



Inside:

Ely gym floor damaged... See /3

Greenwood okays McGrath study... See /11

Tough winter for deer... See /1B

OHV trail expansion proposed...See /1B

The **TIMBERJAY**



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CITY OF TOWER

Council OKs move toward ambulance joint powers

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER— The city council here voted unanimously to pursue a possible joint powers agreement with neighboring townships to operate the city's ambulance service. The action came following the release of the recommendation of an ad hoc committee established by the Tower Ambulance Commission to study ways to maintain the economic viability of the ambulance service.

The service's financial outlook has dimmed in recent years under the burden of low reimbursement rates, a costly paid on-call system adopted in 2018, and more accurate accounting of the service's expenses.

Under the joint powers proposal, the city and area townships served by the Tower Area Ambulance Service would form a joint powers board that would operate the ambulance service in the future. The new board, which could operate as a nonprofit, could well establish a taxing district that would generate the taxes to cover the current

See...COUNCIL pg. 9

TOWER AMBULANCE

Committee report calls for joint powers, taxing district

by JODI SUMMITT
Tower-Soudan Editor

REGIONAL- An ad hoc committee established by the Tower Ambulance Commission is recommending the formation of a joint powers board and a taxing district to provide long-term oversight and financial stability to the Tower Area Ambulance Service (TAAS).

Local and tribal governments that agree to be part of the joint powers district would then elect representatives to a joint powers board which would oversee and directly manage the service. The ad hoc committee is asking for responses to this idea by the end of June.

The group, consisting of representatives from the city of Tower, and the townships of Breitung, Eagles Nest, Kugler, and Vermilion Lake has been meeting since last summer. Bois Forte, Embarrass, and Greenwood were all invited but did not participate in the effort, at least up to this point.

The committee was tasked with looking for options to ensure the ambulance service remains financially

See...COMMITTEE pg. 9



GOVERNOR VISITS THE VERMILION RANGE

Education the focus in Ely

Gov. Tim Walz toured Ely schools, made pitch for more childcare funding

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

REGIONAL— Gov. Tim Walz used the occasion of his birthday last Thursday for a quick tour of the Vermilion Range, with stops in both Ely and Tower.

The governor flew into the Ely airport with snow still falling, but the weather didn't dampen his enthusiasm for talking about two of his favorite subjects— education and childcare.

Gov. Walz, a former teacher, held a press conference at the Ely public school campus that focused largely on the importance of childcare, both to educating young people

Above and right: Gov. Tim Walz, a former school teacher, clearly relished the time he spent with Ely students during an April 6 visit to Ely and Tower.

photo by Walz staff

and expanding the state's workforce.

"We've made it very clear," Walz explained, "that we want this to be the best state in the country for a child to grow up in and for a family to be able to raise their children here... That means there needs to be good quality, well-funded public schools, but also access

See...GOVERNOR pg. 10



Tours wood stove plant in Tower

Touts the value of businesses, like Lamppa Manufacturing, to small towns

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER— Garrett Lamppa had little warning that Gov. Tim Walz would be making a stop at the family business at which he's recently taken the reins from his father Daryl.

"It all happened in about a day and a half," said Lamppa, who had received a call from the governor's planner, telling him that the state's chief executive wanted to tour their plant, recently built with \$1.85 million in funding from Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation.

It was a private visit by the governor, whose staff had asked Lamppa not to alert local media of the visit.

Lamppa wasn't sure what to expect. He told his workers, several of whom are avid Trump supporters, to behave themselves around the DFL governor, who wanted a better understanding of the challenges the company has faced as it expanded its operations in the past few years.

The company, largely through the efforts of Daryl Lamppa, has created North America's cleanest burning wood furnace and they've been expecting rapid growth as the federal Environmental Protection Agency has begun prohibiting the sale of wood furnaces that don't meet

See...LAMPPA pg. 10



Gov. Tim Walz talks to Todd Petersen, of Lake Vermilion, one of the workers at Lamppa Manufacturing, along with Garrett Lamppa, who has recently taken the reins at the family business. photo by Walz staff



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Community notices

The Historic Kaleva Hall annual spring rummage sale is Saturday, April 22

VIRGINIA – The sale is Saturday, April 22 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Kaleva Hall, 125 3rd St. N. Coffee and tea will also be served. Proceeds from the sale will go toward the continued maintenance of the Historic Kaleva Hall.

MSO concerts set for April 22 and 23

REGIONAL- Mesabi Symphony Orchestra will host two concerts. This first will be held at the United in Christ Lutheran Church in Eveleth on Saturday, April 22 at 7 p.m. The second of the two concerts is Sunday, April 23 at 2:30 p.m. at the Goodman Auditorium in Virginia. Tickets are available at mesabisymphonyorchestra.org or at the door.

American Legion National Commander to speak in Chisholm on April 18

CHISHOLM - American Legion National Commander Vincent James “Jim” Troiola of New York state is coming to Chisholm and will speak on issues of importance to Minnesota veterans.

Troiola (pronounced TREE-ola) will address the issue of veteran suicide and The American Legion’s “Be The One” campaign. In addition, he will speak about the importance of membership.

Troiola will visit Valentini’s Supper Club, at 31 W Lake St. on Tuesday, April 18 from 5-8 p.m. for a social hour, dinner and presentation to talk with veterans, community leaders and local residents. Troiola’s visit is organized by Chisholm American Legion Post 247.

“We look forward to sharing with National Commander Troiola the great things our American Legion Family members are doing for our veterans, our families and our communities,” said Minnesota American Legion Commander Jennifer Havlick, who resides outside of Two Harbors. “We encourage members of the public and all supporters of veterans to (come) hear what he has to say.”

Members of the public are invited to attend. If planning to eat, please call 218-966-0603 in advance. For more information visit www.mnlegion.org.

GigaZone gaming championship and TechXpo event set for April 22

BEMIDJI– The 6th GigaZone Gaming Championship and TechXpo with special guest Steve “Woz” Wozniak the co-founder of Apple is Saturday, April 22 at the Sanford Center in Bemidji. The event features free gaming on various console and arcade games, numerous tournaments, door prizes, and the first ever TechXpo. All of the fun is free.

The GigaZone TechXpo is a new part of the event with the mission to spark excitement and create opportunities with technology by connecting students, job seekers, employers, educators, and technology enthusiasts from northern Minnesota. There are over 35 exhibitors that will be showcasing various innovations including virtual reality, drones, simulators, and much more.

The confirmed exhibitors include: Minnesota North Community College– Hibbing Campus, NLFX Professional, Simmuk, Bemidji State University, National Center for Autonomous Technologies, Rocketman, Red Lake Nation College, Kinbee, Bemidji Aviation, Visit Bemidji, Pinnacle Marketing Group, Sanford Health, Wells Technology, Infinity, AirCorps Aviation, Community Voice Mobile App, Marvin, Beltrami Electric, Northwest Technical College, St. Cloud State University, HUG Hydraulics, Bemidji Steel, Ape Man Games, Northwestern Mutual, Minnesota State Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence, Operating Engineers Local 49 Training and Apprenticeship Center, Plum Catalyst, Digikey, First City Geeks, Paul Bunyan Communications, Minnesota State IT Center of Excellence, Central Lakes College, Youth Drone Sports Championship Northern Minnesota Robotics Conference, ICON Architectural Group, Minnesota North Community College -Virginia Campus.

“We are excited to have so many different exhibitors at our first ever TechXpo which will expose a growing regional audience to technology and help them realize their potential to leverage their technical skills and enthusiasm into successful careers right here in northern Minnesota,” said Gary Johnson, Paul Bunyan Communications CEO/General Manager.

Registration for all tournaments will start at the Sanford Center April 22 at 10 a.m. and go until full. For more information visit www.gigazonegaming.com.



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Tower's Gathering Gallery
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Come meet us and your neighbors!
There will be light drinks and snacks available.



ECO-MINDED

Iron Range Earth Fest Saturday, April 22

New location in Virginia offers all events under one roof



Earth Fest 2023 offers numerous activities and exhibits to interest kids and adults of all ages.

VIRGINIA - Earth Fest 2023 will have something for everyone. This year’s festival has been moved to the Iron Trail Motors Event Center, so everything will be under one roof.

Music will be provided by MorningBird who will play from 9-10:30 a.m. in the U.S. Steel lobby, to the left just inside the main doors. MorningBird is Hibbing-based singer-songwriters Rob Wheeler on guitar and Jill Burkes on fiddle. Wheeler and Burkes have been called “musicians who resonate the soul of the region through their music.”

Also performing at Earth Fest are Josh Palmi & Trapper. They will play in the lunch area from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Josh Palmi has been a part of the Iron Range music scene for two decades, as both a solo artist and as part of the Strange Frequencies, PocketKnife, and Josh Palmi & Trapper. Both bands are members of the Iron Range Original Music Association, a loose collective of area bands who write and perform their own compositions.

Hungry Earth Fest attendees can enjoy fest fare from Go Figur’s Alex and Hunter Haugen who will offer a buffet of sandwiches and soups at Earth Fest starting at 11 a.m. The Haugen’s opened their food truck in 2021 as a way to incorporate their love of cooking into their everyday lives. They put a northern Minnesota spin on traditional foods and invent new tasty treats every month or so. Here’s what you can expect at Earth Fest. Smoked salmon bowl, hummus wrap, turkey wild rice chili, fluffnutter sandwich (peanut butter with marshmallow fluff), pulled pork, gluten-free brownie, chocolate chip cookies, coffee, “ugly” potato chips, chocolate milk, and sparkling water/soda.

New to Earth Fest this year is a “Repair Cafe” where festival attendees can learn how to repair stuff instead of throwing it away—from electronics to clothing, repairing is an international trend. The Repair Café Foundation was established with three goals: Bring back repair



into local society in a modern way, maintain repair expertise and spread this knowledge, and promote social cohesion in the local community by connecting neighbors through a low-key event—the Repair Café.

Repair cafés have sprung up all over the world. So, check out the very first Repair Café on the Range, across the hall from the ballroom.

Earth Fest 2023 will also feature e-waste recycling. According to the Global E-waste Monitor, North Americans generate an average of 46 pounds per capita of e-waste per year. For St. Louis County alone, that amounts to more than nine million pounds of electronic waste each year. Right now, Minnesota only recycles roughly twenty percent of the e-waste it produces. The rest ends up in the landfill. “We have a very long way to go to improve, but here’s a start: IRPS will offer free e-waste recycling for desktop and laptop computers, monitors, and televisions under 19” at Earth Fest. Look for the U-Haul Truck and signs in the west parking lot (12th Ave. side).

If you like storytelling, the University of Minnesota-Duluth Sustainability program will offer an open space for discussion, stories, art, and just plain hanging out to talk in the classroom just past the fireplace lounge, across the hall from the ITMEC ballroom. The discussion space follows through on the 9:30 a.m. presentation “Responding to Climate.”

“Responding to Climate” creates an educational and artistic forum where individuals, students, and community members are invited

to explore their personal experience with climate change and the emotional impact these changes are having. There will be three avenues employed for such exploration: provide spaces/facilitation to speak, ask questions, contemplate, and reflect on climate’s current local impacts, integrate climate experiences into educational opportunities, and create and present artistic works that embody participants’ climate experiences.

Earth Fest will also have a dedicated space for children’s activities in Ballroom C. From rubber ducky fishing for the little ones to sack races for the older ones and lots more, children will find something fun to do. Essentia Health will provide a climate-related art activity from 12:30-1:30 p.m. and kids in grades three and above can enjoy a STEM project sponsored by Cleveland Cliffs, St. Louis County 4-H and Iron Range Engineering. Kids will have the opportunity to explore the 4-H Engineering and Design Challenge and join 4-H and Iron Range Engineering as they experiment with hands-on engineering activities, solve challenges and learn how to construct a Rube Goldberg machine out of recycled materials.

Each year, Earth Fest also features a silent auction of local goods and services. The proceeds fund the Community Sustainability Initiative, a Range-wide grant opportunity for area groups to demonstrate sustainability in their own communities. Applications are open year-round and awards are generally for \$500.

The Toyota Arena will host more than sixty exhibitors and vendors from across the area, with about twenty of those offering children’s activities at their booths as well.

Earth Fest is free and open to the public and is offered by the Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability. More information at www.irpsmn.org/earthfest.



Kick Off to Kindergarten

If you have a child who will be 5 years old by September 1, 2023, they are eligible to enter Kindergarten next fall.

You are invited to attend Parent Information and Registration Night on Wed., April 19, 5:30-6:30 PM in Washington Auditorium.

This informational session is a chance for parents to ask questions and start the registration process.

If your child is not enrolled in a pre-school program, please contact the elementary office at 365-6166. ext. 4.

We look forward to creating a positive transition to kindergarten for your child! Feel free to contact us if you have any questions at: 218-365-6166, ext. 4.

BUSINESS

Frandsen Bank & Trust recognized by Standard & Poor's

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

REGIONAL— Frandsen Bank and Trust, which maintains offices in Ely, Tower, and Virginia, and numerous other communities in the Upper Midwest, has been named among the top community banks in the country. That recognition came from the Global Market Intelligence division of the venerable credit and bond ratings firm, Standard & Poor's (S&P), which announced its most recent rankings of banks in the U.S. at the end of March. S&P placed Frandsen Bank and Trust as 23rd on its list of the top 50 community banks in the country with assets between \$3 billion and \$10 billion.

S&P bases its rankings of community banks on returns, growth, and efficiency. In making its evaluations, the respected 152-year-old "Big Three" ratings firm "places a premium on the strength and

risk profile of balance sheets." The other two "Big Three" credit and bond ratings firms are Fitch and Moody's.

Frandsen Bank CEO Chuck Mausbach said he was pleased with the recognition and said it reflected on the quality staff working for the company. "Being a strong, well-run, high-performing bank has always been very important to us, but it means even more in the current banking environment. Our customers deserve to know that their hard-earned money is safe with us."

Frandsen Bank and Trust has assets in excess of \$3 billion and offers a complete array of business, agricultural, real estate, and consumer loans, savings, and financial services, serving communities in Minnesota, eastern North Dakota, and western Wisconsin.

Frandsen vice president and mortgage loan officer Tom Omerza, who works out of the Ely branch, said the rec-

ognition from S&P was well-timed. "Everybody has been concerned and their antennas have been up since the (Silicon Valley Bank) in California and (Signature Bank) in New York failed," Omerza remarked. "When one or two banks go under, then everybody gets concerned about every bank in the whole country."

Omerza expanded on the solid foundation of Frandsen Bank and Trust and how the S&P rating confirms the bank's strength and security. "We (at Frandsen) have been proactive in communicating with our customers, as best as possible, through in-person and our website, just how strong Frandsen Bank and Trust is. I want to pass the message out to the Ely and Tower area that, hey, you've got a community bank here that's strong."

The Frandsen Bank & Trust branch in Tower.
photo by M. Helmberger



ISD 696

Ely School Board floored by gym water damage

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The Ely School Board addressed two notable agenda items during their April 10 session— the gifted and talented program and damage to the high school gymnasium floor from the recent water leak.

Director of facilities Tim Leeson expanded further about the extensive water damage to the gymnasium floor, caused by a leaking water pipe, as reported in the March 31 *Timberjay*.

Leeson reported that an insurance adjuster had visited on April 6 and he gave the board a more detailed description of the extent of the damage. He said approximately a quarter of the top level of the 70-year-old wood floor has already been removed as unsalvageable. He hoped the two wood layers underneath could be dried out and saved, but said that won't be known until the wood dries, a process he predicted could take a month.

It was apparent from the discussion that much of the floor on the west side of the gym will need to be replaced. The damaged floor has taken the gym out of commission, impacting spring sports which traditionally have used it for indoor activities like pitching, hitting and



The floor of the Ely Memorial High School gymnasium where the top layer of water-damaged maple floorboards had already been removed. The floor was damaged by water from a pipe leak on March 17.
photo by C. Clark

track practices. Outdoor practice has been largely limited so far this season due to field conditions.

The gifted and talented program

Concerns over the future of the

school's gifted and talented program were clarified by Superintendent John Klarich after school board member Rochelle Sjoberg, for the second meeting in a row, tried to have the item removed from the agenda.

At the March 27 meeting, it had ap-

peared from the wording of the agenda, that the school district's involvement in the Northeast Area Gifted and Talented program could be terminated as of the end of the school year. But in later discussion on Monday, Klarich revealed that he wanted to restructure the program, not discontinue it.

The gifted and talented program and its coordinator are shared by several Arrowhead area school districts including Ely. When Klarich realized that Ely was contributing more to the program than it was getting out of it, he had resolved to obtain better terms for Ely through restructuring.

"I was looking just for formal action (from the board) since I did get it on the superintendents' meeting agenda for April 19," Klarich told the board. Ahead of that meeting, Klarich said he placed the item on the March 27 agenda for the board's approval, because he wanted to be transparent and inform the board of his plan to restructure Ely's role in the shared program.

"(The agenda item was) to say we were looking at going in a different direction," Klarich clarified. "We still sup-

See **FLOORED...**pg. 5

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OPINION

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

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

Editorial

Ambulance funding

Joint powers and taxing proposal worth serious consideration

Communities around the region are increasingly aware that the old model of funding ambulance services exclusively through the insurance payments generated by users is no longer viable. As services have shifted from largely volunteer organizations to paid on-call models, operating expenses have jumped sharply, and those increases have come at the same time that the costs of purchasing and equipping ambulances are skyrocketing as well.

The ad hoc ambulance committee appointed by the Tower Ambulance Commission has spent the past several months looking for solutions and they released their final report just last week. In it, they recommend the creation of a joint powers board comprised of representatives from the city of Tower and the neighboring townships located within the coverage area of the Tower Area Ambulance Service, or TAAS. That's no surprise since members of the committee have talked openly of the idea at meetings of the ambulance commission. It's also a commonly used means of achieving the goals of the ad hoc committee, which have been to provide a stable funding mechanism for the Tower ambulance as well as increase the buy-in and sense of ownership in the service by surrounding townships. A similar joint powers board has been in place in the Ely area for the past few years, although that board hasn't yet established a taxing district.

It appears a joint powers model, combined with a taxing district, would provide an affordable means of funding the gap between the operational and capital costs of operating the TAAS and its potential revenue. According to the committee report, a property tax levy of between \$11-\$15 per \$100,000 of property value, spread across the townships in the area, would generate the needed revenue to keep the TAAS in the black while dedicating sufficient reserves to pay for capital purchases, like new ambulances. With such a levy, which would come from the special taxing district overseen by the joint powers board, area townships and the city of Tower would no longer need to make their per-capita payments, currently set at \$15 per resident, from their own local levies. The proposal deserves serious consideration by all the local governments within the TAAS coverage area.

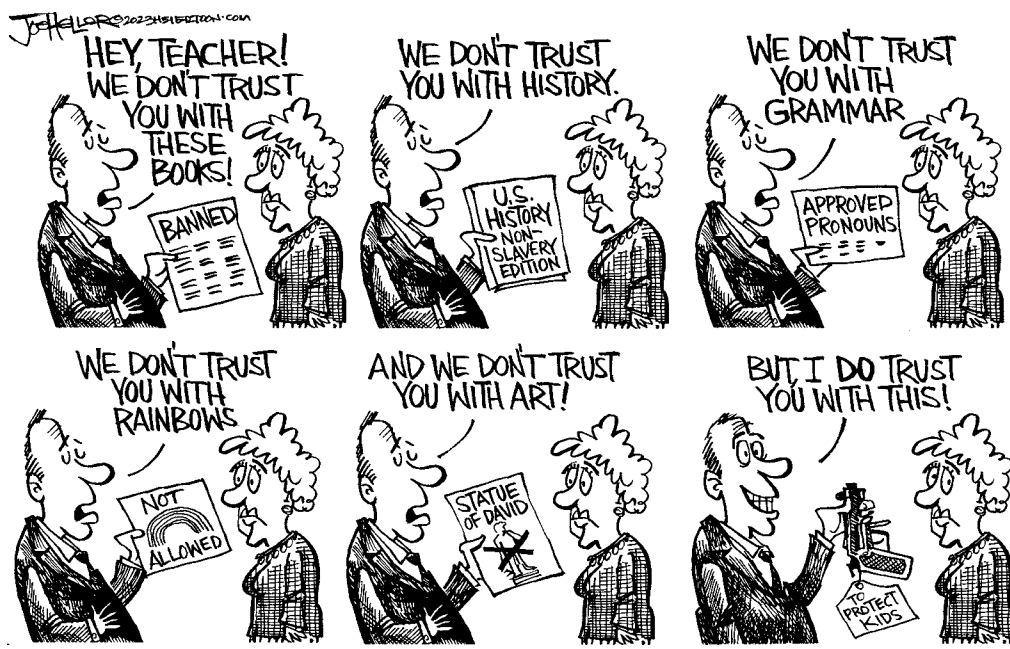
The committee report shows that the cost to taxpayers would double if Greenwood Township refused to take part, which is certainly possible. Greenwood

refused to participate in the ambulance replacement funding last year and, while they were invited, they declined to take part in the ad hoc committee's work, which was unfortunate.

Those who may object to the committee's recommendation should at least offer a viable alternative. We know the status quo is no longer sustainable due to the high cost of paid on-call staffing. While some have suggested turning to a private provider, there's no evidence to suggest that's a viable option for the TAAS coverage area, given its rural nature and lack of a hospital to generate inter-facility transfers. Those are points recently made by an ambulance consultant hired by Greenwood Township, which rejected the option of a private provider given the service's current lack of profitability and limited prospects for generating additional revenue. The consultant also dismissed the likelihood of regionalization, that would combine multiple services in the region into one.

The consultant did suggest that Greenwood could hire its own paramedic who could work in coordination with the TAAS, and that's an idea that the ad hoc committee appears open to pursuing as long as Greenwood is willing to fund it. It would be reasonable, however, to expect Greenwood to join the taxing district at the same time, particularly given that they generate more than a third of the 911 calls within the TAAS service territory. Asking residents of Tower, Soudan, and other area townships—where average incomes are substantially lower than is the case in Greenwood—to pay twice as much as they otherwise would so Greenwood can get a free ride is hardly justifiable.

Greenwood officials say they are dissatisfied that TAAS does not currently offer its own advanced life support (ALS) service. Yet their own consultant highlighted the high cost of maintaining paramedic-level staffing 24/7. Refusing to support the existing basic life support care offered by TAAS simply endangers a service that currently meets needs of the overwhelming majority of its patients, including those in Greenwood, and puts the prospect of ALS service that much more distant. Let's not let perfect be the enemy of the good. All the area townships in the TAAS coverage area should come to the table and be part of a solution that provides a stable and affordable funding mechanism and the continuation of an emergency medical service recognized for its high quality performance.



Letters from Readers

Let's remember what school athletics should be about

Regarding trans youth competing in athletic events: Couldn't - or shouldn't - the decision regarding who should qualify for awards be left to the actual competitors?

Medals and ribbons could be divided among Boys, Girls, and Overalls. The sly humor involved might provide enough social lubrication to let everyone relax and just have a good time.

**Dave Porter
Minneapolis**

How about a right to safe schools?

On the day of the elementary school mass shooting in Nashville I opened a newsletter from Rep. Pete Stauber where he outlined and supported the GOP Parent's Bill of Rights—rights which focus on education. As a retired educator I didn't see any rights mentioned that Minnesota parents don't already have; however, Stauber wrote these rights are necessary due to an increased attention to "radical and divisive ideology." In contrast, I have witnessed recent attacks on education as seen in Florida where there is increased book banning and suppression of open expression. The attacks on "wokeness" and CRT amount to little more than fear mongering on terms and concepts about which most Americans have little understanding. To be clear, Minnesota parents have many opportunities to be involved in their area schools: attending school orientations, seeking support from school staff, attending parent-teacher conferences, joining school or district committees, and attending school board meetings to name a few.

Rep. Stauber, on several occasions, has made reference to his son, a son with special needs. I wonder if he

is satisfied with his son's education and the individual education plan which by law, as a parent, he is afforded a role in developing and accepting. Secondly, in the aftermath of the Nashville school killings, the 13th such mass killing this year, the 157th since 1818, I wonder if the Parents Bill of Rights shouldn't include a right that their children attend safe schools, ones free from weapons of war. In 2022, firearms became the number one cause of child death.

Finally, Rep. Stauber could demonstrate his support for education by authoring a bill to fully fund special education since it is mandated by federal law, underfunded, and a matter close to his heart.

**Pete Boelter
North Branch**

To the artists and lovers of art in the Ely area

I am so grateful to witness our community's support and love of the arts. It brought me so much joy to see so many friends, family, and neighbors coming out to support the Northern Lakes Arts Association's production of "Little Shop of Horrors!" Watching the crowds leave beaming after the show reminded me of the importance of the arts and what they can do for a community. We may not all believe the same thing or think the same way, but by collectively sharing an experience such as a play, art show, or concert, we come together in a way that doesn't happen daily. Ely has always been a place where inspiration and creativity thrive, and now more than ever, we are beginning to see the powerful positive effects they have on our community. The arts have the superpower of bringing people together and allowing us to gain perspective and understanding in a way that nothing else does. Through the arts, we witness the innate human condition that is part of us all. Through the arts, we gain em-

pathy and understanding, and in return, this only makes us better. Watching the radical power of the arts and what they can do for our home has been inspiring for all of us at Northern Lakes Arts Association. We couldn't do it without you, our community. You are the reason why Ely is becoming an arts and culture destination. Whenever you attend a high school band concert, an art show at Ely's Historic State Theater, or take a class at the Ely Folk School, you help Ely become a stronger, more vibrant community. Watching our community come together over the last months over so many incredible arts and culture events has been a joy. Indeed, seeing this makes me proud to call Ely my home.

**Ian Francis Lah
Executive Artistic
Director of the
Northern Lakes Arts
Association
Ely**



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.

Letters are a great way to offer your input to the *Timberjay's* editorial page. We want to know what you think!

COLUMNIST

The historical underbelly of the Trump family

The phenomenon of Donald Trump has dragged me through a river of reactions and emotions, beginning with mockery at the thought that he would believe he could get elected, stunned disbelief on election night, leading into a prolonged period of outrage, despair, and puzzlement, which lasted, well, pretty much up to today. I felt compelled to try to figure out not only how this completely incompetent, caricature of a narcissistic, sociopathic human being



BETTY FIRTH

managed to get into the oval office, but also how so many people, elected and non-, could be fooled into thinking there was any substance behind his ludicrous but dangerous facade.

I sighed with relief when Joe Biden was elected, and did a lot of self-talk to quell intense reactions to Trump's ongoing insanity. He

continued to confound the country with his lies and delusions, not to mention wasting a lot of people's time and taxpayers' money. I reassured myself that he couldn't possibly get away with his shenanigans this time; he'd gone too far. (But...that's just what I thought before he got elected.)

It does appear that with the first indictment rolling in and others very likely in the future, that he may have finally run out of wiggle room. I finally had the stomach to read Mary L. Trump's book, "Too Much and Never Enough; How My Family Created the World's Most

Dangerous Man." She holds a Ph.D. in Advanced Psychological Studies and taught graduate courses in psychotherapy, developmental psychology, and trauma. She affirmed my assessment of Trump's patterns of behavior, "stuck in the patterns of growing, learning, or evolving, unable to regulate his emotions, moderate his responses, or take in and synthesize information." I had often pictured him as an oafy, overblown toddler, hanging on to his diapers, red-faced, screaming until he got what he wanted, the textbook example of an adult holding on to pat-

terns used as young child to gain power or survive but that are inappropriate and ineffective as an adult.

Author Trump offered many enlightening details about his background. I recommended to a liberal friend that she read it, and she said, "Will I have to like him if I do?" I replied, "No, there's no way you'll like him, but you might be able to feel some compassion."

Mary Trump is the daughter of Freddy Trump, Donald's brother. Freddy was

See **TRUMP...**pg. 5

Letters from Readers

Parents should be aware of the influence the 4/20 celebration has on young people

The 4/20 celebration is another opportunity for companies to promote the industry and its products, much like beer and liquor companies do with St. Patrick's Day.

This means adolescents and young adults are exposed to a heavy influence to try cannabis.

Parents of teens, especially, should be aware of this influence. Marijuana has a significant negative impact on a teen's life.

The teen brain is actively developing and continues to develop until around age 25. Fortunately, there are constructive

ways to talk to kids about drug use while also being equipped to notice the signs. As parents, a little awareness goes a long way and may prevent a teen from using marijuana.

"The 4/20 celebrations are a big day for the marijuana industry, especially as the legalization of recreational cannabis is slowly making its way across the nation," said Marcel Gemme, Owner & Founder of Addicted.org.

In Minnesota, the marijuana legalization bill recently cleared additional Minnesota House and Senate committees. Yet, the legalization of the drug does not slow down use. Statistically, 8.15% of 12 to 17 year olds in the state report using drugs in the last month. Over 80% of these teens report using marijuana in the last month.

The early conversations that parents have with their teens are critical. The short, frequent dis-

cussions can have a tangible impact on a teen's decisions about marijuana.

► Parents should talk often and build an open and trusting relationship. Lots of little talks are more effective than one big talk.

► Parents should also make their views and rules about marijuana clear. Discuss beliefs and opinions. Be honest and express a clear message, yet do not lecture or make threats.

► Ask them questions about what they know about marijuana, listen to their opinions, and answer their questions. The conversation goes both ways.

► Lead by example; what parents do is just as important as what they say.

► Provide factual information about the risks and dangers and be prepared to share personal experiences.

The most common reasons why teens try marijuana is be-

cause of pressure from peers and others, self-medicating, and escape.

Unfortunately, the consequences can be life-changing. The adverse effects could include difficulty thinking and problem-solving, issues with memory and learning, reduced coordination, difficulty maintaining attention, and problems with school and social life. More seriously, it increases the risk of mental health issues and addiction.

The signs of marijuana use can be easy to spot. Some signs include red eyes, poor muscle coordination, increased appetite, delayed reaction time, anxiety, panic, and a distinct smell left on clothes and the body.

Age matters for marijuana use just as it matters for alcohol use. For teens, there is plenty of reason to worry. It does make a difference how young a person is when they start using mari-

juana, namely in terms of developing an addiction to other substances later in life.

As 4/20 celebrations have become more commercialized and have moved away from being a counterculture protest, the exposure to teens and young adults increases.

Also, as marijuana becomes legal in more states, its availability to teens will likely increase. Parents must stay aware of the influence and be prepared to have ongoing conversations about marijuana.

Jody Boulay
Quebec City, Quebec

Boulay works as a Community Outreach Coordinator for Addicted.org to help spread awareness of the dangers of drugs and alcohol

CONSERVATION

Minnesota Power exceeds conservation goals

REGIONAL— Minnesota Power continues to lead the way among the state's utilities for energy conservation. In 2022, for the 13th year in a row, the Duluth-based electric utility has exceeded the state's annual goal of reducing electrical demand by 1.5 percent a year as part of an effort to reduce climate-impacting emissions.

Minnesota Power is the only Minnesota utility to have exceeded the goal each year since 2010.

Minnesota Power achieved energy savings

of 2.9 percent of gross annual retail energy sales in 2022, well above the goal set by the state in 2010, and also above the goal of 1.75 percent established in the 2021 Energy Conservation and Optimization Act.

Minnesota Power's Conservation Improvement Program team works with business and residential customers to provide tools and programs to help them reduce energy use. Those efforts paid off by saving 76.4 million kilowatt-hours in 2022, enough energy to power

about 8,433 homes for a year. The savings translate to an approximately 45,191-ton reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide, which is comparable to taking 8,912 cars off the road for a year.

Minnesota Power reported the savings in its annual Conservation Improvement Program report submitted April 3 to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and the Minnesota Department of Commerce.

"Helping our residential customers, businesses and communities save

energy—and reduce carbon emissions—is a key aspect of our sustainability in action strategy and building a clean-energy future," said Frank Frederickson, vice president of Customer Experience and Engineering Services at Minnesota Power. "Our Conservation Improvement team continues to create new offerings and resources to ensure that customers can make informed choices about how they use energy, while powering the rest of their needs with a state-leading supply of 50 percent re-

newable energy. We will continue to be a leader in energy conservation as we move toward our vision for a 100-percent carbon-free energy supply."

Energy conservation is an important component of Minnesota Power's EnergyForward vision for delivering 100 percent carbon-free energy safely, reliably and affordably. The company offers a variety of services, programs, rebates and incentives to help customers make informed choices about their energy use. Services include:

► Rebates on energy-efficient lighting and appliances.

► Rebates on cold-climate air source heat pumps. New technology enables this energy-efficient alternative to traditional furnaces to perform in cold climates.

► Free energy analysis for homes and businesses.

► Refrigerator/freezer recycling.

For more information about these options and other ideas for saving energy, visit www.mnpower.com.

FLOORED...Continued from page 3

port gifted and talented we supported regionally but we're going to do it locally with our instructor."

Sjoberg made the motion to drop the matter from the April 10 meeting because she felt it fell under Klarich's powers and responsibilities to structure the curriculum for the district. Therefore, board approval was not necessary for Klarich to do something that was

already part of his job description.

Reviewing what happened at the March 27 meeting, Sjoberg explained, "There was just not a lot of understanding behind what (the agenda item) was ... The public were concerned and thinking (that) we were doing away with the program."

Agreeing with Sjoberg that restructuring the program was entirely

under Klarich's authority, the board approved dropping the gifted and talented program from the agenda.

Regarding other items on the meeting agenda, the district's school board:

► Received the unsurprising report from athletic director Tim Coombe that because there was "no sign of an early spring," the schedules for softball and baseball required revi-

sion. Coombe released the revised schedules on April 11.

► Approved March 2023 receipts in the amount of \$1,131,405 and disbursements in the amount of \$877,238.

► Approved the March 2023 financial report.

► Approved hiring Suzanna Kelley for the Cafeteria Aide position (2.75 hrs./day, 5 days/week, stu-

dent contact days) effective April 3. The position is for 2.75 hours every day that students are in session at school.

► Accepted the resignation of Amrita Peterson from her paraprofessional position effective June 2, 2023.

► Accepted the retirement of Kirt Hartshorn from his Maintenance Engineer position effective on or before July 10, 2023.

TRUMP...Continued from page 4

the oldest son and presumed heir to the Trump business that their father, Fred Trump had built. The author paints a very clear and detailed picture of the extremely dysfunctional dynamics in the Trump family. Fred, Sr., was interested only in getting ahead and making money. He showed total disregard for his wife and children with the exception of Freddy initially and later Donald. He was an "iron-fisted autocrat" at home, controlling them throughout their lives. Although he was already wealthy and had set up trust funds for his children, he lived frugally with a scarcity mentality. He and his wife, Maryanne, an immigrant from Scotland, were desperate for social recognition and status, only providing for the children what he felt was required to reflect well on himself, such as summer camp, piano lessons, and vacations. They received little else and none of their parents' affection or regard. He was critical and abusive to his children, requiring them to work for the Trump empire and live in Trump buildings, making them dependent on his whims, and manipulating them by threatening to withhold money. This dual dependency for approval and financial support created

unfulfilled needs in all the siblings. Donald's insistence that people agree with him and his endless stream of self-congratulatory language reveals this deficit in him.

Fred, Sr. was drawn to the shallow, self-serving message of Norman Vincent Peale, author of "The Power of Positive Thinking." Fred worked hard and also knew how to hobnob and curry favor one-on-one, so he benefited from the help of highly connected cronies, received government grants, FHA loans, and a lot of good fortune. Peale's message confirmed his thinking that he was rich because he deserved to be. It also affirmed his belief that money determined human value, which meant he should not waste his money on others or on taxes. Donald followed in his self-serving footsteps.

Although Freddy was originally groomed as the heir apparent, he didn't want to work for Trump management. He had always dreamed of flying, so he took lessons and became a commercial pilot, which infuriated his father who immediately cut him off. The criticism and pressure he applied pushed Freddy into alcoholism and the loss of his license within a year. He returned to work for the Trump business, but Fred,

Sr. had passed his crown to Donald, who he discovered had the ruthless, risk-taking qualities he admired.

Furthermore, Donald had the charm and polish that Fred did not, and he saw in his second son the opportunity to build the empire he dreamed of, going beyond Brooklyn and Queens into Manhattan. Never before willing to go into debt, he poured millions into Donald's schemes, who showed early on that he did not have a head for the business, making continual bad choices, and losing money hand over fist. But Fred continued to feed the money machine and Donald's ego to maintain the image of Trump success.

One question that plagued me was why didn't people see him for the failure he was? Why would the banks continue to loan him money when he cheated his investors and employees, foreclosing often? Why would the media pump him up with constant coverage instead of calling him out? Why would anyone with half a brain support him politically? Mary Trump's explanation is that they fed his delusions for their own purposes. While they and Fred enabled him, Donald believed more and more in the fabricated version of himself, surrounded by

"yes men" and the capable people who actually did the work but gave him the credit.

The media took full advantage of his inability to differentiate between flattery and mockery, and Mark Burnett made him and the viewers the butt of the joke in "The Apprentice," presenting him as a successful tycoon when he so clearly wasn't.

His author niece said his "deep-seated insecurities have created a black hole of need" and describes his ego as a fragile thing that must be constantly bolstered. Having grown up in an environment of fear, neglected by indifference, he and his siblings learned that empathy and caring were regarded as weakness. They witnessed their father destroying their brother, who was written out of both parents' wills, not even mentioned in their obituaries, and dead at the age of 42. Failure was not allowed, and the artificially inflated Donald blustered on, unleashed on the world. We shall have to wait and see what is next in the saga.



the
TIMBERJAY

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

Week of April 17

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

Tuesday
Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is April 18.

Greenwood Fire Dept.- Meetings on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

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

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

St. James upcoming service schedule

TOWER- St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower will have services led by the following speakers for April. Services are Sunday at 10 a.m., with coffee an' following.

- April 16- Greg Kuchan
- April 23- Linda Krohnholm
- April 30- Pastor Ellen Taube

Every Sunday, during the service, there is special music with Greg Kuchan on guitar and his wife, Denise Kuchan on electric drums.

Tower-Soudan Joint Powers Rec Board to meet April 18

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Joint Powers Recreation Board will meet on Tuesday, April 18 at 8:30 a.m. at Good Ol' Days. Requests for funding must be made in advance, in writing, and dropped off at or mailed to Tower City Hall, PO Box 576, Tower, MN 55790.

Tower-Soudan-Embarrass Bookmobile Schedule

REGIONAL- The Arrowhead Bookmobiles will be in the Tower-Soudan area on Wednesday, April 26; May 17; June 7 & 28.

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

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

TOWER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Lots of smiles at this year's Easter Egg hunt



The Tower Volunteer Fire Department sponsored the annual Easter egg hunt this year. Over 4,000 eggs were scattered around the parking lot area (since the grass was still rather snow-covered). Pictured clockwise from top left: Matthew Salo thought that the Easter bunny was a very funny guy (submitted photo). Cecelia Majerle scooped up eggs. Avery Planton was a lucky winner of an Easter basket full of prizes and candy. Kolton Orcutt, Tuuli Nelson and Taavi Nelson posed with the Easter bunny. FD member Steve Olson held his daughter Payslee, who won a prize basket. FD member Shawn Gawboy helped kids play one of the games. Ada Gornick worked on opening the eggs she found. FD member Chaz Hanna helped Emma Purkat (center photo) after she filled her basket with eggs. Bottom left: Kids scrambled to collect all the eggs strewn across the parking lot. photos by T. Trucano.



Wellness event set for April 15 in Tower

TOWER- An Integrated Mind and Body Wellness Event will be held in Tower on Saturday, April 15 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. at The Idea Warehouse on Main Street (across from the civic center).

The event will feature presentations on

whole body integrative wellness and speakers include a collective of community practitioners and health and wellness product vendors.

There will be a free expo area with wellness vendors which is open to the public. Cost to attend the series of six pre-

sentations is \$40, with attendance limited to 25. Presenters include Living Well Physical Therapy with a seminar on dry needling; Bare Rhythms Native Medicine with Terah Rinerson; Eden Energy Medicine with Deanna Ellestad; Family Constellation Therapy

with Christy Mesojedec; Norwex with Robin Majerle; End of the Road Yoga with Cindi Rahn-Kloehn; and Reiki and Lyme Disease with Gina Empey.

There will also be personal consultations/sessions offered throughout the day.

Event organizer Terah (Trucano) Rinerson hopes the event will grow and become a seasonal offering, and she also hopes to bring in more speakers and vendors.

To register for the seminars, text/call Terah at 218-780-5554.

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BUSINESS NEWS

Piragis Northwoods 44 years and still going

by CATIE CLARK

ELY- With a double-wide retail storefront plus four other buildings clustered on the sweet spot location of Central and Sheridan, Piragis Northwoods Company is one of Ely's most visible businesses. The firm is also an economic engine for Ely's tourism-and-hospitality sector, employing 50 to 60 every summer and 20 full-time in year-round positions.

The firm is also owned by the Piragis family, who started out small and grew organically over time into the Ely business anchor it is today.

What's inside

It's impossible to miss Piragis when driving into Ely. The retail store combines two former businesses into one on Central along with newer additions tacked onto the back, plus four other buildings next door or across the street: the outlet and outfitting building, a boat storage shed, the Chocolate Moose restaurant, and the "Boathouse" retail location across the street for canoe, kayak and paddling equipment retail.

The business is open year-round. It's easier to list when Piragis isn't open. "We're closed on Christmas, New Year's, Easter, and two days a year when we do inventory," said Jay Gustafson, the firm's retail store manager.

Walking into the retail store, a customer is greeted with seasonal items, seasonal rentals, Ely and BWCAW branded items, crafts

and gifts. Multiple local and Minnesota artisans and crafters have their items and works on sale, like Heidi Pinkerton and Steve Piragis photos, Ely's Sweet Fern soaps, and Seven Sisters jewelry.

Moving deeper into the store, are rooms for clothing, outdoor and camping gear and the bookstore upstairs. Summer outfitting is out of the back of the same building where the discount outlet is located. In the winter, outfitting is out of the Piragis Boathouse building across the street – not to be confused with the Boathouse Brewhouse up the street.

Seasonality

Piragis is affected by the yearly tourism cycle, just like every other tourism-and-hospitality business in the Ely area. The Chocolate Moose is open only during the summer season, along with the outlet store. Everything else is open year-round.

Piragis bulks up its floor staff during the summer months. Along with its outfitting services, which are comprehensive, the business also has guides on its payroll.

"A person could walk in with no gear at all, and we can send them out into the Boundary Waters completely geared up," Gustafson stated. Given that the store personnel and the website both brag about this, the ability to outfit "from nothing to equipped" is something the business prides itself on.

The retail hours also shift depending on the season. "Our winter hours are nine to five. In the



Jay Gustafson, the retail store manager at the Piragis Northwoods Company, inside the "Boathouse" part of the multi-building Piragis complex where canoes, kayaks, and paddling equipment are sold. photo by C. Clark

summer, we open at 6 a.m. and close at 10 p.m.

The hidden business

When the *Timberjay* visited Piragis, the big surprise wasn't the diverse inventory or the capacity of the outfitting business, it was the catalog sales. The firm prints and distributes the "Boundary Waters Catalog," sending out a quarter million catalogs every year. The catalog is also online. Everything Piragis sells inside its store, it also sells through its catalog, including canoes.

"Many people buy canoes (during the winter and shoulder seasons)," Gustafson said, "and have us store them until they come up in the summer to go out into the Boundary Waters.

The other surprise was the impact of the catalog sales. The *Timberjay* inquired what portion of the firm's sales was through the catalog versus the retail store. According to the Piragis' general manager, Elli Piragis, the amount

varies from year to year, but the catalog sales are typically around 40 percent of revenues.

Great place to work

"Steve and Nancy Piragis are good to our people," Gustafson said. "I'm lucky that I have employers who care about my quality of life." He pointed out that employee retention was high, which is unusual for retail, and many Piragis employees have worked for the store for over 20 years.

Regardless, Piragis shares many of the employee problems of other area businesses. Finding enough people to staff the business is an ongoing concern. Gustafson and his colleagues are active at recruiting at area job fairs, including the two Ely at the end of March.

"We're lucky that people want to work for us, but it's not always easy. Housing and childcare are a challenge, not just for us but for everyone."



The "gear room" inside the main retail store of the multi-building Piragis Northwoods Company complex in Ely. photo by C. Clark

AROUND TOWN

Non-Traditional Lender Forum rescheduled

ELY- The Non-Traditional Lenders Forum Lunch was originally scheduled for April 5 in Ely. The winter weather during the first week of April had other ideas, and the event was postponed.

The Non-Traditional Lenders Forum Lunch has now been rescheduled for Friday, April 28 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The location is unchanged. The event will still be at the Boathouse Brewhouse & Restaurant and the lunch is still free.

The forum will bring

multiple non-traditional lenders to network with local businesses and entrepreneurs, including APEX, the Entrepreneur Fund, the Small Business Development Center, Northspan, the Northland Foundation, the Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation, and several others. The coordinating agency for the event is Northspan Group. The Ely Chamber of Commerce and the City of Ely are two of the event's many sponsors. Contact info@northspan.

Story time is just ducky



Governor Tim Walz's visit is the subject of a feature article in this week's Timberjay. We snapped this shot while Walz was reading a story about ducks hide-and-seek to pre-schoolers at Head Start. Note as the Governor (center) asked the children how many ducks were still hiding in the story, State Senator Grant Hauschild (right) signaled the answer to the kids. photo by C. Clark

Upcoming Events

Ely Public Library

ELY- On Friday, April 21, the Librarian Scientists group will make marble rollercoasters from 3-4:30 p.m. This activity is appropriate for Grades three to five. Participants must preregister so the library can order enough supplies for everyone.

Local author Mary Casanova will speak on April 18, 3:30-4:30 p.m. about her writing process.

The next Kahoot online trivia game will be on the first three books in the Boxcar Children series by Gertrude Chandler War-

ner. Register in advance with an email address where participants can receive the link to the game. The game will run from April 26, 3 p.m., and end on May 1, 8 a.m.

The next "get crafty" session will be on April 27, 1-2 p.m. Participants will make homemade coffee scrub. Register in advance so the library can order adequate supplies.

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

All library events are at the Ely Public Library at 224 E. Chapman St.

Ely Folk School

ELY- The folk school will hold a song writer circle on Tuesday, April 18,

6-9 p.m. participants will share works in progress and to talk about writing lyrics. The event is free.

The folk school will hold a class on making English farmhouse cheese on April 20, 2-5 p.m. Tuition is \$36.

The poetry reading and open mic session at the Folk School from April 5 was rescheduled for April 20 at 7 p.m.

Makers' Mornings are every Thursday morning, through April 20, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Registration, a complete class schedule, and tuition/fee information are linked off the "learn" tab at elyfolkschool.com. The above events will be at the Ely Folk School at 209 E. Sheridan St.

Ely Community Education

ELY- Ely Community Education will hold a first time home buyers class on Wednesday, April 19 at 5:30 p.m., in the media center at the Ely school complex. The class will meet in the Ely Public School District media center. Enter the middle door (door no. 1) into the new school addition and turn right. The media center is on the right after the elementary school and school nurse offices. If you reach the hallway right turn, you went too far.

Basic dog obedience classes start on May 8, 6-7 p.m., and run every Monday until June 26, except for Memorial Day. The

class will meet in the Ice Arena. Cost is \$120.

For a complete listing of classes and to register, go to <https://www.ely.k12.mn.us/communityed>.

Northern Lakes Arts Association

ELY- The Northern Lakes Arts Association April Art Show displays the work of Heather Wright in her show, "Weird Wonder: Surrealism from Tiny Nature." The show will be at the Ely's Historic State Theater Her work will be shown from April 17 to April 30. A reception for the artist and her work will be on April 29 from 5-7 p.m.

In Brief

Tuesday Group schedule

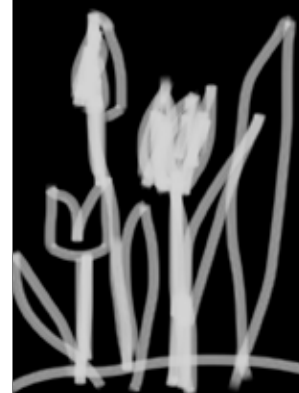
ELY – The Tuesday Group community educational lunch gathering meets every Tuesday at noon at the Grand Ely Lodge. Participants have an opportunity to order lunch. For those interested in being a host, or who have a speaker suggestion, contact Lacey Squier by email at ElyTuesdayGroup@gmail.com or call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

Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

➤April 17: New Resident Social. **This is a Monday event.** Meet and greet new Elyites upstairs at Northern Grounds, from 5-7 p.m. The first wine or beer is complimentary. RSVP is encouraged at: bit.ly/BWCsocial.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2023



a sudden warm up
the sun brightens the landscape
and spring countenance

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.

ORR CITY COUNCIL

Can Orr become ATV destination?

Local committee looking into possibility of new trail connection

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- At its regular meeting on Monday, the Orr City Council signed on to exploring possibilities for getting connected to a growing network of ATV trails in the region.

Tom Richardson with the Pelican Lake Resort Association and Bobbi Malecha with the Dam Supper Club were present to tout the benefits of making Orr accessible to the many ATV enthusiasts who come to the area. Malecha said she's been in contact with Voyageurs Country ATV.

"We're trying to find a way to get the trail system to connect with us here in Orr," she said, "to my place, to the resorts, and to the Bear Association. And they (Voyageurs Country ATV) do have funding for this. Currently this year they're putting in the trail from the river road to the Arrowhead, which is only three miles out of town, which would bring us to not having so much pavement to ride on to go back and forth. It would be nice if we could get a trail going so there's more to offer in this area."

"I think what Bobbi is wanting to do is get a committee together to see if there's really any interest in this," Richardson said. "We don't want to be pushing something that nobody wants. But I think it would be great for

businesses. If would be a source of revenue for the gas stations, motels, resorts. We really don't have any bar restaurants out there so until that happens it's probably not going to be really advantageous for us, but it would add a little bit of an extra reason for people to come up here."

Malecha addressed the council again.

"So, if I can get this committee formed, and I've got quite a few people interested in being on it, I was wondering if I could grab one or two of you to be on the committee, if you guys even want this."

Bruce Black was the first to speak up, and Hannah Manick was quick to follow.

"I'll put myself on that one," Black said.

"I will as well," Manick said.

"It sounds like you're OK with us pushing forward with this," Malecha said. (Voyageurs Country ATV) said they would come and do a presentation for you on how it would help. I just need some direction and guidance. I've never done anything like this before in my life."

Malecha said she wants to work hand in hand with Voyageurs Country ATV.

"They are more than willing to help. They've got a lot of money coming in this year and it is for extending trail use."

New dock

Council members reviewed preliminary engineering and construction cost estimates to replace the city dock behind Pelican Bay Foods. An overhead map drawing of the project provided by Benchmark Engineering shows the new dock located to the north of where the old one was, to be comprised of a 64-foot section eight feet wide extending from the shoreline and a perpendicular section at the end 56 feet by eight feet. A cost estimate put together by Benchmark came in at \$43,650. A construction proposal by Handberg's Marine included in the council packet estimated \$45,000 for construction, and recommended the perpendicular section be extended by four feet at no extra cost to better accommodate three docked boats.

Alan Johnson of Benchmark was present and noted that there is a DNR grant the dock might qualify for. Bemidji used the DNR grant to put up a fishing dock and had to provide a \$10,000 local match. The Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation is another funding option. The dock would likely need to be handicap-accessible, Johnson noted.

Council members voted to authorize Benchmark to prepare design specifications for anticipated bidding and ap-

proved city staff to begin work on funding applications.

In other business the council:

►Approved a revision to the city's Data Practices Policy for Data about Subjects and Members of the Public and named new Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Jennifer Whittemore as the city's data practices designee.

►Updated signatories on Park State Bank/First Horizon Letters of Credit to remove Joel Astleford and include Robert Antikainen.

►Accepted over \$2,000 in donations for the Orr Fire Department's Easter event.

►Tabled the question of replacing the security system at the Orr Municipal Liquor Store until additional information about the reutilization of existing cameras is available.

►Heard from Paul Koch that the water tower standpipe is leaking, and that someone was coming to look at what was needed for repairs.

►Heard from Donna Hoffer that the ambulance service had 13 runs in March, including three medical transports and three mutual aid runs. Hoffer also reported that St. Louis County's reimbursement program will not cover calls made outside of the ambulance's designated service area.

COOK KIDS EASTER PARTY



Above: Nine-month old Taeley Simpson was too small to receive one of 24 bikes given away, but just right for the Easter bunny's lap. Below: Callie Lindberg works on a coloring activity. photos by D. Colburn

Watercolor pouring workshop coming to NWFA Gallery

COOK- Have you ever wanted to just pour paint on a canvas to create a painting? Northwoods Friends of the Arts is giving you that opportunity when Linda Smith presents a one-day workshop on Saturday, May 20 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. teaching two methods of "pouring" using watercolor at the gallery in Cook at 210 S River St..

The supplies needed for the class are normal watercolor supplies including: spray bottle; masking fluid; 2-3 pieces of paper (9x10 or 9x12 - Arches brand holds up best); scrubber (whatever you use); three tubes of paint, Red, Yellow, Blue or your choice -- Linda Smith will provide Alizarin Crimson; Azo Yellow & Ultramarine blue; old bath towel; a bag to bring wet towel home.

To register for this class call Alberta at 218-666-2153 or send an email

to nwfamn.org@gmail.com. The cost of the class is \$15 for NWFA members and \$20 for non-members. There is a specialty supply fee of \$3 which will be paid to artist/teacher Linda Smith at the time of the workshop.

NWFA is a nonprofit membership arts organization located in Cook near Hwy 53. Memberships cost \$25 which helps pay the expenses of the gallery. Membership allows artists to display and sell their artwork and attend classes at a discounted rate. See more information on Facebook, Instagram and on the website, www.nwfamn.org.

Cook Farmers Market to hold planning meeting

COOK- Despite a seemingly never-ending winter, the Cook Area Farmers Market is holding meetings to plan for the 2023 season. Anyone who grows local produce or makes a product locally is encouraged to attend. The

next organizational meeting will be at the Cook Community Center at 6 p.m. April 19.

Join in creating a fun, festive atmosphere this summer on River Street in Cook on Saturday mornings from 8-12. The Market is a great place to get locally grown and organic produce, honey, roasted coffee, baked and canned goods, art, crafts and more. It is also a place for the community to gather for an enjoyable opportunity to visit on a Saturday morning in the summer. If you want to be a vendor and help us plan, come to the Community Center on April 19.

North Woods book fair offers two for the price of one

FIELD TWP- The North Woods PTO will serve as host for the annual Buy One, Get One Free Spring Book Fair April 14-21. The fair will be held in the Library at the North Woods School with the following schedule:

- Friday, April 14, 5:30-7 p.m.
- Monday, April 17, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 18, 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 19, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Thursday, April 20, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Friday, April 21, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

All items available at the book fair are buy one, get one free. Sales tax will be charged. All purchases earn Scholastic dollars that are then used to add books to the library and all classrooms. Any support is welcomed and greatly appreciated.

NWFA features North Woods art student works

COOK- North Woods School art students are to be congratulated for their 2023 collection of artwork presented at the annual Northern Minnesota State High School League Visual Arts Festival. Two North Woods artists came home with "Best in Show"

awards One was "Fever Dream" by Trinity Vidal and the other was "Tangled Words" by Nahvaya Kingbird.

During the month of April the public can view this collection of art from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook at 210 S. River St. The Gallery is open also on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Congratulations are due all of art teacher Rachel Betterley's students.

Children's theater presents Wizard of Oz Friday at school

FIELD TWP- Join 43 local elementary and high school youth in a wonderful journey through the Magical Land of Oz as they take the stage this Friday along with two professional actors in Prairie Fire Children's Theatre's original musical production of "The Wizard of Oz."

The public performance will be Friday, April 14 at 6 p.m. in the North Woods School commons area. Based on L. Frank Baum's classic American fairy tale, the "Wizard of Oz" has been reimagined for today featuring original music and script by Daniel Nordquist. The production also features set and costume design by Deborah Pick.

"The Wizard of Oz" continues Prairie Fire Children's Theatre's tradition of presenting classic tales as you've never seen them before. Prairie Fire's version is set in contemporary America at the beginning and from there a tornado takes Dorothy over the rainbow to Oz.

Tickets are \$5 per person with a \$30 family limit. This Prairie Fire Theatre residency is sponsored by North Woods Community Education. For more information, contact Denise Parson, ISD 2142 Community Education Director at 218-666-5221.

NORTH WOODS SCHOOL THIRD QUARTER HONOR ROLL

A Honor Roll

Seniors
Cooper Antikainen
Kohen Briggs
Brenden Chiabotti
Kiana LaRoque
Angeline Lilya
Olin Nelson
Anya Pearson
Kaden Ratai
Karah Scofield
Steven Sopoci
Emily Trip

Juniors
Evelyn Brodeen
Jonah Burnett
Addy Hartway
Helen Koch
Riley Las
Victoria Olson
Trinity Vidal
Jacob Whiteman

Sophomores

Rory Bundy
Addison Burckhardt
Alex Burckhardt
John Carlson
Ella Cornelius
Nevada Gauthier
Ryder Gibson
Aidan Hartway
Sheyenne Schuster
Sierra Schuster
Dakota Schwarzenberger
Amber Sopoci
Richard Swinson
Lydia Trip

Freshmen

Lincoln Antikainen
Isaiah Briggs
Lauren Burnett
John Danielson
Victoria Mathys
Isabel Pascuzzi

Eighth Grade

Alethea Bangs
Corralyn Brodeen

Andrew Hartway
Carson Johnson
Sophia Mathys
Victoria Phillips
Hunter Schwarzenberger
Kaycee Zupancich

Seventh Grade

Gage Aune
Zoey Burckhardt
Carsyn Burnett
Kayson Gaskell
Sawyer Glass
Johnathon Hampson
Cyrus Johnson
Rebecca Koch
Tysen Lenzen
Joshua Long
Aubrey Olson-Stoltenberg
Vincent Pascuzzi
Alice Sopoci

B Honor Roll

Seniors
Brielle Hujanen
Hannah Kinsey

Lane Kneen
Grace Koch
Benjamin Kruse
Loren LaFave
Dillon Musakka
Madison Spears
Brian Swinson
Avery Thiel
Alexandria Whiteman

Juniors

Annabelle Calavera
Hannah Cheney
Brandon Cook
Madison Dantes
Sean Drift
Talise Goodsky
Alexandra Holm
Evan Kajala
Zefrym Mankowski
Cadense Nelson
Jessa Palmer
Cole Rabas
Ella Smith
Autumn Swanson
Luke Will

Sophomores
Nicholas Abramson
Chloe Anderson
Trajen Barto
Nia Gaskell
Cody Kirkman
Brielle Lindgren
Jay Mattson
Louie Panichi
Ethan Ploof
Lakota Villebrun

Freshmen

Brynn Chosa
Isabelle Koch
Brittin Lappi
Scott Morrison
Brent Morrow
Rogelio Noyes
Sadie Spears
Megan Taylor
John Warren

Eighth Grade

Grace Bundy
Kate Cheney
Presley Chiabotti

Abigail Dargontina
Kaelyn Ehrbright
Emarie Gibson
Ella Kruse
Elijah Lindgren
Michael Nuthak
Cash Rutchasky
Merliee Scofield

Seventh Grade

Sophia Bangs
Gavin Cardona
Colt Chosa
Felicity Hoagland
Sophia Hoffman
Cedar Holman
Rainer Jacobson
Brittan Koskela
Evangelina Mathys
Kalle Nelson
Cassidy Pinski
Evalyn Thiel
Neveah Wipf

COMMITTEE...Continued from page 1

viable.
 “As the service benefits the entire area,” the report states, “it should be managed by the entire area, and the city of Towers should be willing to step back to support the service.”

Currently the city owns and operates the service, so this option would mean the city would need to give up ownership of the service and its equipment.

“To remain operational,” the report concludes, “the service requires additional funding.”

TAAS has been operating with a financial loss for the last several years, though this is a problem being seen at many area ambulance departments, as well as at rural ambulance services throughout the state.

A joint powers board would create a new management structure, involving the entire area the ambulance department now serves. It would hopefully bring in a group with wider management and business experience to oversee the service.

But the real change would be the addition of a funding mechanism, a potential tax levy based on property values, which would spread out any subsidy needed over the wider area, not just the per capita payments currently in place based on

the number of full-time residents.

“Keeping a good Basic Life Support (BLS) service is needed to support Advanced Life Support (ALS) when the communities can help fund an upgrade to ALS,” the report notes.

The joint powers board could also become a stepping stone to the consolidation of other emergency services, such as fire protection.

Tax levy

The report estimates a levy of \$11-\$15 per \$100,000 in taxable property value would be sufficient to make the service run in the black. That assumes, however, that Greenwood Township, which has the largest property tax base in the coverage area, participates. The necessary tax levy would jump to \$30-\$40 per \$100,000 in value if Greenwood opts not to take part. The proposed levy would raise \$130,000 a year in additional revenue for the service and would replace the existing \$15 per capita levy. These numbers are based on information received from the county auditor.

The amount levied could be reduced, or increased, as needed in the future, and would be determined by the joint powers board. The \$130,000 is the group’s best estimate

of what is needed to cover the current shortfall and the expenses (mostly management-related) now being paid by the city.

The report states that adding ALS service would cost about \$332,000 a year, based on estimates from the Cook Ambulance Director Roland Shoen.

“Raising this kind of revenue and capability would increase the costs another almost three-and-a-half times,” the ad hoc committee reported.

The report notes that if Greenwood Township wants ALS coverage, they could consider funding a local paramedic as a first responder at the scene who could then ride with TAAS to the hospital.

“TAAS is willing to discuss adding ALS if the community commits to fund the increased expenses,” the report states, “or will discuss partnering with townships that hire their own local paramedic. This meets Greenwood’s objectives of faster response times, ALS, and not being in the ambulance business, but they would need to support the paramedic business.”

A joint powers board would have to assume the duties and costs now being borne by the city. This would include hiring and firing, management, billing, and grant writing.

The ambulance is currently audited as part of the city’s audit. Audit expenses are projected to be \$22,000 per year. In addition, the city has donated paid-on-call staff time, where city employees take on-call hours during their regular workday, but do not receive on-call wages, and then can leave their job if there is an emergency call.

The report says that under a joint powers agreement, areas served by the ambulance but not belonging and contributing to the joint powers board, could be assessed a surcharge per individual ambulance run.

Essential service

The report notes that the ambulance should be considered an essential service, like the fire department, but at this time it is not funded at the local, state, or federal level. Rising costs for personnel (state requires ambulance services to have on-call staff 24/7), equipment, and new ambulances has meant that the standard reimbursements for emergency calls, especially those paid by Medicare or Medicaid, do not cover the actual costs of operating the ambulance. These issues are being talked about at the state Legislature, but no funding changes are on the table at this time.

Other options

Other options discussed but not recommended included staying with the status quo. While the service is operating and paying most of its bills, there is not enough revenue to cover new equipment and additional operational expenses. The service is projected to have lost \$22,000 last year plus depreciation costs. While the ambulance subsidy and contributions from the city to cover the number of transfer miles helps fund the purchase of new ambulances, there is no funding source for other equipment, such as defibrillators, snowmobile and rescue sled, EKG machines, and more. The study notes that reducing the payroll expense by reducing the wages paid to on-call personnel would risk losing staff and missing calls. If the service was forced to shut down, the EMSRB (Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board) would likely expand the territory for Cook and Ely to cover the TAAS region, which would substantially increase response times.

Another option was to have the other townships in the service area contribute to the city for equipment and a small amount for operations to the current service, or to have the current ambulance

commission oversee these additional contributions.

“This could be done if there was more confidence in the city of Tower running the service,” the report says. “The service is excellent and recognized by the EMSRB as an excellent service with quick response times, and excellent triage and other clinical measures.”

But the report notes that “the wider community is not supportive of giving more money without more control of the service.”

The idea of a combined or regionalized service was seen as problematic at this time because “all of the surrounding services have their own funding issues.” The report said TAAS is open to more partnering and sharing of administrative duties and training, but this is something that can also be put into action by the joint powers board.

The ad hoc committee did reach out to Essentia to see if they were interested in supplying private ambulance service in this area, like they recently did in Buhl. The report states that Essentia said they were not interested in expanding their territory, and that they had agreed to the service in Buhl to better accommodate their transfer business from the Range to Duluth.

COUNCIL...Continued from page 1

gap between operational and capital costs for the service and its available revenue.

“Doing nothing is probably not sustainable,” said city council member Kevin Norby, who served on the ad hoc committee. At the same time, Norby said the cost to operate the ambulance would likely be higher under a joint powers arrangement, since the city subsidizes some of the costs of administering the service and uses staff time to fill some on-call hours during the week.

He said the service would also likely need an independent audit, which would further add to the costs. On the other hand, the joint powers arrangement and a taxing district would provide a broader tax base to help subsidize the service and provide area townships a much greater voice in the operations of the service. “If townships don’t like how we’re running it, it’s a chance to play a role in making it better,” Norby added.

Norby said the ad hoc committee had explored other possible alternatives, including combining with neighboring departments or employing a private service, such as Buhl did recently with Essentia. “That works well for Essentia in Buhl because it’s halfway between their facilities in Hibbing and Virginia, but they weren’t interested in looking at doing something like that here,” said Norby. As for combining, “Ely said no because they have their own problems to work out, and Cook was lukewarm.”

Norby said the committee had hoped a solution might come out of the McGrath study commissioned by Greenwood Township but noted that that study had concluded that neither regionalization nor privatization were likely solutions for the area.

Norby, in response to a question from Mayor Dave Setterberg, said there was a strong consensus on the ad hoc committee for the creation of a joint powers board and a taxing district. “Just letting it go in the hopes that someone else will take it over, well, hope

is not a plan.”

In other business, the council held off on approving a supplemental agreement with city engineering firm SEH for continued work on the water treatment plant the city owns jointly with Breitung Township. The Tower-Breitung Wastewater Board (TBWWB) has already spent about \$253,000 on design and engineering for the long-delayed project and SEH is now seeking an additional \$57,145 to update bidding documents, update specifications, resubmitting documents to state regulators, and updating permit applications.

The city has paid for the funds already expended through a temporary loan that was supposed to be repaid through grant funds for the project, but if the project fails to move forward, the loan will need to be repaid by the TBWWB.

The project had appeared ready to go three years ago, when the Army Corps announced a \$3.375 million grant that was supposed to cover 75 percent of the project cost. Nearly three years later, however, the project remains in limbo as bureaucratic delays at the Army Corps and last year’s failure of the Legislature to approve a bonding bill have tied up funding. Meanwhile, the pandemic-fueled spike in inflation, particularly in the cost of construction, has only exacerbated the problem by driving costs much higher. SEH engineers now estimate the cost of the drinking water plant at \$5.5 million, leaving the TBWWB facing a more than \$2.1 million funding gap.

City officials appeared to want to wait and see if funding proposals before the Legislature are approved before committing additional dollars toward the project.

In other action, the council:

► Heard that the proposal to transfer the corpus of the Gunderson Trust to the Duluth-Superior Area Community Foundation for ongoing management will be heard before a judge on May 30. Following the

hearing, the judge has 90 days to render a decision, although in uncontested trust matters like this, the judge will typically rule from the bench at the conclusion of the hearing. The order will likely then take a week or two to process, according to clerk-treasurer Michael Schultz.

► Heard that the meeting and site visit for the MN Housing Partnership is set for Friday, April 28. Donald Goggeye is the community development manager with the partnership who will be working with Tower.

► Voted to hold a public hearing on the question of whether to rename that portion of Spruce Street in front of the Tower-Soudan school building in honor of the late Carol Alstrom. Some former students of the popular physical education teacher have requested the renaming of the street, but city officials have been trying to assess public sentiment on the question. “There’s a lot of history in this town, so you want to think it through,” said Schultz. No date has been set for the hearing.

► Briefly discussed a longstanding issue with the city’s storefront account, which appears to have been tapped several times over the years for other city spending, leaving it largely depleted. The issue was recently reported as a new development by the *Tower News*, but Schultz said the disappearing funds date back beginning as early as 2009 and that the account has had very little activity over the past few years. The fund, which is now managed by the Tower Economic Development Authority, was recently restored with \$50,000 from the sale of land on Mud Creek Road and a \$50,000 development partnership matching grant from IRRR. The fund currently has approximately \$111,000 available for lending for commercial renovations and improvements.

► Approved a motion to work with architects MacDonald and Mack to perform the bidding and construction administration for the Tower Depot roof replacement project, not to

exceed \$2,500. The council also greenlit an application to Lake Country Power’s Operation Round-Up for \$1,000 to help cover a portion of the cost of interior painting at the Depot. The city has also lined up a \$29,550 grant from Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation and \$10,000 from the Minnesota Historical Society toward the project.

► Established the dates of Saturday, June 3 and Monday, June 5 for the Tidy Up Tower blight reduction effort. Council members will recruit volunteers to assist with the effort on Saturday and city public works staff will finish up hauling of debris on Monday. The city is dedicating \$500 to cover costs of the now-annual clean-up effort.

► Made no decision on what to do with the city’s 6-passenger electric GEM car/truck, which has been inoperable for several years after the batteries quit holding a charge. Council member Joe Morin reported on quotes he had received for new batteries, which were around \$3,500 give or take, not including shipping. Schultz suggested that the vehicle could be stationed at the city’s airport as a courtesy car.

► Approved the hiring of Chaz Hanna as an emergency medical responder with the Tower Ambulance Service. Hanna recently joined the Tower Fire Department as well.

► Approved the low bid for retrofitting the lights under the Hwy. 169 bridge at the mouth of the harbor to LED. The lights require replacement of bulbs and/or ballasts as it is, so Schultz said it was a good time to upgrade to LED. The low bid was \$6,935 from Amptek.

► Approved a motion to allocate \$14,000 from the sewer fund repair and maintenance for sewer televising and \$2,500 from the water fund repair and maintenance to exercise water valves throughout the city.


► Approved the final payout to the Nordic Group

Cook VFW
 POST 1757
 Starting April 1 we will be open Noon to Close every day but Tuesday (closed).
HAPPY HOUR • 4-6 PM
 MON, WED, THURS, FRI, SAT, SUN
 - CLOSED TUESDAYS -
FRIDAY
BURGER NIGHT • 4:30-7 PM
Take-Out 666-0500
 206 1st St SW, Cook, MN

for work done four years ago on trails and lighting around the harbor.

Ritchie Automatic
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 Since 1948 Wells Water Systems
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 1704 E Camp St. | PO Box 89 | Ely, MN 55731 | askjean.net
CHECK OUT askjean.net for current TAX TIPS!

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

Ash River Trail Canister Site 11391 Ash River Trail Summer Hours Wed: 1pm-4pm Sat: 2:30pm-5:30pm	Kabetogama Lake Canister Site 10150 Gamma Rd Summer Hours Mon. & Wed: 9am-noon Sat: 10:30am-1:30pm	Sturgeon Canister Site 8380 Hwy 73 Hours Sun: 8am-noon
Orr Canister Site 4038 Hwy 53 Summer Hours Tue: 9am-1pm, Thu: 2pm-7pm Sat: 8am-noon, Sun: 10am-2pm	Portage Canister Site 6992 Crane Lake Rd. Summer Hours Tue: 2pm-6pm; Thu: 10am-1pm, Sat: 1pm-5pm; Sun: 3pm-6pm	County 77 Canister Site 2038 County Rd. 77 Summer Hours Tue: 1-6pm, Thu: 8am-1pm Sat: 8am-5pm, Sun: noon-6pm
Cook Transfer Station 2134 S. Beatty Rd. Hours Mon: 10am-6pm Tues thru Sat: 9am-3:30pm	Regional Landfill 5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia Hours Mon-Fri: 8am-4:30pm Sat: 8am-3:30pm	St. Louis County Environmental Services Department 1-800-450-9278 Office hours 8-4:30 Mon. thru Fri. stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle

Household Hazardous Waste Facilities
 5345 Regional Landfill Rd., Virginia
 Tue, Sat: 8am-1pm
 3994 Landfill Rd, Hibbing
 Sat: 8am-1pm
 Summer hours effective April 15th through September 30th

THE LEGISLATURE

Lawmakers find pot legalization a heavy lift

REGIONAL- The legislative path to approving recreational marijuana for Minnesota has been a long and winding road, as companion bills in the House and the Senate have snaked their way through more than 20 legislative committees since being introduced in January.

What's become clear through the parade of cannabis industry experts and others testifying at committee hearings is that the original "one size fits all" approach of the original proposals wasn't a suitable, comprehensive

fit for the two-pronged world of hemp-based cannabis-infused edibles and recreational marijuana. A number of other issues have also cropped up, and all of the corresponding revisions to the bills have significantly altered the authors' original plans.

"You're seeing the cannabis bill being rewritten in real time, committee-by-committee, which is what people have been asking for, to not do things in the dark of night," said Rep. Zack Stephenson, the Coon Rapids DFLer who is the sponsor of the

primary House bill, HF 100. "We have a lot of great hemp businesses out there that are doing great things, and we do not want to shut them down."

The Legislature authorized the sale of edibles and beverages infused with hemp-derived THC, the primary psychoactive compound in cannabis, last summer, but failed to provide a robust regulatory framework for producers and vendors. Had the original provisions of the recreational marijuana bill not been changed, they would have threatened the

viability of the hemp-derived edibles business sector.

"The way that this bill is written is confusing," Glenn McElfresh, co-founder of Plift Beverages, the state's first-ever THC drink packaging and distribution center, said in early March. "The way this bill is written is bad for all the businesses who have invested in these low-dose THC products."

Legislators took note, adopting major amendments to deal with regulatory and licensing objections. The 142-page amend-

ment adopted for SF 73, the Senate version of the bill, was almost half the size of the original 300-page proposal. A similar amendment was recently adopted in the House.

An ongoing challenge for legislators has been that while recreational marijuana is illegal under federal law, hemp-derived THC products are not. Sellers of the latter have been concerned that their businesses would be disadvantaged by being too closely

See...MARIJUANA pg. 11

LAMPPA...Continued from page 1

strict standards. But bureaucratic bungling by the EPA left the business in dire straits late last year, although the issues have been resolved and the company now appears back on track.

Lamppa said the visit, lasting a little over an hour, was a positive one that left just about everyone at the plant impressed. "He met all the employees and went into a lot of detail on each of their jobs," he said. "He started asking my dad how he came up with the ideas for reducing emissions and my dad told him

some things I'd never even heard before."

Lamppa said Walz talked about the importance of small businesses, particularly manufacturing businesses, like Lamppa Manufacturing. While Walz acknowledged that the media focus is often on Fortune 500 companies, he said companies like Lamppa Manufacturing are critical to the economic success of small towns in Minnesota.

"He came across as very interested and genuine," said

Right: Garrett Lamppa discusses some of the challenges the company has faced in recent months with Gov. Walz and District 3 Sen. Grant Hauschild.

Lamppa. "He couldn't have come across any better."

The governor was accompanied by state Sen. Grant Hauschild, DFL-Hermantown, IRRR Commissioner Ida Rukavina, along with the governor's communications staff and security detail.



GOVERNOR...Continued from page 1

to childcare in those early years. We know those first 1,000 days shape that child for the rest of their lives."

While his message was focused on his political agenda, Walz was otherwise in casual mode, dressed in blue jeans, a blazer and no tie.

Consistent with his "One Minnesota" budget theme, Walz outlined why he believes state level funding should play a significant role in equalizing both child care opportunities and quality education throughout the state. "If you base the quality of your schools solely on what the property tax base is," Walz said, "(then) we've got schools that have two indoor pools, are brand new, have climbing walls, and are fully fitted. We have other schools that are trying to fix leaky roofs and replacing windows."

Walz laid out why state funding for schools was crucial to creating educational equity in the state: "When more of the funding for education comes from the state level, property taxes go down on local communities, education quality goes up across the state, and we're not spending any more money. We're just doing it in a much more equitable way to make sure everybody benefits."

Walz then used state-wide education funding as an analogy for child care funding, "If we just leave each community on their own, it creates a real inequity that certainly doesn't serve our children (in) the best way." Walz sees current childcare funding legislation working its way through the Legislature as a means to address those inequalities, just like they are addressed for state-level school funding in Minnesota. "It's the right thing to do for the kids who are our future workforce ... (by) making childcare affordable and making sure that the reimbursement rates make sense."

It's also a key to the continued success of the state's economy. "When I meet with the business community, it's not taxes that's the first thing they bring up, it's workforce and housing," he said. Advocates have noted that expanding childcare slots in the state is critical to bringing more people into the workforce. With the state's unemployment at a

near-record low, businesses are increasingly struggling to find qualified workers.

When he wasn't making his political pitch, Walz took time out to meet with a second grade classroom at Washington Elementary, read a book to a group of Head Start students, and inspected a classroom in the high school that needs new windows and doors.

Funding for families

Walz described two potential avenues for improving the funding of Minnesota childcare. The first was through need-based funding for families through tax credits. "We're making sure we're focusing on... cutting taxes for those families that need it the most," Walz said, "making sure we reduce childhood poverty, and ... making sure we're able to adequately pay the workforce that (needs) early childhood (childcare) ... We need to make the economics work for those families, so that we fund them to an adequate level."

According to an April 6 statement from the Governor's office, the latest proposal provides \$547 million in tax credits in 2026-2027 to expand the Child and Dependent Care Credit, reducing costs for 100,000 Minnesota households. Under the proposal, families making under \$200,000 with one child will receive up to \$4,000 a year for childcare costs. Families with two children could receive up to \$8,000, and families with three children could receive up to \$10,500.

Other proposals are currently covered in other bills, including increased funding for Early Learning Scholarships, another program aimed at helping children from low-income families access high-quality childcare.

Funding for providers

The Legislature is also exploring adding higher reimbursements for childcare providers participating in programs like the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). CCAP is partially funded by federal tax dollars.

Minnesota has historically not provided a full "match" of state funds for the federal funds it receives. Prior to the proposed legislation, the state's CCAP reimbursement rate has

been only 35 percent. According to the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Minnesota has the lowest CCAP reimbursement rates in the nation.

"The CCAP reimbursement rates in most states, whether it be Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, if they (meet the federal) match, they get a reimbursement rate of 100 percent. In Minnesota for many years, we were stuck at 35 percent. We're proposing to raise that up. Those are our tax dollars (that) we already paid. (By meeting the match amount,) they will come back and make the reimbursement rates higher."

More proposals

The other problem with childcare in Minnesota, especially in rural locations like Ely, is the lack of providers. According to the Governor's office, other proposed legislation will expand the number of public pre-K seats in programs like Head Start for nearly 25,000 eligible children. In addition, the Governor's budget addresses Minnesota's childcare shortage by increasing staff compensation and supporting providers starting childcare businesses.

Pending legislation includes a proposal to create an Office of Child Care and Community Partnerships at the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). The office would administer a proposed \$18 million over four years in DEED Child Care Economic Development Grants to support childcare and economic development in Minnesota.

In Ely related news, Walz did mention that at least one bill at the Legislature includes money to cover the funding gap for completing the Ely School District's 21st Century Facilities Project, which was negatively impacted by the supply chain and inflation problems which started during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vermilion college

While in Ely, Walz also visited the Vermilion Community College campus, where he discussed his proposed bonding and funding bill for infrastructure, which includes just over \$3 million in improvements to the college facilities in Ely.

Those improvements entail a roof replacement, the renovation of six classrooms, and the upgrading of two restroom pairs to make them compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Proposals, not law

While the Governor has high hopes for additional funding for education and childcare, none of the bills covering the funding for tax credits and provider reimbursements have passed both chambers of the Legislature.

Two standalone childcare bills, HF 13 and HF 150, passed the House in February, but the measures remain in committee in the Senate. Most legislation passes toward the end of the session, and with six weeks left in the session following the Easter break, the Legislature has not yet entered the home stretch.

HF 13 increases the CCAP reimbursement rates for child care providers. HF 150 provides \$12 million to extend pandemic-era business stabilization grants until this summer. It would also send \$40 million to the Minnesota Department of Education for Early Learning Scholarship Fund for preschoolers. Other childcare bills will be packaged in omnibus bills for easy passage in the time crunch at the end of the session.

According to the childcare bills tracker maintained by the Minnesota Child Care Aware organization, 45 bills have been laid over for inclusion in an omnibus childcare bill. The two standalone bills, HF13 and HF150, and the bills that will be put into an omnibus, contain most of the provisions proposed in the One Minnesota budget which Walz talked about during his visit. Given the current Democratic Farmer Labor Party majority in both houses of the Legislature, the question will be not whether the bills pass, but which provisions will survive to the end.

Even though Minnesota is sitting on \$17.5 billion in revenue surpluses from last year, everyone who didn't get their anticipated funding in the legislative deadlocks last year has been down in St. Paul looking for money. As Ely Schools superintendent stated at the most recent Ely school board meeting, "Everyone is down in St. Paul right

now with their hands out."

Other visitors

Accompanying Walz on his visit were freshman state Sen. Grant Hauschild (DFL), Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Commissioner Ida Rukavina, and St. Louis County Commissioner Paul McDonald. At the morning visit, several Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency officials braved the icy roads between Ely and Virginia to listen to the Governor, including executive director Scott Zahorik, Head Start program manager for Ely Connie Derickson, and Arrowhead Head Start director Gabe Johnson.

Walz's visit did include

some lighter moments. The press conference assembled in the hallway between the new addition at the Ely School District campus and elementary school, just outside Principal Anne Oelke's office. This resulted in several students and teachers cutting through the journalists and government officials gathered to hear the Governor speak. That included Ely Mayor and Washington Elementary fifth grade teacher Heidi Omerza, who led her class through the press conference on the way to her classroom because there was no other way around.

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Board gives McGrath study a lukewarm okay

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOODTWP- Town board members, on Tuesday, reluctantly agreed to accept the McGrath Ambulance Study report, but still voiced several complaints about what they view as missing or misleading information.

Ambulance committee chair John Bassing and member Lee Peterson both complained that the possibilities of contracting with a private provider or greater regionalization of services were not investigated thoroughly enough.

“Consolidation was accepted for schools,” Peterson said. “It needs to be applied to ambulance services. The study didn’t look at ambulance station locations and service area changes. A broader area using Virginia as a regional nucleus needed to be considered.”

Peterson said the township should research the process, outlined in the study, involved in making changes to ambulance’s primary service areas.

Peterson also said he strongly disagreed with the reasoning in the McGrath report that said a hospital-based ambulance service was not an option. The report said that this option would require Greenwood to get into the ambulance business and would mean the township would have to apply for a change in the primary service area. The McGrath report stated that according to the EMS director

for Essentia Health, getting a PSA change would be difficult if the current service providers did not support the change.

“I lean towards this option because I think it is the best for the patient and ambulance staff,” Peterson said. “I believe that it needs to be looked into by the township.”

Bassing said the report should also have investigated having the Mayo Clinic ambulance service provide service in this area and didn’t further explore the idea of having a private ambulance service take over the area.

Bassing also disputed the report’s claim that there weren’t any deficiencies noted with the Tower Area Ambulance Service.

“Our request stated we felt there were deficiencies in response times and level of service,” Bassing said. “It was just obvious. I don’t know how they let that pass. We are fighting that parochialism. They are not agreeing that ALS was a higher level of service.”

Peterson added that in the past, TAAS had missed some emergency calls when they weren’t staffed 24/7.

They both also questioned why the report only looked at regionalized service by combining Tower and Cook, and not the wider area.

The board agreed to accept the study, but they will have Bassing try to negotiate the final fee with McGrath. The board is

not asking the McGrath group to attend a meeting to present the final report.

“They didn’t deliver everything we wanted,” said clerk JoAnn Bassing. “But the final report was much better than the draft.”

“We learned that nothing substitutes for our own learning,” said Peterson. “We need to learn on our own and apply it. We need to put the patient first.”

The board took no action on the Tower Ambulance Commission’s Ad Hoc Committee report (see related story in this week’s paper).

“I don’t think they have the authority to ask us [to join a joint powers commission],” said John Bassing, who asked board members to review the proposal for discussion next month.

“They’ve captured a lot from the McGrath report and put their spin on it,” said supervisor Rick Stoehr. “The people who wrote it don’t have the knowledge to write it.”

Supervisor Barb Lofquist said the idea of assessing a levy based on property values was a no go.

“They should assess a straight rate like the solid waste fee,” she said. “Otherwise, we get screwed again as it happened with the ISD 2142 bonding.”

Clerk’s wages

Chair Bassing left the room as the board discussed a motion from Lofquist about increasing

the clerk’s wages to the 2020 level, an additional \$5,119 on top of the current annual wage. This sets the clerk’s annual wage at \$27,799.

The board voted 4-0 for the motion. John Bassing had left the room for the discussion and vote, since it was a conflict of interest since the clerk is his wife.

Skubic asked about setting office hours. JoAnn Bassing said hours will be starting soon and will be 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday, as well as by appointment.

JoAnn Bassing said there are problems with the phone system not ringing, and Frontier came out to check and said the problem was with the township’s phones. She said they are looking into options for reducing the number of landlines the township pays for, as well as getting new phones if needed.

In other business, the board:

- Again, denied a request from Lee Peterson to have public comment moved to the top of the regular agenda. Peterson wants the public to have input on the agenda, payroll, claims, and making changes to the minutes. He also asked that the claims list be available with the regular packet, which is published several days prior to the meeting. Clerk JoAnn Bassing noted it was difficult to get all the claims processed that early. Peterson suggested moving the meeting day later in the week.

➤ Had a limited discussion on an approved claim from the previous month for sanding on Birch Point Extension and heard a question from Mark Drobac on why the decision was made to have the road sanded. “I would like the township to put up a sign saying this is a minimally maintained road, and travel is at your own risk,” he said. The township was billed \$287 by St. Louis County Public Works.

➤ Will advertise for bids on lawn care services.

➤ Heard that the Cook Fire Department does not want to implement an automatic box alarm system with Greenwood, but would just like to be paged out immediately when needed.

➤ Approved liquor license applications from Shamrock Landing, Gruben’s, Timbuktu, and the Vermilion Club.

➤ Voted 3-2, with Drobac and Skubic voting against, to send a letter to St. Louis County Planning, asking for a moratorium on lakeshore RV parks in the township.

➤ Voted down a motion, 2-3, that would have allowed all supervisors to have keys to the clerk/treasurer office, with Drobac and Lofquist voting for the key access. Right now, keys are limited to the clerk and treasurer.

Read more about this Greenwood Town Board meeting in next week’s paper or online at timberjay.com.

MARIJUANA...Continued from page 10

Vertical integration refers to the practice of one company controlling multiple parts of the supply chain. That could give rise to a few large businesses controlling most of the industry, which is directly opposed to the authors’ intent that there will be widespread economic opportunities for small entrepreneurs through the bill.

Yet, some proponents argue that vertical integration leads to better regulatory oversight and allows for shared costs.

But those who wish to limit the practice point due to its potentially detrimental effect on small businesses entering the marketplace, with less ability to raise capital. Large vertically-integrated corporations that have controlled the cannabis market in other states have engaged in practices that ultimately caused those markets to collapse.

Making up for the ill-effects of legal prohibition that fell hardest on the low-income and communities of color, the bill hopes to provide access via loans and training to people from those communities. Limits on single businesses having

licenses up and down the supply chain is a way to help those communities with smaller businesses. These “social equity” applicant communities include military veterans who lost honorable status due to a cannabis-related offense, a resident for the last five years of a census tract or neighborhood that experienced a disproportionate amount of enforcement, a resident of a census tract with 20 percent or more poverty, or a tract where the median family income did not exceed the greater of 80 percent of statewide or metro area median family income. Such status will earn additional points on the scoring of applications. Added to the list by the amendment are people who have been convicted of a cannabis-related offense and socially disadvantaged farmers.

The bill also authorizes negotiations with Native Tribes for medical marijuana and adult use marijuana.

Additional portions of the bill address:

- The creation of more than a dozen types of licenses for growing, selling, transporting and testing cannabis.
- The creation of

the Office of Cannabis Management to regulate cannabis and take enforcement actions.

➤ Taxing cannabis retail sales at eight percent, in addition to any already imposed local or state taxes.

➤ Creating and funding programs to combat cannabis abuse.

➤ Creating grants to assist individuals entering the legal cannabis market.

➤ Eliminating crimi-

nal penalties for cannabis possession.

➤ Expunging the criminal records of people previously convicted of low-level cannabis offenses.

➤ Giving communities additional leeway for local regulation while prohibiting them from banning cannabis-related businesses.

While the regulatory sections of the bills received extensive atten-

tion in the House and Senate amendments, the directives for personal recreational use have not been as radically revised.

Legislators did agree to reduce the amount of cannabis flower a person can possess in a private dwelling from five pounds to 1.5 pounds, while two ounces may be possessed in a public place.



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Outdoors

Our lives in the
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WILDLIFE POPULATION

Latest moose survey shows stable population

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— There is more evidence of stability in the northeastern Minnesota moose population even as the Department of Natural Resources' latest estimate of 3,290 moose marks a substantial decline from the estimate of 4,700 moose last year. The latest estimate comes following the completion of the 2023

aerial moose survey earlier this winter.

Spotters located a total of 267 moose across 53 sample plots flown by aircraft over a ten-day period in late January, which was down from the 373 moose sighted during last year's survey.

The raw number provides only a starting point, however, as DNR researchers use several factors to develop a modeled estimate of the population. That estimate has

varied considerably over the past decade but has shown no upward or downward trend.

Although survey results suggest a decrease in the moose population from 2022 to 2023, those estimates are better used to understand long-term trends. Factors such as visibility of moose from the air, challenging weather conditions and moose avoidance of aircraft create moderately high sampling uncertainty. This year's greater than

Right: A bull moose makes its way through young regenerating forest at the site of the Pagami Creek fire.

file photo

average snow depth during the period of the survey may have pushed moose into heavier cover, where they are less visible to aerial spotters. Indeed, according to DNR biometrician John Giudice, See **MOOSE**...pg. 2B



WINTER SEVERITY

Deep and dense snowpack posed a challenge for deer

REGIONAL— While winter finally appears to be in retreat across the North Country, the impact of the deep and dense snowpack that's been in place throughout the region for the past several months is likely to be felt for some time within the area's whitetail deer population.

"It's been a tough winter, I would say we're at severe," said Jessica Holmes, DNR Tower area wildlife manager. "It was a milder

season for temperatures, but our snow depths are exceptional, anywhere from 26 inches minimum to over 30 inches in many places," said Holmes last week. That was before this week's remarkably warm temperatures, which spurred a rapid snow melt.

Even so, winter severity index readings were already running at or above the severe level in most parts of St. Louis and Lake counties. Yet Holmes said the index, which adds a point for each day with at least

15 inches of snow on the ground and another for each day with a below zero temperature reading, can only tell part of the story. "A fifteen-inch snow depth is

a lot different than 30 inches as far as deer are concerned," she said. The higher density of the snowpack, the result of more mixed precipitation this winter than in the past, has also made moving through the snow more challenging for deer than with a lighter, fluffier snowpack.

That only got more difficult for deer as of mid-March, when the late-winter crust began forming. "We've had a situation where the wolves were running on top and the deer were busting through," she said.

Other indicators confirm the tough conditions. "We've been pretty heavy on deer depredation calls," said Holmes, who noted that deer are beginning to feed on hay bales in farmers' fields in the Cook area and points south. "You know it's a tough winter when they go after the hay bales." In addition,

Above: Area deer were taking advantage of bare ground on a south-facing slope this week to search for fresh growth. These deer, located near Puncher Point on Lake Vermilion look to be in relatively good shape, likely due to artificial feeding by local residents.

photo by M. HelMBERGER

Holmes said recently retired wildlife manager Tom Rusch had reported seeing evidence of deer eating spruce and balsam fir, which Holmes described as "a last resort behavior" for deer in the area.

While this week's sudden warm-up has dropped snow levels considerably and opened up more exposed ground on south-facing slopes, the impact to the deer population is probably already baked into the cake and is likely to affect the number of fawns born this spring. It's the second moderate-to-severe winter in a row for area white-tails, which is unlikely to help the area's already diminished deer population recover.

And you can bet the impact will be felt when DNR wildlife managers determine antlerless permit numbers for next fall's

hunt. "One hundred percent it will factor into the fall hunting season," said Holmes. "I'm going conservative across the board." That means most permit areas in the Arrowhead will likely once again be limited to bucks only, and antlerless permit numbers for permit areas 177, 178, and 176 could well see reductions over this past year's already reduced figures. "That's my most productive ground," said Holmes, yet much of the eastern half of PA 176 and the bulk of PA 177 have seen significant snow depths since mid-December. "We're keeping an eye on that," she said.

DNR wildlife managers will meet to decide on antlerless numbers later this month. And with most permit areas running below their population targets, hunters should expect a conservative approach. And hunters may be largely supportive of that, suggests Holmes, who said she's received several calls from hunters urging caution.

"We will be listening to hunters," said Holmes. "I do appreciate the folks who have called me and expressed their concerns."



MARSHALL
HELMBERGER

OHV EXPANSION



Prospectors propose new OHV trail expansions

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— A proposal to add about 59 miles of new OHV trail segments and a connecting spur in northern St. Louis County is up for public comment through May 4. That's according to the Department of Natural Resources, which is overseeing the environmental assessment worksheet, or EAW, on the proposal.

The Prospectors Trail Alliance is the proposer of the new trails, which are part of what the club is describing as Phase Two of their plan to expand off-road riding in the region connected to the Prospectors Loop Trail. The new segments would provide new connections to existing OHV trails and a spur to the

Y Store to allow for refueling and other amenities. Among the proposed new trails is an approximately 16-mile segment running from Tower west to Pfeiffer Lake. The proposed trail would follow portions of the Taconite Trail between Tower and a new connecting spur to the Y Store. It will later turn southwest, paralleling Hwy. 169, then turning west onto the Flaim Road and Flaim Woods Road before continuing west down an unspecified corridor to Pfeiffer Lake.

New segments are also planned along the Cloquet Line (approx. three miles), north of Ely, and connecting Mud Creek Road and the Wolf Lake Rd. north of Hwy. 169, to near Mitchell Lake (approx. 18 miles), located south of Hwy. 169. The longest proposed segment, at approximately 20 miles, will run mostly along county and U.S. Forest Service roads between Hoyt Lakes and the Dunka Road, near Babbitt.

About 22 miles of the proposed routes would travel over existing corridors already open to OHV use, including ATVs, off-road motorcycles, UTVs, and jeeps and four-wheel trucks. Just over 27 miles of the new segments would pass along existing corridors that are not currently open to OHV use and would likely require hardening of slopes and bridges across wetland areas. A total of nine miles of new trail would be constructed under the plan.

The proposal is expected to impact about six acres of wetlands

See **OFF-ROAD**...pg. 2B

Outdoors briefly

Don't forget to renew your boat licenses

REGIONAL— The Department of Natural Resources is encouraging boat owners to renew expired water-

craft registrations before this year's boating season.

Boater owners are encouraged to renew registrations online (mndnr.gov/licenses/online-sales.html) or at a local deputy registrar's office rather than by mail. People

renewing online can print out the confirmation page to use as their temporary permit. Boaters also may write down their temporary authorization number from the confirmation page. The registration card and expiration decals will then be mailed to the

boat owner.

To renew online, visit the DNR's online license sales page (mndnr.gov/licenses/online-sales.html), click on "Get Started" and follow the prompts.

THE CHANGING SEASON

Mild air brings migrants

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— This week’s remarkable weather brought more than near-record warm temperatures to the North Country. The southerly breezes also brought with them a flood of migratory birds that have returned to the area, in some cases just ahead of the warm temperatures.

Robins are now back in force, as are redwing blackbirds, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, fox sparrows, and even yellow-rumped warblers, which are typically the first members of the warbler family to return to the region. Others have reported sandhill cranes, turkey vultures, purple finches, kinglets, and grackles have returned to the area. This weekend’s return to more seasonable temperatures is unlikely to slow the flow of migrating birds. Once it begins, the



Yellow-bellied sapsuckers are returning to the area along with this week’s mild weather.

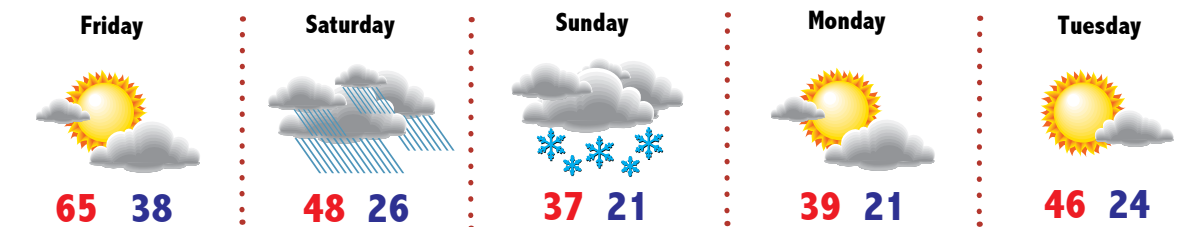
photo by M. Helmberger

relentless pull of the seasonal change, guided by day length and hormones, takes over, leaving most birds on auto-pilot.

So keep an eye out... after a long and snowy winter, spring is finally beginning its march across the North Country.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather



City	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	City	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	City	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	City	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.					
Ely	37	17	0.06	0.1"	Emb.	40	26	0.02		Cook	37	27	0.02		Orr	34	27	0.00		Tower	40	26	0.02	
04/04	34	20	0.06	0.7"	04/04	38	24	0.02		04/04	40	13	0.02	0.4"	04/04	28	21	0.02	0.3"	04/04	36	23	0.02	0.2"
04/05	28	18	0.26	1.0"	04/05	29	20	0.26	0.6"	04/05	27	20	0.11	1.8"	04/05	30	19	0.30	1.5"	04/05	28	19	0.26	3.2"
04/06	35	14	0.08	1.9"	04/06	35	16	0.05	0.5"	04/06	34	16	0.06	1.0"	04/06	28	14	0.01	0.3"	04/06	34	15	0.12	0.5"
04/07	27	5	tr	0.3"	04/07	28	-4	0.00		04/07	28	0	0.00		04/07	39	-4	0.00		04/07	29	-5	tr	0.2"
04/08	41	6	0.00		04/08	42	-5	0.00		04/08	39	-1	0.00		04/08	50	10	0.00		04/08	41	-3	0.00	
04/09	48	25	0.00		04/09	48	10	0.00		04/09	50	9	0.00		04/09	61	36	0.00		04/09	49	10	0.00	
YTD Total			4.20	83.1"	YTD Total			3.46	75.6"	YTD Total			2.61	77.6"	YTD Total			NA	NA	YTD Total			2.97	69.6"

OFF-ROAD...Continued from page 1B

and increase the spread of invasive plant species. Construction of the trail is projected to burn 57,600 gallons of diesel fuel, while trail users are expected to consume about 21,000 gallons of gasoline annually. That would generate about 192 metric tons of carbon emissions per year, according to the EAW.

To comment

A copy of the EAW is available on the project page of the DNR website (mndnr.gov/input/environmentalreview/prospectors-loop.html).

A hard copy may be requested by calling 651-259-5122.

The EAW is also available for

public review at Hoyt Lakes Public Library, 206 Kennedy Memorial Drive, Hoyt Lakes, MN 55750.

The EAW was published in the April 4, 2023 Environmental Quality Board Monitor (eqb.state.mn.us/eqb-monitor-volume-47-number-14).

Comments must be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. on May 4, 2023.

Mailed comments should be sent to the attention of Becky Horton, EAW project manager, Environmental Review Unit, Ecological and Water Resources Division, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette

Road N, St. Paul, MN 55155.

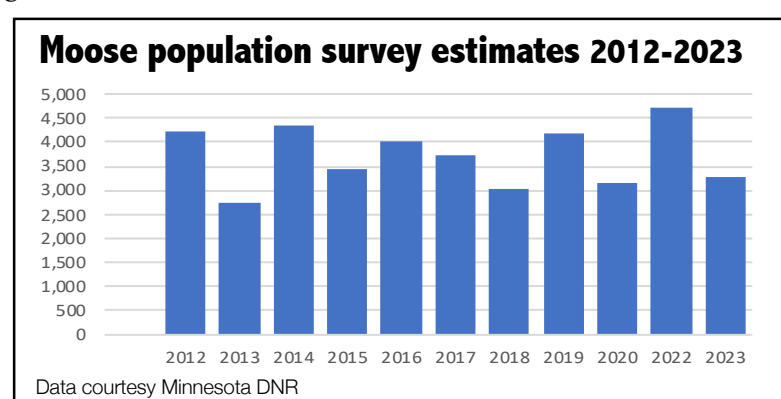
Email comments should be sent to environmentalrev.dnr@state.mn.us with "Prospectors Loop" in the subject line.

Anyone providing a mailing address or submitting comments via email will receive a copy of the decision document, which includes responses to comments. Because all comments and related information are part of the public record for this environmental review, commenters' names and email or postal addresses will be published and publicly available as they appear in the materials they submit.

MOOSE...Continued from page 1B

who drafted the survey report, moose did appear to be more associated with visual screening, such as heavy conifer cover, than usual. The effects of that variable are supposed to be factored into the modeling, but it undoubtedly adds to the uncertainty of the resulting data. That uncertainty makes it difficult for researchers to make confident statements about the magnitude of population changes unless those changes are relatively large and occur consistently over time.

But data collected recently by researchers with the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa suggest the magnitude of this year's decline could be more than an artifact of sampling. They have reported high mortality rates on collared moose and similar decreases in aerial surveys around Grand Portage and Isle Royale. Continued comparisons



in coming years will help answer that question.

The 2023 DNR survey results showed that calves comprised an estimated 16 percent of the population and the estimated calf-cow ratio was 38 calves per 100 cows. Those estimates are slightly lower than last year's figures but are comparable to values observed during the last

10 years, especially considering moderate-to-high levels of sampling uncertainty. Both factors are key indicators of reproductive success.

While estimates suggest continued stability in the population and reproductive success, DNR researchers point out that Minnesota moose remain at risk given long-term trends.

Outdoors briefly

Stream trout fishing season opens April 15

REGIONAL — Minnesota's popular stream trout season opens Saturday, April 15 with quality fishing opportunities in every region of the state, at least where anglers can find open water. Brook trout and splake fishing also open April 15 on Lake Superior and its tributary streams.

Trout anglers can find information on Minnesota's trout streams and lakes on the DNR's website at mndnr.gov/fishing/trout. Anglers will find helpful learning guides and fishing

tips tailored to each of Minnesota's six trout fishing regions. Anglers can also access StreamFinder at mndnr.gov/fishing/trout/map.html, which provides anglers with a description, species list, regulations and access information for trout streams throughout Minnesota, and is modeled after the DNR's popular LakeFinder tool.

Minnesota has roughly 3,800 miles of designated trout streams. Anglers fishing on designated trout waters must have a trout stamp validation in addition to an angling license. Complete trout season details are available at the DNR's fishing page at mndnr.gov/fishing.



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COUNTY SCHOOLS

2142 board develops response to Native parent committee

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

VIRGINIA- It was apparent at Tuesday's ISD 2142 board working session that communication and understanding between the district and its American Indian Parent Advisory Committee is still a work in progress.

In February, AIPAC members voted to notify the board that "we attest that the school board and/or district are not compliant with Minnesota Statutes and that the school board and/or district are not meeting the needs of American Indian students." The so-called vote of nonconurrence was accompanied by a list of 10 recommendations the district should adopt to become compliant with the regulations as AIPAC understood them.

But as district Director of Federal Programs Kim Jordan worked with board members on a response to the recommendations, she expressed confidence that the district is in compliance with all regulations regarding the Indian Education program.

"We're going by what it currently is, and we do try to follow the state statutes," Jordan said. "We are doing what we're supposed to be doing. We are in compliance."

Jordan allowed that some best practices in the regulations that parents would like to see, such as having the percentage of Native staff equal to the percentage of Native students, are outside the district's ability to provide, but that doesn't mean the district is out of compliance

District disagrees with AIPAC conclusion that standards aren't being met

for not being able to provide that.

"Sometimes we can't because of financial considerations or we don't have the staff, but we do our best according to the statutes that are [in place] right now," Jordan said.

Board member Chris Koivisto noted that AIPAC recommendations inferred that the district was not in compliance.

"But we are in compliance, so there's nothing to be done there, right?" Koivisto asked.

"Right," Jordan confirmed.

Responding to AIPAC's recommendation for full collaboration in writing all aid grants, Jordan indicated that is a shared goal that has been difficult to achieve of late because of issues with AIPAC functions during the COVID pandemic.

"It kind of fell away and they didn't really meet, but now they're getting organized again and they're gaining speed," Jordan told the board. "We are excited to work with them. We just have to have common definitions of what collaboration means so that we can support our programs and make sure our American Indian students are getting what they need to be successful."

AIPAC's third recommendation was for district personnel to read and adhere to AIPAC's bylaws, and while not a specific regulatory issue, board members requested that they be provided with copies to review.

AIPAC recommended that the district reinstate a full-time Indian Education director, but

Jordan pointed out that regulations don't require such a position. In her draft response that she reviewed with the board, she explained that the district employs a full-time cultural liaison, and that Jordan serves half-time as Director of Indigenous Education. That has allowed the program to run effectively, she said.

For the recommendation that the district needs to be in compliance with teaching American Indian standards in all classrooms, Jordan said the resources are in place for that to happen.

"Our teachers are given supports and resources to do this," she said. "They know what the standards are. We have given them a list of what they are and how they line up with our current academic standards. And then if they need resources, they just need to reach out to their staff at the school."

The Minnesota Department of Education has a self-assessment tool for Indian Education programs, and AIPAC recommended that the district work toward attaining excellent ratings.

Board member Bob Larson directed a question to Jordan.

"When you meet with the parent group, do they understand that you can't do everything at once, is that agreed upon?"

"I hope so," Jordan replied. "That's a point I'll have to make sure I make next time I meet with them. We've talked about the rubric. Like you said, there

are some things that are an easy fix and there's some that it's going to take some time."

At that point, Superintendent Reggie Engebretson joined the conversation noting that communication and collaboration with AIPAC is evolving.

"We are in the middle of some growing pains working together and building this collaboration with the AIPAC committee," Engebretson said. "We found out we're not supposed to call an AIPAC meeting together, the AIPAC committee meets on their own and it's up to them if they want to invite Kim (Johnson) and I. The AIPAC committee revised the budget that we had and I think the perception might have been that I was supposed to accept it. So, we had a meeting on Zoom with the Indian Education Director at the state, and I said we're supposed to collaborate, right? I was struggling that one group says this is our budget and they're not part of the school's budget, and she agreed. So, we're trying to understand and use the same language for this collaboration—what does it mean? We're trying to work and we want to work together. It's just being clear on what the roles are."

Board member Rob Marino said roles need to be more clearly understood based on his experience of attending an AIPAC meeting via Zoom.

"We'll be happy to listen and figure out what everybody's role is, because at that meeting I wasn't quite sure what everybody's role was and what they

expected and what we expected, but they'll come together," he said.

Being on the same page was a recurring theme as the board continued to review Jordan's draft responses to AIPAC. Jordan noted that the district has an open line of communication with the state office, and that representatives will be coming up in May for a visit to help facilitate collaboration between the two groups.

Jordan will incorporate the board's suggestions into her draft and present the final document for approval at the next board meeting so that it can be delivered to AIPAC.

The board also heard a presentation from Senior Consultant Julie Baeb of TeamWorks, the organization that is facilitating the district's comprehensive strategic plan development. Board members expressed their approval of the work TeamWorks has done to solicit engagement of all of the constituent stakeholders of the district and the thoroughness of the process. Baeb responded to their concerns about coming up with a strategic plan that doesn't become a document sitting in a file cabinet by describing how the plan incorporates specific performance measurements that are reviewed regularly and are aligned with the directions the district wants to go. The plan as constructed will work as a management tool to guide decision making and performance at all levels of the district, she said.

Obituaries and Death Notices



Patricia Mason

Patricia Griffis Waisanen Mason made her final boarding call and "slipped the surly bonds of earth" on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023. She died at home in Albany, Ore., with her copilot and husband Bill Mason by her side. Over the last six years he walked each step of the "long goodbye" with her, lovingly caring for her until the end.

Pat enjoyed a good laugh and a good story. Her family invites you to join them for both at a celebration of Pat's life from noon to 3 p.m. on Sunday, July 16 at the Embarrass Town Hall. In lieu of flow-

ers, the family would appreciate donations to the hospice of your choice.

Pat had many roles in her life. She was an RN, Nurse Practitioner, MSW Counselor, and Hospice Social Worker. She was also a wife, mother and grandmother. While in high school she met and married George Waisanen. Over the next 21 years they raised five children on the farm in Embarrass.

Pat was an adventurer and lived the adage, "Life is not a spectator sport!" She became a private pilot in her 40's and spent the rest of her life having fun while checking off items on her bucket list. They included piloting her plane into Oshkosh for the annual fly-in, joining a mariachi band when possible, and spending most weekends at fly-ins all over the south. In 1995, she fulfilled a dream to see Alaska from a single-engine plane. She piloted her Cessna from Texas to Arizona, up the coast of California to Oregon, where she picked up her

co-pilot Bill Mason. They explored Alaska together and were married upon their return to Minnesota. Pat and Bill spent the next 27 years traveling the USA and Mexico in airplanes they built together.

Pat and Bill retired to Oregon where they continued to build airplanes and explore the west coast. Together they flew to visit children and friends around the USA and Mexico until she was 80 years young.

It was during her years as a Hospice Social Worker in Texas that Pat met many military pilots. Most of them had walked away after the war, never having the opportunity to fly again in the planes they piloted with such heroism. Pat started the One More Flight program in Rockport, Texas. She arranged for veterans to get a last flight in the plane they piloted whether it be a B17 or a Huey. She was recognized as the Hospice Social Worker of the year for the Texas-New Mexico Hospice Association,

in part for this program.

Pat is survived by four children, Candace Dale, George Curtis Waisanen (Jill), James Waisanen (Wendy) and Holly Waisanen; three brothers, Donald, Harold (Dick) and Curtis Griffis, all of Montana. She was predeceased by her daughter, Valerie.

She is also survived by and will be missed by her seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. She passed on the value of a good prank to her grandchildren, who learned to check their beds for "short sheets" or "cereal" if Gramma was visiting. They grew up looking to the sky when a plane passed over, hoping Gramma was back.

Dolores M. Erickson

Dolores M. Schmidt Erickson, 89, of Virginia, longtime resident of Lake Vermilion-Tower, died in peace at the Virginia Hospital on Monday, April 3, 2023, following complications from a fall in her apartment. She was in

the presence of her loving family. Her personal request was to not have a funeral. Her family will celebrate her life at a later date. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by four children, Jerry Erickson (life partner Kathy) of Sandy Township, Cheryl (Debbie) Erickson of Duluth, Debra (John) Suhadolc of West Eveleth and Amy (Mike) Fasulo of Buhl; eight grandchildren; and thirteen great-grandchildren.

Viola I. Hollenbeck

Viola "Vi" Irene Eidal Hollenbeck, 93, of Aurora, longtime resident of Embarrass, died on Saturday, March 25, 2023, at Carefree Living in Aurora. A prayer service will be held at 2 p.m. on Monday, April 17 at Ziemer-Moeglein-Shatava Funeral Home in Aurora led by Pastor Barbara Hefors. Family and friends may gather one hour prior to the service. Inurnment will be in Waa-

sa Cemetery in Embarrass at a later date. Memorials are preferred.

She is survived by her children, Diane (Bob) Gihl of Shoreview, Peggy Koivisto of Pequot Lakes and Rob Hollenbeck of Dallas, Texas; seven grandchildren; several great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; five siblings; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Karen A. Brandt

Karen Ann Brandt, 83, of Tower, passed away on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, at her residence. Arrangements are pending with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

Leif Selkregg

Leif Selkregg, 67, of Ely, died on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, at home.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

St. Louis County Solid Waste Facility Area site hours

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

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Clue: K equals F
RK SDF CMRVCSWP QGCHCQSWHL
CHW PHCDM FM SGW LCVW
QCHSFFM KHCVW, R'P QCUU SGWV
QWU VCSWL.
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CryptoQuote
AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW
One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.
ABV PWS JVGDVHDY HWD
WBAQZEXDE PBC CABEH; ABV
PWS JVGDVHDY HWD LWDDCD-
QZEXDE PBC B XDVJZC.
- ABHHWDP ALLSVBZXWDN
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LOCAL BOARD OF APPEAL AND EQUALIZATION KUGLER TOWNSHIP

Important Information Regarding Property Assessments. This may affect your 2024 property taxes

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Appeal and Equalization for Kugler Township shall meet on **Wednesday, April 19, 2023 from 10 - 11 a.m. at the KUGLER TOWN HALL 9072 HWY 135, TOWER**

The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether taxable property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor, and to determine whether corrections need to be made.

If you believe the value or classification of your property is incorrect, please contact your assessor's office to discuss your concerns. If you disagree with the valuation or classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may appear before the local board of appeal and equalization. The board will review your assessments and may make corrections as needed. Generally, you must appeal to the local board before appealing to the county board of appeal and equalization.

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

Chris Suihkonen, Kugler Township Clerk
Published in the Timberjay, April 7 & 14, 2023

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Faux pas
5 Spider's creation
8 Smith of Fox News
12 Wood strip
13 Hollywood's Gardner
14 Model Banks
15 Twistable cookie
16 "Wonder Woman" star
18 Reproductive cell
20 Old Geo models
21 Conceal, in a way
23 Zodiac cat
24 When a sporting event starts
28 Pvt.'s superiors
31 Historic period
32 Open a toothpaste tube
34 Consume
35 Beige
37 Floral wreaths
39 Mao -tung
41 Coaster
42 Three-note chords
45 Doohickey
49 Hood

DOWN

1 Trudge
2 News reporter
3 Logan
4 "Friends" role master
5 Betting parlor activity
6 Ms. Longoria
7 Lip soother
8 Iowa and Maine, e.g.
9 Lightest element
10 Slangy suffix
11 Bits of butter
17 Solidify
19 Ballet wear
22 Community gym sites
24 "Gosh!"
25 Lob's path
26 Strict task-master
27 Tea choice
29 Wee bit
30 Map lines (Abbr.)
33 Entreaty
36 Applications
38 Venomous snakes
40 Mag. staff
42 End-of-wk. cry
43 Tabula -
44 Ticket half
46 "Mercy Mercy Me" singer
47 Novelist
48 Look after
50 Disney deer

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!
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Super Crossword

Answers

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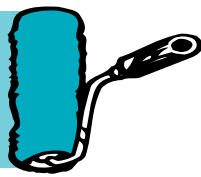
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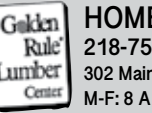
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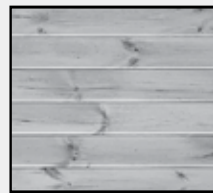
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