could enforce it better.

The committee worked with samples of blight ordinances from other communities to help craft the one for Cook, and the draft went through extensive legal review before being presented to the full council and then to the community.

The ordinance will become effective 45 days after a summary of the council-approved ordinance is published in the city’s legal newspaper, and a summary of the enforcement provisions is presented here from the copy provided at the public meeting.

City maintenance supervisor Tim Lilya will serve as the designated enforcement officer specified in the ordinance. He

will have the authority to issue a compliance order to anyone with blight conditions on their property as described in the ordinance. That order will provide a minimum of ten days and a maximum of 30 days to bring the property into compliance, although the enforcement officer will have the discretion to grant additional time if warranted.

The person served with the compliance order may request a hearing with the city council. If the council finds that a violation did occur, the council has multiple options depending on the circumstances.

If it is a parking violation, a fine of \$15 will be assessed that will double to \$30 if the fine is unpaid within 10 days of being imposed and will double every 30 days thereafter.

For all other violations, each week that a person continues in violation of the ordinance constitutes a separate offense and will be fined \$100 per week.

The city also has the authority to cut and re-

move weeds and grasses, or remove garbage, refuse, or any other accumulated materials at the expense of the owner and occupant. If the charges for the work are not paid, the amount will be applied against the property as a special assessment.

Finally, the city may also elect to seek prosecution as misdemeanor for any offense under the ordinance.

The ordinance also provides extensive descriptions of what constitutes a blighted condition subject to the ordinance.

The council determined that priority for addressing complaints under the new ordinance would be given to written complaints already received and filed with the city under the old blight ordinance.

Councilor Liza Root suggested the possibility of having the city host a cleanup day in conjunction with the launch of the new ordinance as a way to promote civic engagement and betterment of the community. The response from the council

was generally favorable, and included a suggestion that such a day be held after Timber Days to help with the cleanup from that community event. As this was a public meeting called for the blight ordinance, no action could be taken on the suggestion.

“I think that would be a great kickoff showing the community that we want to take a positive approach,” Martinson said.

Special meeting

Immediately prior to the public meeting for the blight ordinance, the council convened a scheduled special meeting for addressing several issues for the fire department and one for the airport.

The council approved an increase in the per capita rate assessed for providing fire protection services from \$20 to \$40 that will generate much needed funds to go toward needed equipment. The new rate is projected to bring in \$147,820 total for the department.

The council also approved the purchase of ten SCBA (Self-Contained Breathing Appara-

tus) units for the department for a total cost of \$109,547.41. The units will provide for greater safety for firefighters in situations where breathing assistance is necessary to effectively battle a fire.

Revisions to the department’s bylaws that clearly define the parameters for return to service after separation from the department and how years of prior and future service apply to qualify for pension coverage were also approved.

Councilors discussed with airport manager Doug McDuff the need to install electric power for the new taxiway lights and future hangars to be built alongside it. Reservations already exist for the planned 11 lots where hangars will be built, and six additional hangars could also be accommodated. The extension of power to the taxiway and hangars is not eligible for federal funding, unlike many other capital projects at the airport. The council gave its approval to approach the IRRRB for funding for the project.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Buyck Fire Department buys AEDs for businesses

BUYCK- People choosing to patronize any of four eating and drinking establishments in the vicinity of Buyck can enjoy their time there with a little extra confidence that should the unthinkable happen, a cardiac arrest, help is only an arm’s reach away.

Myrtle Lake Resort, Trails End Resort, Echo Trail Tavern and the Vermilion River Tavern, known to most as simply the VRT, have partnered with the Buyck Volunteer Fire Department to install automated external defibrillators (AEDs) at their businesses that can deliver an electrical shock to help the heart re-establish an effective beating rhythm.

Department Chief Kathy Weiland said that the department conducted numerous fundraisers and received donations to collect money to pay for the AEDs, which run about \$3,600 each. The

department wanted businesses with large numbers of customers to have them because in the event of a heart attack, response time is critical to a favorable outcome. Having a defibrillator on-site with someone trained in its use is clearly more immediate than waiting for medical first responders to arrive.

“Studies have shown that if an AED and CPR are initiated in the first six minutes that someone has a cardiac arrest they have a 74 percent chance for recovery,” she said. “Every minute of delay decreases chances of survival by 10 percent. This is what drove us to get a plan going.”

The first phase was to offer CPR and AED training to the businesses and their employees at no cost. Then the department needed to purchase the AEDs. For that, they worked with Advanced First Aid Inc. out of Min-

neapolis to set up affordable Lifepack CR Plus fully-automated AED kits, which have been placed in highly visible, easily accessible metal cabinets with signs and how-to posters, so even those unfamiliar with the units could possibly use them if a trained employee isn’t present. The monitor incorporated in the Lifepack is designed to know when to shock a heart, taking guesswork out of the equation. As it is fully automatic, the unit delivers the shock without the need to press any buttons, and can increase the power for additional shocks if previous levels were unsuccessful in establishing a regular rhythm.

This spring and summer, free CPR/AED classes will be offered to the public, Weiland said.

“The more that know, the greater chance of a life being saved,” she said.

And the department

has more plans to become better equipped to meet the needs of cardiac arrest patients. Weiland said they are working on a grant that would allow them to purchase a LUCAS device, a mechanical substitute for a human delivering CPR that provides consistent and uninterrupted automatic chest compressions.

“It’s portable and we would be able to carry it in our rescue truck as well as our rescue sled,” Weiland said.

The department also intends to get additional AEDs for its first responders to better equip them, Weiland said.

“We would like to thank the generosity of the Buyck community and supporters who allow us to set plans like this in motion,” she said, “as well as the EMS members of the fire department who worked to put all of this together.”



Top right: Brian and Jeanne Sorensen of Trails End Resort received one of the new AEDs. Here, Jeanne takes a look at the unit with Buyck Fire Chief Kathy Weiland.

Middle left: The attractive remodeling at the VRT now includes a highly visible AED case, as displayed by Nikki Johnson and Chief Weiland. VRT owner Paul Schlomka has been a longtime supporter of Buyck Fire Department.

Middle right: After their first full summer season as owners of Myrtle Lake Resort, Abi and Danny Malecha, are happy to have the chance to provide their guests with access to a life-saving AED.

Left: Clint Diefenthaler of Echo Trail Tavern turned over the photo opportunity to Mikki Diederich and 2-mo.-old Riley.

Vote in NWFA photo contest by March 31

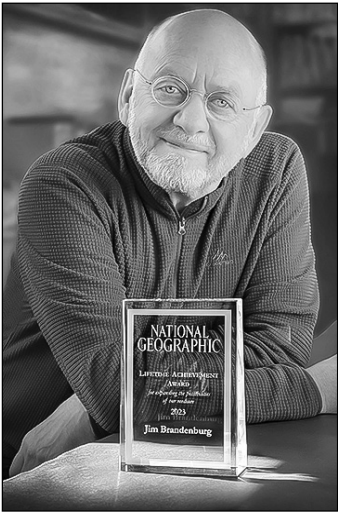
COOK- There’s only a week left to go to the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook to vote in NWFA’s annual photo contest. This year’s edition, “Winter Wonderland,” has 114 photos on display that can be viewed and voted on during the gallery’s open hours of 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays and 9 a.m.-1 p.m. on Saturdays at 210 S. River St. Vote by Friday, March 31, and attend the reception at 5:30 that day to see who won.

Brandenburg honored with Lifetime Achievement award

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

ELY— Minnesota native and long-time Ely area resident Jim Brandenburg has received no shortage of top awards in his more than half a century as a photographer. But the Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Brandenburg by National Geographic’s Photo Society earlier this year is probably the most prestigious.

Only five other individuals have ever received the coveted honor, which is determined by the members of the Photo Society, an organization comprised of the approximately 200 photographers who have produced major assignments for National Geographic. “I have been so very fortunate over the years to have received some precious and treasured awards around the world, but this one is unique for me because it



Jim Brandenburg

is from my peers - some of the finest photographic talent in the world,” said Brandenburg in a statement issued this past week. The award was presented in late January, but Brandenburg was unable to attend the ceremony

due to other commitments.

Brandenburg’s photography career began at an early age in his hometown of Luverne, in far southwestern Minnesota, where he developed an eye for capturing the beauty of open spaces. He began working for National Geographic almost 50 years ago, helping produce a television production, called “Strange Creatures of the Night,” which aired on CBS during primetime in the pre-cable era. He began working as one of the magazine’s photographers in 1978 after that and shot more than 20 major assignments during his years there. His work ranged from portrayals of the tallgrass prairies to the high Arctic, to Africa. His stunning portrayal of Arctic wolves on Ellesmere Island, published in two separate articles in 1987 and 1988, won him the fame that has followed him ever since. While his work

took him around the world in his early years with the magazine, he remained closer to home in more recent times, focusing his lens on the landscape he had come to love best, the northeastern Minnesota canoe country.

His final three photo essays for National Geographic, titled North Woods Journal (1997), Boundary Waters (2003), and 93 Days of Spring (April 2016), were all shot near his home east of Ely.

Brandenburg said the award came as a surprise given that he has been engaged in other work in recent years. “My first response was disbelief because as of late I have been mostly absent from that exceptional ‘family’ that I grew up with for fifty years.”

More recently, Brandenburg has been working as a filmmaker. He’s currently working on two projects in Europe, which prevented him from accepting his most recent award in person.

Brandenburg said he is deeply immersed in his film work, which he said are the largest and most complex projects of his career. He is currently working with a prominent French film production company on a film about his life in nature and is producing a second film that he created, wrote, and is currently producing in Italy with a film crew from the United Kingdom.

“I will share more about these rewarding yet daunting productions at a later date,” he said.

For now, Brandenburg said he is back in Minnesota, “feeling extremely honored and a bit breathless contemplating it all.” He said he was especially grateful for his family and friends who have helped him along the way. “This is not possible without that kind of support,” he said.

CANNABINOID...Continued from page 1

buying an edible cannabinoid and consuming it at the business where it was purchased. Off-sale is the purchase of one of these products for consumption elsewhere.

The ad hoc committee was set up at the Feb. 21 city council meeting and included council members Angela Campbell and Jerome Debeltz, as well as the mayor and members of the Ely Police Department.

City attorney Kelly Klun explained that the ad hoc committee decided that prohibiting on-sale purchases was “too restrictive” given the number of restau-

rants that have inquired about selling Minnesota-legal cannabinoid beverages. As a result, the proposed ordinance contains a restrictive provision to allow restaurants, clubs, hotels, bowling centers, and congressionally chartered veterans’ organizations to sell edible cannabinoids for consumption on their premises to “members and bona fide guests.”

For both the on-sale and off-sale licenses, each application to sell within Ely will be considered before the city council for approval.

The prohibitions

The proposed ordinance prohibits the issuing of any license to a business which is “on a lot immediately adjacent to a lot upon which there is any public school or church structure.”

A lot across a street or across an alley from a public school or church is not defined as immediately adjacent. The ordinance does not have any prohibitions regarding businesses next door to private schools and private pre-schools and childcare facilities.

In a provision that parallels laws about alcohol, possession of an opened

edible cannabinoid products package or container is not allowed by a pedestrian “on public property,” in a public park, or on a street or highway. An opened container or package is also not allowed while operating or riding in a private vehicle.

Licenses to sell edible cannabinoids will be issued only to those 21 or older. Employees at businesses with licenses must be at least 18 in order to sell the products. A business must display its license to sell edible cannabinoids where the public can see it.

Businesses cannot sell any cannabinoid products

to anyone under 21. The products must be kept behind a counter or bar accessible only to employees. Edible cannabinoids cannot be sold in Ely from a vending machine.

There are provisions in the ordinance for the police department to use decoys between the ages of 17 and 20 to attempt to buy edible cannabinoids as part of its powers to inspect businesses and determine their compliance to the city’s cannabinoid regulations. The ordinance also states that consent to inspection by the police “without a warrant for searches and

seizures” is a condition of receiving a cannabinoid license in the city.

The city council designated itself as the “hearing officer” for the purpose of determining if a business has violated the ordinance. The fines for violations range from \$300 to \$2,000. Violations will also result in either temporary or permanent revocation of a cannabinoid license, depending on whether the offense is a first or repeated violation.

VOYAGEURS...Continued from page 1

VNP Superintendent Bob DeGross, who delegated the response to Chief Law Enforcement Ranger Josh Wentz. Wentz declined to answer any questions and referred all inquiries to the Minnesota U.S. Attorney’s Office arguing that, “the ongoing and active criminal investigation has been turned over to that office.”

Two subsequent emails to the U.S. Attorney’s office went unanswered, and on Aug. 4 the *Timberjay* filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the Department of Interior and National Park Service for “Any incident report, Park Service required use of force report, body camera footage, electronic communications, citations issued, and any other official documentation regarding an incident at Voyageurs National Park in which a taser was discharged against an individual(s) by VNP-NPS law enforcement personnel.” Seven and a half months later, the Park Service has failed to act on any portion of that FOIA request.

NPS policy violation

Since that time, Park Service officials have used various smokescreens to dodge the *Timberjay’s* questions, although the Park Service has not found such things to be obstacles to reporting out detailed incident information and body camera footage from past incidents at other parks around the country. The Park Service’s initial dodge, that the case remained under investigation, became inoperative in December after citations issued against Ebel were resolved, mostly dismissed.

Park Service policy specifies that the names of those involved in a law enforcement incident, the circumstances pertaining to the incident, arrest warrants and the time and place of arrest, whether weapons were

used, charging documents, criminal complaints, indictments, violation notices, and the names of arresting officers is all information that is releasable to the press. Yet park officials have repeatedly declined to provide any such information in response to the *Timberjay’s* requests.

Regional office response

The newspaper’s latest round of inquiries was initiated in February. The *Timberjay* was able to obtain probable cause statements for the citations written by one of the VNP rangers involved in the incident from a different federal agency. Provided with copies of the probable cause statements and a list of related questions via a Feb. 6 email, Wentz again declined to provide any answers, indicating that he would have to ask the Park Service’s regional office in Omaha, “what level of information we can give out.”

With no subsequent answers forthcoming from Wentz, *Timberjay* Publisher Marshall Helmberger took the case for answers directly to Park Service Regional Director Herbert “Bert” Frost. Given the past unresponsiveness of VNP officials and Wentz’s expressed need to get permission from the regional office to release information, Helmberger pointedly asked Frost in a Mar. 1 email if his office had issued a “gag order of any kind regarding the release of information surrounding the June 25 tasing of Justin Ebel” and asked for an explanation of the unwillingness of VNP officials to respond to the newspaper’s inquiries.

Frost did not reply until March 10.

“I want to be unequivocally clear, there is absolutely no ‘gag order’ in place,” Frost said. “I know the park is fully committed to communicating with the

local community and others interested in the June 2022 law enforcement.”

Frost noted the *Timberjay’s* outstanding FOIA request as he skirted other questions posed by Helmberger, including whether the rangers involved in the Ebel incident were under any kind of investigation or suspension. Helmberger immediately responded, disputing Frost’s claim that park officials were committed to communicating.

“Other than Superintendent DeGross’s acknowledgement of the dates of employ of the two officers involved, the National Park Service has provided nothing meaningful in response to our questions for the past nearly eight months,” Helmberger said. “I completely reject the notion implied by Superintendent DeGross that because we have made a FOIA request for certain data, that the NPS cannot respond to basic questions, such as the rationale for the boarding of Mr. Ebel’s boat and his subsequent tasing. He is fully aware that we have asked that question numerous times, in writing, and have yet to receive any response.”

Frost’s response was more of the same.

“The information requested by the *Timberjay* is being reviewed as part of your paper’s FOIA request. As I’ve mentioned, the FOIA is currently being processed by the NPS FOIA office,” he said. “Until all reviews are complete, we are unable to provide additional information.”

Helmberger responded, calling Frost’s actions “arbitrary.”

Helmberger continued: “You say you are ‘unable to provide additional information’ but that is misstated. You are ‘unwilling’ to provide additional information since there is no legal basis blocking your response. And by instruct-

ing VNP officials not to respond to our questions, you are acknowledging what is, in effect, a gag order.”

Given the Park Service’s unwillingness to provide basic facts surrounding the incident, the *Timberjay* has included top federal elected officials, including Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Sen. Tina Smith, and Rep. Pete Stauber in its correspondence with the Park Service, to no obvious effect. Smith’s office did apparently reach out to Superintendent DeGross, who appears to have assuaged the senator’s representative with an explanation of the park’s “communications plan” and a reiteration of his office’s commitment to full communication with the local community. That representation of the situation has been challenged repeatedly by the *Timberjay*.

FOIA backlog

There is little reason to expect a response to the *Timberjay’s* FOIA request anytime soon. Federal records reviewed by the *Timberjay* reveal that the Park Service has, by far, the largest backlog of unfulfilled FOIA requests of any agency within the Department of the Interior.

According to a report generated on the FOIA Online website by the *Timberjay*, the Park Service already had 1,508 unfulfilled FOIA requests pending on the day the *Timberjay* submitted its request, and has received 1,283 additional requests since then, as of this week. An internal DOI report obtained by the *Timberjay* acknowledged that “The Department’s overall backlog increased in FY 2022, in part due to an approximate 12 percent increase in the number of FOIA requests received by the NPS FOIA office as compared to FY 2021, resulting in the largest number of requests ever

received by NPS.”

Much of that increase was fueled by an increasing number of information requests that stem from law enforcement incidents.

The *Timberjay* requested expedited processing of its request due to the timely news value associated with the Ebel incident and existing public concern over law enforcement practices at VNP, but the Park Service denied that request. The Park Service originally projected it would have the *Timberjay’s* FOIA request processed by Sept. 1, 2022, but it has failed to provide any response to the request as of seven months later.

Because of the extent of the *Timberjay’s* request for documents, it likely falls in the category of “complex” requests. DOI’s annual FOIA report for FY 2022 indicates that it took the Park Service an average of 272.82 days to process such requests in which information was granted.

But the department also has a list of exemptions it can apply to deny requests, something the Park Service did nearly 900 times in FY 2022. It is unknown what exemptions, if any, may be applied to the *Timberjay’s* FOIA request, although it’s notable that

multiple FOIA requests for body camera footage of law enforcement encounters have been denied by Park Service.

The *Timberjay* did receive some information about its FOIA request in February. After learning that Park Service law enforcement procedures allow body camera footage to be deleted after six months, the *Timberjay* filed a second FOIA request specifically for that footage to ensure that it was being preserved. That filing generated a response from Erica Beckett with the Park Service’s FOIA Office.

“Please be advised the requested records are not in danger of being destroyed,” Beckett wrote. “The responsive records pertaining to your previous request are currently under final review with the Department of the Interior’s Office of the Solicitor (SOL). We hope to have a final response to you very soon.”

The Office of the Solicitor is the department’s legal division and could be presumed to be considering what laws and regulations pertain to the information requested by the *Timberjay*.

Donald C. Gardner

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RENOVATION...Continued from page 1

environment, better ensure the facility’s long-term functionality, and help attract additional student enrollments.”

Under Minnesota law, charter schools are prohibited from owning their own buildings, but the state provides considerable “lease aid,” which generally provides schools with about 90 percent of the funding needed to cover lease costs. The school has leased its facility from TEDA since it opened its doors in the fall of 2013.

The renovation plan will include the installation of a suspended ceiling over a 9,000 square foot portion of the building that currently houses most of the school’s classrooms as well as the lunchroom. The existing ceiling is comprised of the underside of the high vaulted roof of the building, which is more than 25 feet high at its peak. The open nature of that portion of the building has made for a noisier environment than is ideal for a school and has forced the school to heat an exceptionally large space, much of which is unusable for students. The heat that gathers near the current high ceiling has contributed to considerable ice damming at the building, which has created occasional problems with water leakage as well.

“By lowering the ceiling, and insulating heavily above it, the renovation helps keep the heat



Students Landon Salmela and Remy McDonough talk to school chef and social studies teacher Chris Glazer

down where the students are, reducing the heating requirements and keeping the roof colder, reducing snow melting and ice damming at the same time,” said TEDA executive director Marshall Helmberger.

The renovation will also provide considerably more separation between classrooms, to reduce the noise level and other distractions that can affect student learning. Existing classroom walls will be extended above the new ceiling and insulated to reduce noise transfer between classrooms.

“The open school environment is wonderful,” said teacher Karin Schmidt. “But it can be a challenge to find a quiet spot at times. This will benefit our academic program.”

All of the school’s

existing fluorescent lighting will be replaced with LED lights and all the existing heating ductwork will be insulated to help keep the newly created attic space as cool as possible. A 12-inch blanket of fiberglass batting will be installed on the top side of the suspended ceiling to maintain an effective heat barrier.

The project will also expand the amount of natural light in the building, with the installation of new windows in the front as well as the replacement of a bank of opaque fiberglass panels that were installed as part of the original renovation with insulated reflective glass.

A much smaller second phase of the project, which would be undertaken in the fall, will replace two outside furnaces with new,

more efficient models along with air conditioning. Some security upgrades are also under consideration.

Living the lessons

The energy efficiency improvements go hand-in-hand with the school’s environmental education focus. “This will give our students a real-life example of what they’ve been learning at school,” said the school’s new director, Sam O’Brien.

School staff were excited at the investment being made in the building, to support the educational program at VCS. “I am excited to see the school progress and grow,” said teacher Al White.

TEDA’s president sees the investment as recognition of the school’s growing importance to the area. “It’s wonderful how

the Vermilion Country School has become an integral part of our community, serving both local and regional students, providing good paying jobs, and supporting TEDA’s on-going mission,” said Morin. “Most important, of course, are the students, some of whom I’ve been told have benefited simply by attending a small, more personal school right in their hometown.” He said he’s heard of examples of students who have struggled at larger schools but have “opened up like a flower blooming” at VCS.

TEDA will fund the project primarily through a loan through Frandsen Bank, although TEDA officials expect to tap at least one source of grant funds and expects to qualify for rebates for the installation of more efficient lighting. The cost of both phases, including a ten percent contingency, is expected to come in around \$380,000, although grants and rebates could reduce that figure by as much as ten percent.

Repayment will come from a portion of the school’s lease, while the remainder of the lease helps fund TEDA’s operations. “The charter school building is, by far, TEDA’s most profitable asset,” noted Helmberger, who offered the TEDA board a brief history of the school’s creation and its impact on city finances during its meeting

last Thursday.

Helmberger noted that TEDA, which was then under the control of the city council, had paid for the original renovation at the school with a \$400,000 bank note and approximately \$115,000 in city general funds. To date, the school’s lease has generated \$732,025 in payments, while TEDA has paid \$444,177 toward retirement of the \$400,000 note, which will be fully retired in November of this year. That leaves a net profit of \$287,848. For the first six years, those payments accrued to the city, rather than TEDA, which allowed the city to recover all of its investment of general fund dollars and an additional margin in excess of \$60,000.

Helmberger noted that the charter school organizers had also arranged for the forgiveness of an outstanding non-recourse loan of approximately \$290,000, that the city had with Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation for the construction of the charter school building, built originally for the Powerair car wash manufacturer.

As Helmberger reported to the TEDA board, the net financial return to the city and TEDA from the charter school has come to \$433,000 over the past decade, including the debt forgiveness.

“It’s been one of the best investments the city has ever made,” he said.

HORRORS...Continued from page 1

lakesarts.org or at the door. The March 30 production is a “pay what you can” performance.

Due to traumatic content and some unsavory language, this production is not recommended for children under eight.

Stage vs. film

The stage production is the Off-Broadway musical. It originally opened in 1982 in New York City and ran for five years. It inspired the 1986 film of the same name, starring Rick Moranis and

Ellen Greene. Greene was the original Audrey in the musical and reprised her role for the movie.

The musical has some notable differences, including several musical numbers that were not included in the film. The plot is also slightly different while the ending will be a surprise to those who have never seen the stage version.

The cast

The cast for the production includes Ian Lah as Seymour Krelborn;

Wendy Lindsay as Audrey; Peter Kess as Mr. Mushnik; Jim Lah as Orin Scrivello, D.D.S.; Emily Weise, Jennifer Merhar, and Grace Klein as the doo wop trio; Olin Weise as the Audrey II Puppeteer; Karin Schmidt as the voice of Audrey II; and Grey Kurnava, Bailey McLinn-Belehar, Matthew Janeksela, Sandra Tuominen form the ensemble.


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
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CITY OF ELY

Council addresses several development projects

Editor’s Note: Other actions by the Ely City Council, including the first reading of a cannabinoid ordinance and a proclamation of the Year of “Frozen” are covered in other stories in this edition.

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY—If Tuesday’s council meeting had a theme, it would be upcoming projects. Speaking for the Parks and Recreation Committee, council member Adam Bisbee introduced that committee’s recommendation that the city form a three-member panel to study the feasibility of a “multi-use recreation and event facility for the city.” The council approved the recommendation.

The council also voted to award the East End Development Project to Low Impact Excavators,

pending the results of the environmental review by St. Louis County. City Clerk and Treasurer Harold Langowski reported that that the funding situation and requests “look favorable.” This project will pave and provide water and sewer improvements for the undeveloped lot next to Zup’s. Multiple businesses will benefit from the work including Zup’s, Spirit of the Wilderness, and Voyageur North Outfitters.

Council member Ryan Callen presented the project committee’s recommendation that the council approve the \$4.5 million congressional earmark request to rework Ely’s five-mile long 90-year old water supply line from Burnside Lake. The council did so unanimously.

In other matters for the meeting agenda, the council:

- At Omerza’s prompting,

held a moment of silence in memory of John Braun. Braun, aged 62, passed away at his Ely home on March 2. He worked for the city’s public works department from 1999 until 2019.

- Decided to consider the sale of East Spaulding, Block 2, Lot 15 for \$12,000 instead of its listed price of \$15,000, since the lot is not buildable. The prospective buyers will use it for green space. The council asked Langowski to consult with Jim Burke, the city’s realtor, about the price.
- Approved giving the go-ahead for TKDA to update the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan for the airport.
- Received the report by council member Angela Campbell that the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Ely’s public housing agency,

has received the designation of “High Performer” based on its recent inspection by Minnesota. The designation is the highest that a public housing agency can receive.

- Received the report by the city clerk and treasurer that the skating rink is now closed for the year. “This is the first certain sign of spring,” remarked Langowski.
- Approved a purchase agreement for East Spaulding First Addition Lot 7, Block 1 to David Streif and Michelle Beltrand.
- Approved the mortgage satisfaction for the note the city issued to Timothy Leeson and Jessica Leeson in 2017 for a storefront rehabilitation project.
- Approved the appointment of Mauro Caruso to the police commission.
- Approved the payment of

city and Ely Utilities Commission claims for March 21, 2023 for \$997,007, \$272,738 to Rice Lake Construction Group for waste water treatment facility (WWTF) improvements, \$29,489 to AE2S for the WWTF improvements Project, \$2,524 to SEH for the Prospector EAW Project, and \$650 to SEH for the Prospector ATV Phase 2.

- Approved the agreement for professional services between city of Ely and Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc., which was effective October 5, 2021.
- Approved a Minnesota Department of Transportation grant agreement for airport improvement, excluding any land acquisition, for the AWOS Phase 1 site selection environmental work.

PUBLIC ACCESS

State Supreme Court opens the door to cameras in courtrooms

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— In a judicial order issued March 15, the state Supreme Court has loosened longstanding rules that had limited audio and visual coverage of cases in Minnesota courtrooms.

The change, in an eight-page order signed by Chief Justice Lorie Gildea, will allow judges in the

state considerably more discretion about whether to allow cameras or other recording devices in their courtrooms during criminal proceedings. In the recent past, judges had been authorized to open their courtrooms to such devices, but only with the consent of both parties in the case. It was that relatively rare exception that allowed television coverage of the Derek Chauvin trial held in

the wake of the murder of George Floyd.

The change in the rules, which takes effect next January, means that judges can determine, with or without the consent of the parties involved, to make their courtroom open to recording devices.

There will still be restrictions during some portions of the legal proceedings, such as during jury selection or certain

witness testimony, or if the judge determines that coverage could subject some individuals to intimidation or harm.

Chief Justice Gildea acknowledged that the new rules will create some challenges, but she concluded that the public good would outweigh them.

Even with the changes, Gildea argued that the rules in Minnesota will remain more restrictive than in

many states, where cameras are routinely allowed in courtrooms during criminal proceedings. Even with the change, it’s unlikely that cameras will be seen regularly in Minnesota courtrooms any time soon.

Recording or broadcast devices will remain prohibited in cases heard in drug courts, mental health courts, or veterans courts, without the consent of participants.

Several media organizations and groups that promote government openness advocated for the change. Associations for state prosecutors, public defenders, the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault and other survivor advocacy groups opposed the changes or urged caution.

Minnesota Public Radio contributed to this story.



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Location: Grand Ely Lodge

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Contact the Ely Chamber of Commerce at 218-365-6123 or director@ely.org to reserve tickets.





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HAPPY ENDINGS

Missing three-year-old back home and healthy

Ely family thanks fire department, first responders

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- Fire chief David Marshall had wonderful news for the city council here on Tuesday. During the fire department report, Marshall noted that the three-year-old girl who went missing on the morning of March 14 was now healthy and back at home with her family.

As reported in the March 17 edition of the Timberjay, the child wandered out of her home on the 400 block of Washington St. in Ely before dawn in below-zero temperatures. The search for the child pulled in resources from sheriff's departments of St. Louis and Lake Counties, the Ely Fire Department and Ely Area Ambulance Service, and the Ely, Babbitt and Virginia Police Departments. K9 officer Teddy

from the Virginia PD was instrumental in locating the child in a vacant house next door. The child was stabilized for exposure at the Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital and later transported to a facility providing a more advanced level of care.

Since then, the three-year-old has returned home in good health, reported Marshall, who then displayed the colorful construction-paper "card" decorated by the child for the first responders. He also read the thank you card from the child's parents.

"Your quick action

saved her life and kept our hearts from shattering," read the card in part. "A very special thank you to the volunteer who held our baby girl until the ambulance arrived. We will never forget your heroism. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

Right: Ely Fire Chief David Marshall displays the thank you note from the three-year-old's family and the thank you card drawn by the child herself, which they sent to the first responders.

photo by C. Clark



Crane Lake woman injured in snowmobile mishap

CRANE LAKE- A Crane Lake woman was airlifted to a Duluth hospital Sunday after receiving non-life-threatening injuries in a snowmobile accident.

According to a St. Louis County Sheriff's press release, Carole Scott, 64, was operating a snowmobile in the southwest corner of Crane Lake when she struck an ice ridge, which caused her snowmobile to roll over.

Crane Lake first responders, Orr Ambulance and Buyck Fire Department responded to the scene. A North Memorial Air Care helicopter transported Scott to Essentia Health-St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth.

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PROCLAMATIONS

It’s the “Year of Frozen” in Ely

Recognition marks the right to perform the stage production of the popular Disney movie

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- Mayor Heidi Omerza declared 2023 the Year of Frozen in Ely on Tuesday, but it wasn’t a commentary on the weather. Instead, Omerza’s proclamation marked a remarkable achievement by local music and theater enthusiasts in bringing the stage adaptation of the Disney musical “Frozen” to Ely.

Through a competitive application process, just one school in each U.S. state was given the rights to perform the production, and Ely’s was Minnesota’s winning application.

Mike Rouse, who teaches music in the Ely schools, and his wife Billie spearheaded the application effort. The couple, who live in Babbitt, were unable to attend the city council meeting for the proclama-

Right: Mayor Heidi Omerza (center) with Alison Poppler from Ely Memorial High School and Ruby Milton from Northeast Range High School, reading the proclamation.

photo by C. Clark

tion. In their stead, they arranged two high school students, Ruby Milton

See **FROZEN**...pg. 4B



ARCHERY

North Woods archers score well at Mt. Iron

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

MT. IRON- North Woods archers competed in a dual meet last Saturday in Mt. Iron, and once again the Grizzlies sharpshooters took home a host of medals, with many posting their highest scores of the season.

Eleventh-grader Cadence Nelson took first place in her grade division and fifth place among high school girls to lead the North Woods contingent in the Mt. Iron Bullseye tournament. Cooper Long placed fifth among middle school boys and Laurin Glass captured fourth for middle school girls. In the elementary group, Clark Danielson placed fourth among the boys and Kaidence Scofield took fourth among the girls.

Three North Woods boys scored medals in the Regional 3D tournament’s high school division. Cooper Antikainen placed second, Blaze Markwardt took third, and John Danielson finished third. For the girls, Cadence Nelson finished fourth.

Cooper Long notched a second-place finish for middle school boys, while Elizabeth Udovich was the highest placer for the girls, coming in third. Michaela Brunner took fourth.

Two Grizzlies girls captured elementary-level medals. Kaidence Scofield took second place among fifth graders and Leah Las finished fifth in the fourth-grade group.

North Woods archers compete next weekend at the Minnesota National Archery in the Schools Program competition in Duluth.

EVENTS

Firefighter appreciation and pancakes

TIMBER HALL — The Embarrass Region Fair Association is inviting everyone to come and thank area firefighters during their monthly pancake breakfast, set for Saturday, April 1, from 8-11 a.m.

Everyone will enjoy all-you-can-eat pancakes, choice of ham or sausage links, a fruit cup, juice, and a bottomless cup of coffee. The cost is \$6 for adults, \$3 for children 6-10, and free for kids under six. Firefighters dine for free as well.

This regular event is sponsored by the Embarrass Region Fair Association.



ANTIQUE AND CLASSIC SNOWMOBILES

It’s a party on ice

Antique sleds roar again during annual event at Melgeorge’s Resort

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ELEPHANT LAKE- Blustery winds and falling snow aren’t about to keep a true Minnesota snowmobiler off his or her sled, and that goes double when it comes to Melgeorge’s Antique and Classic Snowmobile Race. The annual event at Elephant Lake was held this year on Saturday, March 11.

As in years past, spectators’ cars and trucks lined the road outside of Melgeorge’s Resort, and it was standing room only outside of the lodge as people milled about chatting and snacking on food from the outdoor grill.

A full contingent of vintage sleds and racers staked out their spots along the western shoreline, waiting for their turn at tackling the winding circuit course. Some of the sleds, and many of the drivers, qualified as sexagenarians, with machines from the 1960s and 1970s well represented at the race.

The snow came down hard enough at times to somewhat obscure the view of racers as they negotiated the far turns of the circuit, but the snowy track didn’t appear to impair their ability to steer through the corners and accelerate down the straights. As with humans, old age can wreak havoc with machines, too, as some racers found out at the start line and others discovered somewhere out on the course. But most riders completed the circuit without mishap.

Some wondered if recent knee surgery would keep race organizer



Top: Bringing up the beer... this colorful ensemble won the fan favorite award. Above: What appears at first to be a heated competition is actually a Cat Cutter being towed by a Lynx snowmobile. Below: Sometimes the older sleds are not as cooperative as riders would prefer.

photos by D. Colburn



See **MELGEORGE’S**,pg. 4B



Outdoors

Our lives in the
Northwoods

RECOGNITION

BWCAW given “Quiet Park” status

Currently one of only two places in the U.S. to achieve the exceptional award

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

THE BOUNDARY WATERS — The yodel of a loon. The chirp of a bald eagle. The sound of waves lapping on rocks. These are sounds of nature that visitors to the 1.1-million-acre Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness can take for granted. Yet it’s the sounds that they don’t hear that may be the most significant.

Which is why the Boundary Waters has been recognized by the California-based nonprofit Quiet Parks International as a “Wilderness Quiet Park,” making it only the second such award in the United States. The organization recognized Glacier National Park in 2022 and is currently reviewing applications for several other locations around the globe.

In a world dominated by human activity, places where the sounds of civilization give way to the sounds of the natural world are increasingly rare. “The reality is that there are very few quiet natural places left on planet earth. The Boundary Waters is special and inspiring for many reasons, and its soundscape is certainly one of them,” said Matt Mikkelsen, an audio engineer who serves as Executive Director of Quiet Parks International. Mikkelsen, who moved to Duluth in 2021, said the process of documenting the Boundary Waters as an exceptionally quiet place took considerable time.

“The process starts in front of a computer,” Mikkelsen said. “You look at different things,



Canoeists ply the calm waters of a BWCAW inlet. photo courtesy Quiet Parks International

like the population density of the region, flight traffic maps, and transportation and industrial corridors.”

Mikkelsen said the Boundary Waters is fortunate that it sees few commercial airline overflights, which is one of the factors that make the area exceptional. After determining that the Boundary Waters was a good candidate, Mikkelsen gathered sound readings using highly sensitive recording devices in numerous locations, both inside the wilderness as well as at entry points ranging from the Gunflint Trail to north of Ely. The data from his efforts confirmed that the Boundary Waters met the criteria for the award. “What we’re looking for is the noise-free interval between noise events,” said Mikkelsen. “The criteria is a dependable

15-minute interval. I know that doesn’t sound like much but it’s really hard to achieve that even in very remote areas. Aircraft really are everywhere.”

That’s a point brought home to Gordon Hempton, the group’s volunteer media spokesperson, during a recent visit deep inside the Amazon rain forest. “I was just there two weeks ago and was probably 1,000 miles from a modern highway. The only access was by boat. But there were eight commercial overflights a day that didn’t have anything to do with the Amazon.”

He said he’d also spent time recording sounds of the Kalahari Desert in Africa and when the wind was calm, he could hear a muffled generator operating at a tourist camp 20 miles away.

Hempton, who lives in the Seattle area, spent time in the Boundary Waters during his college days in Wisconsin. He said he was thrilled to hear that the area had met the criteria for the award. Hempton, who recently retired from a career as

an acoustic ecologist said he has made sound recordings from the Boundary Waters and recognized it as an exceptionally rare location from a sound perspective. “I’ve been aware for some time that the Boundary Waters really is world class,” he said.

Indeed, while the criteria requires sound-free intervals of just 15 minutes, the sound recording in the Boundary Waters demonstrated far longer periods without noise intrusion. Mikkelsen’s research documented that the Boundary Waters’ soundscape is significantly free from sounds other than nature for intervals of hours at a time and does not typically experience noise from such sources as commercial air traffic, military activity, mining or other extractive activity, or other startling and disruptive sounds.

Even the Quetico Provincial Park, located just across the border from the BWCAW, has more sound intrusion from aircraft overflights, noted Mikkelsen. “The Boundary Waters is one of

the only places left in the Midwest and Great Lakes region that you can go and hear only the sounds of nature for hours at a time,” he said.

Raising awareness

Quiet Parks International is an entirely volunteer organization with active volunteers all over the world who seek to bring attention to the importance of quiet places, both for wildlife as well as humans. The group notes that studies have shown that quiet has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and helps to restore focus. They have sought to call attention to the value of quiet as well as promote those places that qualify as refuges of quiet. The awards granted by the group have no regulatory authority but are designed to increase public interest and awareness of uniquely quiet places. In doing so, the group hopes to increase the public’s interest in protecting the handful of truly quiet places that still exist in the world.

Award highlights risks

Given the fragility of truly quiet places, the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters is highlighting the recognition as part of their work to oppose copper-nickel mining near the wilderness. “This award recognizes what millions of visitors have experienced in the Boundary Waters - the healing, quiet solitude of nature that is so hard to find anywhere else,” said Ingrid Lyons, Executive Director of Save the Boundary Waters. “Turning the edge of the wilderness into an industrial mining zone would mean that noises of drilling, blasting, machinery, heavy traffic and more would drown out the natural sounds of our northwoods.”

RESEARCH

Spittlebug coloration signals a changing climate

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

Hypothesis made, hypothesis confirmed.

That was the conclusion of an admittedly obscure study that happened to connect to the North Country, and on which we had reported on back in August 2021. The two researchers behind the study were a New York couple, Vinton Thompson and his wife Ruth Moscovitch and they had traveled to our area that summer in order to sample our spittlebug population.

Spittlebugs, for those who don’t know are those smallish insects that we usually only detect from the presence of a marble-sized blob of whitish spittle on tall grasses and wildflowers.

Vinton, who is a retired

college president and still keeps active as a research associate with the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, had traveled through our area once before on an insect-collecting tour as a young man in the 1970s. His analysis had confirmed that our region had the highest percentage of dark morph spittlebugs in all of North America. At the time, he hypothesized that the dark form of the spittlebug would be most abundant in the coldest portions of the insect’s range, since the dark color would help the insect absorb more sunlight and stay warmer during the sometimes-cool North Country summers.

And, so, he was back nearly 50 years later to take another sample to further test the latest permutation of his hypothesis. The couple suspected that the

warming climate would lead to a reduction in the percentage of dark morph spittlebugs. They even calculated how much they might decline based on the amount of warming.

I interviewed Thompson and Moscovitch back in 2021, while they were sampling insects at the Hwy. 169 wayside rest in Soudan. Since the conditions had changed significantly there (mowed lawn versus an untamed field), they ended up collecting their relevant sample at the intersection of Junction Road and the Taconite Trail. They took samples in other places in northeastern Minnesota where Thompson had visited in the 1970s, including Isabella, Tofte, and Ilgen City down on the North Shore. I asked that they send their results once they had completed their study, which

they did recently. It was published late last year in the journal *Entomologica Americana*, and it largely confirmed their hypothesis, although I will spare you the fine points, which include percentages of several different spittlebug morphs, regression analysis, etc. We’re just not going there today. Count yourself lucky.

Thompson gave me the shorter version in an email last month. “The headline is that yes indeed the bugs do provide evidence for real effects of local climate warming,” he wrote. “To be honest, when I looked at the NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration] data it was disconcerting to see how much the temperature had gone up in the area— 2.7 degrees C (=4.86 degrees F) is a lot of warming!”

And as the area warmed, the percentage of some of the darker morphs in the population declined, at rates very close to what Thompson had predicted. Does it prove the change was due to climate change? Not exactly. This shows a predicted trend that correlates very closely with the increase in temperatures in our region.

By itself, it’s just one small piece of a very large puzzle that thousands of scientists are working on every day to understand, namely how is the warming climate affecting the incredible diversity of life all around us? It’s a question that will occupy scientists for decades, probably even centuries, to come.

Outdoors briefly

Volunteers needed

The Minnesota State Climatology Office is looking for volunteer rainfall monitors for the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS). The network includes more than 20,000 volunteers nationwide who measure precipitation in their backyards using a standard 4-inch-diameter rain gauge. These rainfall monitoring activities are performed

by individuals at home who submit their reports online. Volunteers are particularly needed outside the immediate Twin Cities metro area. Volunteers receive training on how to observe weather trends and how to submit their precipitation and weather event reports. All training material is available online.

To sign up or for more information, visit CoCoRaHS.org or contact Luigi Romolo at luigi.romolo@state.mn.us.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather

Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
39 15					41 19					38 17					35 9					29 5				
Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.
03/13	19	3	0.20	1.8"	03/13	20	-9	0.08	2.4"	03/13	21	5	0.02	0.3"	03/13	27	-2	0.51	5.0"	03/13	20	-7	0.06	1.0"
03/14	27	-4	0.00		03/14	28	-15	0.00		03/14	24	-8	0.00		03/14	34	-2	0.00		03/14	27	-12	0.00	
03/15	35	5	0.00		03/15	34	-14	0.00		03/15	33	-8	0.00		03/15	41	21	0.00		03/15	35	-8	0.00	
03/16	44	23	0.01		03/16	42	22	0.04		03/16	43	22	0.00		03/16	36	18	0.00		03/16	44	22	0.00	
03/17	31	7	0.34	4.8"	03/17	31	5	0.24	3.0"	03/17	31	4	0.14	2.5"	03/17	16	3	0.01	0.5"	03/17	30	5	0.45	4.0"
03/18	14	5	0.08	1.4"	03/18	15	5	0.03	2.5"	03/18	17	2	0.03	0.6"	03/18	25	7	0.11	2.0"	03/18	15	4	0.08	1.9"
03/19	22	5	0.00		03/19	24	4	0.00		03/19	25	6	0.00		03/19	41	3	0.00		03/19	24	0	0.00	
YTD Total			3.34	73.1"	YTD Total			2.70	70.2"	YTD Total			1.62	69.4"	YTD Total			NA	NA	YTD Total			2.16	60.0"

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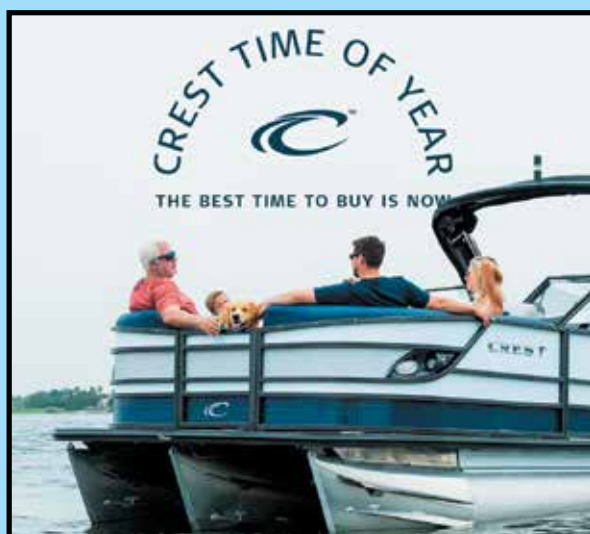
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FROZEN..Continued from page 1B

from Northeast Range High School in Babbitt and Alison Poppler from Ely Memorial High School, to read statements about the upcoming musical.

At the city council meeting, Milton read, “Today a proclamation is to be made. But first I will provide a brief background to help frame the content

to follow. I encourage you to take the opportunity to reflect on its significance both to our school and to our community.”

“The ‘United States of Frozen’ is a groundbreaking competition sponsored by Educational Theatre Association, Disney Theatrical Group, and Music Theatre International

that aims to promote inclusive and diverse high school theatre programs using the theme: “Love Is an Open Door.”

“We are two students that are representing the inclusivity and collaboration between our two schools to bring Disney’s ‘Frozen the Broadway Musical’ to the stage,” continued Poppler, speaking to the council. “We would also encourage any group, organization, club, business, churches, or artists and dreamers, to embrace the theme of ‘Love is an open door.’ We ask that any project completed would have photos and written explanation sent to Mr. Rouse at his school email

address: mrouse@ely.k12.mn.us.”

“The project information will then be forwarded to the Disney Corporation. We are so excited to have you join us on our journey to Arenedelle!”

After the two students read their statements, the Mayor read the proclamation, part of which read,

“Until the final performance is completed, the curtain falls, the last smudges of makeup washed away, and the lights turned off – that this (will) be: The Year of Frozen here in Ely.”

MELGEORGE’S..Continued from page 1B

Steve Koch away from his traditional spot at the start/finish line, but like a trooper he was there, appearing no worse for the wear with clipboard in hand keeping track of the contestants.

The chilly wind did seem to drive more friendly conversations inside the lodge, where seating in the restaurant was at a premium all day long, although clusters of people huddled together around their snowmobiles as well. Few chose to sit at the frosty picnic tables, however, apparently preferring to stand.

A number of folks showed up wearing costumes, a recent development for the event, including a pair of giant walking, talking beer bottles who along with their snowmobile and beer sled entry won the day’s fan favorite award. Seriously intense racers might have a hard time fitting in to this fun, light-hearted event where every racer is an old or new friend, although the competition is highly spirited.

Awards were given in antique, classic, and vintage divisions, with ten “other” crowd-pleasing awards such as “beast of show” and “just plain cool.”



And, as always, a good time was had by all.

Results

Antique Division
Rear Engine 8 HP and under – 1. Todd Carlson, Duluth, 1963 Polaris Snotraveler; 2. Lee Carlson, Culver, 1963 Abe Mathews Trailmaker.

2 Cycle 9 HP and under – 1. Wayne Schlauderoff, Detroit Lakes, 1966 Foxtrac RT10; 2. Alex Carlson, Fridley, 1966 Polaris Colt.

2 Cycle 10 HP and over – 1. Todd Carlson, Duluth, 1969 Scorpion Mark II; 2. Curtis Grandquist, Duluth, 1965 Ski Doo.

4 Cycle 9 HP and under

Left: A racer pilots his Polaris TX toward the finish line.

photo by D. Colburn

– 1. Sawyer Smith, Mora, 1965 Arctic Cat D 100; Terry Smith, Mora, 1964 Polaris Snotraveler.

Classic Division
250-300CC stock air-cooled – 1. Jodi Ellsworth, Harris, 1978 Polaris TX; 2. Jeff Harmon, Orr, 1976 Arctic Cat Jag.

250-300CC modified air-cooled – 1. Casey Fenske, Ely, 1971 Arctic Cat Lynx 292; 2. Jeff Harmon, Orr, 1977 Arctic Cat Lynx.

250-300CC stock liquid-cooled – 1. Arin Marks, 1975 John Deere 300.

340-400CC stock liquid-cooled – 1. Kael Richards, Ely, 78 Jag.

340-400CC modified liquid-cooled – 1. Kael Richards, Ely, 78 Jag.

340-400CC modified air-cooled – 1. Ellsworth, Polaris TX; 2. Casey Fenske, Ely, 1978 Arctic Cat Jag.

440-500CC stock air-cooled – 1. Tucker Jacobson, Pelican Rapids, 1974 Arctic Cat Painter 440; Cody Long, Orr, 1976 Arctic Cat El Tigre.

440-500CC modified air-cooled – 1. Jesse Brunner, Cook, 1977 Arctic Cat El Tigre 5000; 2. Eric Jansson, 1976 Jag.

500CC and up stock air-cooled – 1. Tucker Jacobson, Pelican Rapids, 1971 Ski Doo TNT; 2. Connor Bamberk, Duluth, Arctic Cat Panther.

500CC and up modified air-cooled – 1. Cody Long, Orr, 1977 Arctic Cat El Tigre; Otto Stavnes, Hibbing, 1974 Yamaha GPX.

Vintage Division
250-300CC stock – 1. Kevin Parotti, Hudson, Wis., 1980 Arctic Cat Jag.

340-400CC stock – 1. Jim Lavavor, Hibbing, 1979 Yamaha Enticer; Kael Richards, Ely, 79 Jag.

340-40CC modified – 1. Kael Richards, Ely, 79 Jag; 2. Riner Gale, Ash River, 1979 Arctic Cat Jag 340.

440-500CC stock – 1. Kael Richards, Ely, 79 Jag; 2. Brian Najdek, Oak Grove, 197+9 Ski Doo Blizzard.

440-500CC modified – 1. Nels Gabrielson, Orr, 1980 Polaris Indy; Travis Gillette, Coon Rapids, 1980 Polaris Centurion.

550CC and over – 1. Karl Richards, Ely, 1979

Arctic Cat Jag.

Other awards
Mini-Kitty Cat – 1. Owen Bergman, Orr, 1978 Arctic Cat; Lucy Admunson, 1971 Arctic Cat.

Elmer Smith Award (best unrestored) – Hollace Fenske, Ely, 1962 Arctic Cat 500.

Best Dressed – Marnie Kleven.

Beast of Show – Lee Carlson, Culver, 1963 Abe Mathews Trailmaker.

Beauty of Show – Charlie Van Canneyt, 1972 Arctic EXT.

Cutter – Carye Moore, Onalaska, Wis. 1971 Ski Doo Elan and Slay

Rat sled – Case Zachariason, Detroit Lakes, 1970 Snow Pony Min Mater

Fan Favorite – George, Nick, Jack, and Dylan Novak, Beer Buggy.

Just Plain Cool – Scott Gillette, Stacy, 1963 Hus Ski.

Favorite Classic – Darren Rutledge, New London, Polaris TX 500 LTD.



Memories of the Early Days

A fascinating look back at the early history of the Lake Vermilion area

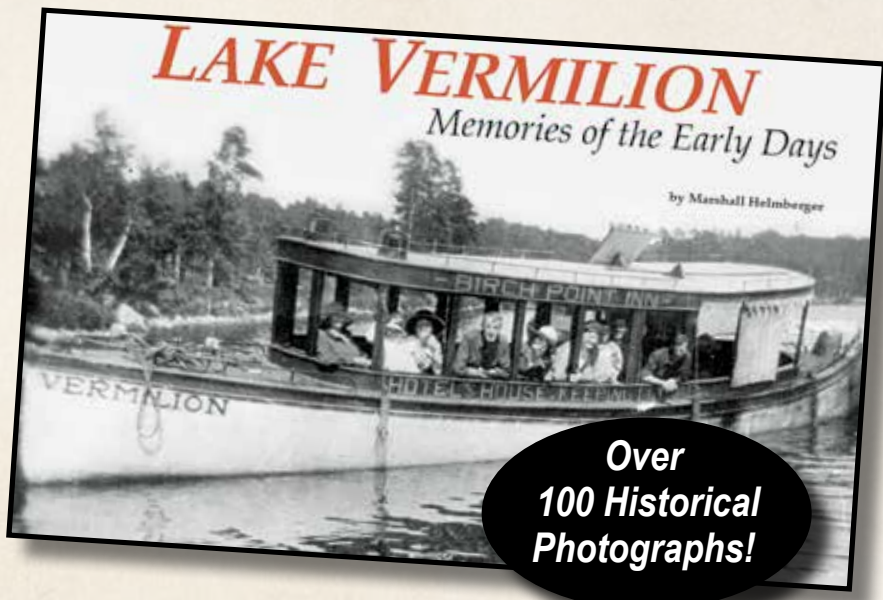
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Obituaries and Death

In its place, website looks back at three years of COVID response

While the data used to populate the dashboard was collected and disseminated by the Minnesota Department of Health's surveillance and data collection system, St. Louis

The answer to those questions can be found in the replacement for the dashboard, something

- The county established eight isolation/quarantine sites to serve people experiencing homelessness who needed a safe place to recover.

To view the county's COVID story map, go to <https://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/departments-a-z/public-health-human-services/public-health/covid-19>.

He is survived by his wife, Robin Doran Braun; parents, Bill and Georgia Braun; mother-in law, Helen Huovinen; siblings, Mary Carol (Chris) Peterson of Florida, Tom (Debi) Braun of Oregon, Mike (Chris) Braun of Ely, Cindy Kuhar of Minneapolis, Beth (Kelly) Patterson of Oklahoma, Cecilia (Randy) Bennett and Peter (Karen) Braun, both of Wisconsin, and Cathy Braun of Ely; brother-in-law, Mike (March) Doran of Tennessee; sister-in-law, Ann (Jeff) Reese of Kentucky; foreign exchange sister, Diana Butterworth of Paraguay; and many nieces, nephews and godchildren.

He is survived by his twin brother, Gene (Ruth); daughters, Nancy (Chuck) McNeil, Patti Alt and Barbara (Blair) Carlson; grandchildren, Andrew (Rochelle), Joe (Karen), Cullen, Devlin, Chaz (Adam), Reed (Steph), Riley, Keenan (Mina) and Eliana; four great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Virginia Sue Stahnke, 74, of Crane Lake, passed away on Saturday, March 18, 2023. Services are pending with Mlakr Funeral Home of Cook.

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VISIT VermilionPetCremation.com or call 218-780-8069 for pet cremation details and rates.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Ely AA OPEN GROUP MEETINGS- in person meetings, Wednesdays & Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, 915 E Camp St., Ely.

MS SUPPORT GROUP- meets the second Friday of the month at 1 p.m. at the Babbitt Municipal Building, senior room. Open to all. For information contact Mary at 218-827-8327.

ORR AA meets Tuesdays at 8 p.m. at Holy Cross Catholic Church, Orr.

TOPS- Meetings every Monday at 4:45 p.m. at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Virginia.

BABBITT AL-ANON- meets Thursdays at 7 p.m. in the upstairs of Woodland Presbyterian Church.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP- Are you troubled by someone's drinking? Al-Anon Family Group is a community-based mutual support program for the friends and families of alcoholics. It is confidential and open to anyone affected by someone else's drinking. Hope Lutheran Church in Embarrass hosts an Al-Anon group on Monday evenings at 6 p.m. 218-984-2037.

VIRGINIA AA WOMEN'S MEETING- Ladies by the Lake. Tuesdays at 12 noon. Peace United Methodist Church, 303 S 9th Ave, please use side door and parking.

AA MEETING IN COOK- Sunday Night Big Book Group meets at Trinity Lutheran Church, 231 2nd St. NE, Cook, at 7:00 pm Sunday. For information call 218-666-2820 or 218-780-7670.

AL-ANON MEETING IN COOK - Ashawa Al-Anon Family Group meets at Trinity Lutheran Church, 231 2nd St. NE, Cook, at 7:00 pm Sunday. This meeting is for families and friends of alcoholics.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CryptoQuote answer

It is all very well to copy what one sees, but it is far better to draw what one now only sees in one's memory. — Edgar Degas

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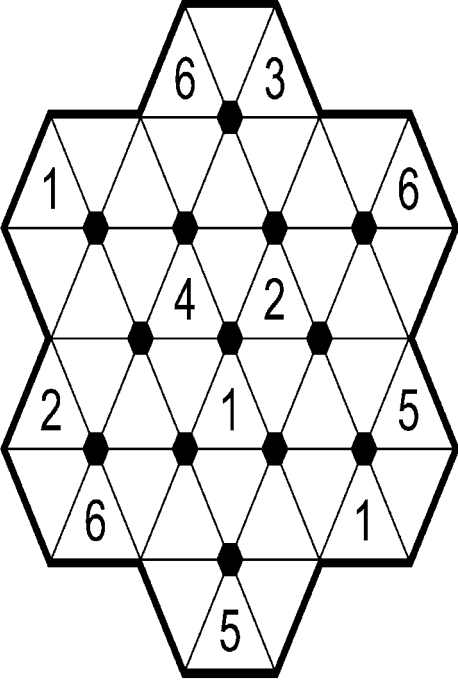
Volunteers in Education (VinE) is looking for tutors to help K-8 students with reading, math, and other content areas. VinE currently serves North Woods School (Cook), NE Range School (Babbitt), Tower/Soudan School (Tower), Mt. Iron/Buhl School (Mt. Iron), and Cherry School (Iron).

Please call or email VinE if you are interested:
218-404-5742 • teresad@vine-mn.org 3/24

SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

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



DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

♦ Easy ♦ ♦ Medium ♦ ♦ ♦ Difficult

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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Super Crossword

ACROSS

1 Downhiller's headwear

8 Mexican beach resort

14 Island home of Odysseus

20 University of Wyoming's city

21 Moon-landing program

22 Had to have

23 They appear before a film's first scene

25 Viewed to be

26 Cakes of cornbread

27 Indy units

28 Bichon — (white dog)

30 Stitch's cartoon friend

31 Bleating females

32 Speedy plane

33 It turns a computer on

35 Always, to bards

36 Vintage auto

38 Active Sicilian volcano

39 Holders of emergency supplies

43 Women with babies on the way

47 Puccini work

51 Gala after a presidential oath

54 Cutting noise

55 Quadrillionth: Prefix

56 — epic scale

57 Musical insensitivity

59 Sets for viewing

60 Perfume by Dana

61 Lured

63 "You Gotta Be" singer of 1994

65 Graduation address deliverer

71 Keyless, musically

72 Many a Netflix show

73 "— Dinka Doo" (Jimmy Durante tune)

75 Candy in collectible dispensers

76 "Mice" or "lice," but not "rice"

81 Blowout, e.g.

82 Look for prey, as a lion

83 Cyber-addresses

85 Membership ceremony

88 Phony: Prefix

90 Camera item for a long or short view

91 Down Under dweller

92 "Me? Never!"

94 — Cruces

95 Says "yes" to

96 Celebratory event for a rollout

102 Swung tool

103 Green gem

107 Prefix with directional

108 Cosmetician

109 Saintly

111 Birds-and-bees class

112 Stick together

114 Bible's first words (apt for this puzzle's theme)

117 Actress

118 Quarterback great Dan

119 Flow out

120 Smallish sofa

121 Slip away

122 City in Arizona or Mexico

DOWN

1 Inclined land

2 "Bam!"

3 Singer Cara

4 Lion features

5 French buds

6 Moral failure

7 Bowler, informally

8 Koi, e.g.

9 Clumsy sorts

10 Signal "yes"

11 Actor

12 Radical sort

13 GI's "Uh-uh!"

14 Owing money

15 PGA peg

16 Shoe lifts

17 Grant entry to

18 Singer/rapper

19 Green

24 Attach

29 "Remington —"

32 Bach's "—, Joy of Man's Desiring"

33 Mediocre

34 108-card game

35 Frozen waffle brand

36 Move in circles

37 "Lose Yourself" rapper

39 Natural ability

40 Many short plays

41 Hoodwink

42 One of the four seasons

43 Wildly excited

44 Blast stuff

45 Sapporo sash

46 Prohibit

48 Just between us

49 Stream in the title of 1957's Best Picture

50 Church area

52 Horse color pattern

53 Fills with freight

58 Irish actor

61 Lawyer

62 — Moines

64 Minis, midis and maxis

66 GPS display

67 Tetley competitor

68 Bridal gown features

69 Grain towers

70 Hammer's striking end

71 Since Hector was —

74 Everybody, in Essen

77 Starts to remove a jacket, say

78 — de Janeiro

79 — -Z (total)

80 Fashion designer

82 Name shared by 12 popes

84 Least cloudy

86 Join forces

87 Fall lawn tool

89 Rx writer

93 A flirtatious look

95 Element #8

96 Safe securers

97 Love, in Italy

98 Not stricken

99 — or two (on occasion)

100 Kidney-related

101 "Neon" fish

102 Schooner fill

103 One of the Bush twins

104 Around a line of symmetry

105 Al — (a bit firm)

106 Knife features

109 Birds sitting on clutches

110 Conical-bore woodwind

111 Hosiery flaw

113 GPS display: Abbr.

115 Trendy

116 "It seems to me," online

	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12	13		14	15	16	17	18	19			
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88																		82					

HEALTHCARE

Ely hospital gets \$285,000 grant for ultrasound equipment

ELY- Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital will be getting three new ultrasound devices, two of them portable, thanks to a \$285,654 grant from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust.

The award, announced Tuesday, is part of a \$26.4 million ultrasound initiative in Minnesota undertaken by the Helmsley Trust to help hospitals and health centers purchase ultrasound imaging devices and boost sonography and point-of-care ultrasound training across the state.

Ely-Bloomenson will receive one fixed GE ultrasound device and two MindRay point-of-care portable ultrasounds through the initiative.

“Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital (EBCH) is extremely thankful for the opportunity to once again work with the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust. They have provided many incredible opportunities throughout the years so that we can improve our technology here at EBCH. Their most recent ultrasound project is no exception,” said EBCH CEO Patti Banks.

Ultrasound uses high-frequency sound

waves to produce images of structures inside the body. This safe, cost-effective tool supports other clinical information to help providers make timely diagnoses and provide appropriate treatment.

Walter Panzirer, a Trustee for the Helmsley Charitable Trust, said the grants will help improve access to exceptional medical treatment for all Minnesotans, whether they live in the heart of Minneapolis or a smaller rural or underserved community.

“Our hospitals and health centers need to stay current with rapidly advancing technology so they can continue to provide top-notch healthcare close to home,” Panzirer said. “These grants help ensure that facilities across Minnesota have the latest and greatest ultrasound equipment and training.”

More than half of the 196 devices purchased through the grants (109) are POCUS machines used by providers at the bed or bedside for immediate patient assessment to determine a course of action quickly. The grants will also provide 69 general ultrasound systems and 18 cardiovascular ultrasound systems, which



The new ultrasound machines will give hospital staff more options for patient treatment. submitted

aid in imaging of the heart.

The training grants include more than \$917,000 to the Minnesota Rural Health Association to support sonographer training, more than \$1 million to expand St. Cloud Technical and Community College’s sonography program, and nearly \$6.2 million to the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians Foundation which will partner with High

Quality Medical Education (HQMEDE) to provide portable sonography training across the state.

About the Helmsley Charitable Trust

The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust aspires to improve lives by supporting exceptional efforts in the U.S. and around the world in health and select place-based initiatives. Since

beginning active grant-making in 2008, Helmsley has committed more than \$3.5 billion for a wide range of charitable purposes.

Helmsley’s Rural Healthcare Program funds innovative projects that use information technologies to connect rural patients to emergency medical care, bring the latest medical therapies to patients in remote areas,

and provide state-of-the-art training for rural hospitals and EMS personnel. To date, this program has awarded more than \$600 million to organizations and initiatives in the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Minnesota, Iowa, Montana, and Nevada. For more information, visit www.helmsleytrust.org.

JOB TRAINING

Northeast Regional Corrections Center opens meat retail store

New job training program addresses statewide shortage of meat processors, store offers quality, freshly-prepared meats

SAGINAW- The Northeast Regional Corrections Center (NERCC), which completed its new meat processing facility last fall, now has attained the necessary authorizations to open a retail store to sell meat to the public, marking the end of the decade-long project.

The new retail store is open Monday-Thursday, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at NERCC, 6102 Abrahamson Road in Saginaw. Beginning May 1, the store’s schedule will expand to be open Monday-Saturday. The store offers a variety

of poultry, beef, pork and sausage, all cut and prepared on site by NERCC residents as part of a job training program.

The state legislature assisted NERCC through three separate bonding bills – in 2015, 2017 and 2020 – to fund the new meat processing facility. The previous meat facilities were built in the 1940s and no longer were up to code.

To open the retail meat shop, the NERCC needed additional permits from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture,



the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other agencies. That process is now complete.

“The meat processing program has been a good service for our residents, teaching skills and setting

them up for a future career when they leave here,” said Wally Kostich, ARC Executive Director, in a statement. “Now, with the addition of the retail store, we are able to make this program a service to our

community, as well, by offering for sale quality meats freshly processed and prepared right here on site.”

NERCC is part of the Arrowhead Regional Corrections system and

has operated as a “work farm that works” since the 1930s. It operates a 136-bed facility on a 3,200-acre working farm that produces chickens, turkeys and pigs, along with flowers, vegetables, hay and barley. It also offers programs that teach carpentry, food service, animal husbandry, mechanics and maintenance skills. Its model of work training increases an individual’s odds of finding employment upon release and reducing recidivism rates.

NERCC is operated by Arrowhead Regional Corrections, a joint powers agency providing correctional services to Carlton, Cook, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis Counties.

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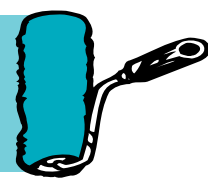
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