



Northern lights... See /4B

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Fire destroys old dairy building... See /3
VNP ice road plan presented... See /11
Restoring a wooden water taxi... See /1B
Deer-proofing your garden and yard... See /4B

the TIMBERJAY



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989 VOL. 34, ISSUE 16 April 28, 2023 \$1⁵⁰

PUBLIC SAFETY

Commerce: Don't make life easy for car thieves

The North Country is not immune to the rise in auto theft

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Vehicle theft is a serious problem in Minnesota, and the North County is not immune, as the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office crime map shows thefts occurring the past two years in all parts of the *Timberjay's* coverage area.

Right: Leaving your keys in the car is an open invitation to a car thief.

And according to the Minnesota Department of Commerce, which has launched a campaign to bring awareness to the issue, the leading contributor to the over 16,000 vehicle thefts last year is

See...THEFTS pg. 9



COUNTY SCHOOLS

Grab bag of legislation could make or break the district's finances

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

VIRGINIA- The St. Louis County School District has seen a downturn in the amount of state aid it receives as a result of student losses during the COVID pandemic, and it isn't clear if funding changes during this year's legislative session will help the district turn the corner. That's according to District Finance Director Kim Johnson.

"The one we're really hopeful about is that they will be increasing the funding formula," Johnson said. "We don't know how much yet."

An increase in the formula would mean the district would receive more money per pupil from the state.

Another increase could come in the area of special education funding,

See...SCHOOLS pg.10

THE LEGISLATURE

House passes marijuana legalization

Skraba votes no, Lislegard yes

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Minnesota moved another step closer to legalizing recreational marijuana for adults on Tuesday when the House approved its version of the cannabis-authorizing legislation on a vote of 71-59.

The House vote fell largely along party lines, although the DFL-authored bill did attract some Republican support.

A companion bill in the Senate

See...MARIJUANA pg. 9

POLITE PROTEST

Culture wars come to Ely

Opposition to weekend drag shows focuses on concerns about child exposure

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- A "Minnesota Nice" version of the culture wars broke out in Ely last Saturday, April 22, as a little over 30 protesters stood outside the Grand Ely Lodge in sub-freezing temperatures to protest the "Disney Drag Brunch," who performed two shows to packed houses.

It was the third time in less than a year that the drag performers appeared in Ely, but this was the first time they were met by protests. Opposition to drag as an art form has grown on the

Above: Protesters braved the cold and the wind on Saturday to protest the drag shows at the Grand Ely Lodge resort. photo by C. Clark

Right: A performer at Saturday's show portrays Cruella de Vil from Disney's production of 101 Dalmations. photo by D. Colburn

religious right in the past year and has been facing official bans in some southern states.

The protesters in Ely were

See...DRAG pg. 9



TRAGEDY ON THE HIGHWAY

Snowy car crash leaves mother and daughter dead

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

VERMILIONLAKETWP- Thirty-five-year-old April Lynn Pecchia, of Eveleth, and her 11-year-old daughter Lucy Lynn LaRue Pecchia, of Tower, both died in a tragic car crash here last Thursday, April 20.

The mother and daughter

were headed northbound on Hwy. 169, when April lost control and veered into the opposite lane, hitting a southbound pickup truck head-on.

Roads were icy and snow-covered at the time, winds were high, and visibility was poor. Both were wearing their seatbelts at the time. The

driver of the truck, 69-year-old Frank Joseph Sopp of Virginia, suffered non-life-threatening injuries and was treated at Essentia in Virginia.

The accident, which occurred near the Tarkman Rd. intersection just north of the Pike River bridge, shut down Hwy. 169 between the Y Store and

Right: Lucy Pecchia, at a younger age, smiled as she reached for her brother Dane during recess at school.

file photo by J. Summit

Hwy. 26 for several hours as the accident was cleared. St. Louis County Sheriff's Office, Tower

See...CRASH pg. 10



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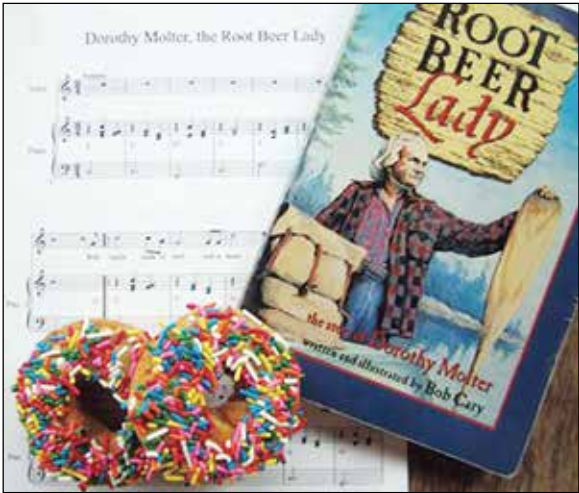
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Community notices



Rootbeer Lady - The Musical returns this fall for shows at Ely's Historic State Theater

ELY - Preparations for the return of “Root Beer Lady – the Musical” have begun with generous support from Ely and the northern Minnesota arts community. Large grants from the Donald G. Gardner Trust and Arrowhead Regional Arts Council along with generous donations from local citizens have allowed local nonprofit BottleCap Volunteer Productions to bring the musical to Ely’s Historic State Theater in September.

The play last produced in the summer of 2017 at Washington Auditorium was deemed an overwhelming success. It was credited with promoting the town of Ely, the Dorothy Molter Museum and introducing a larger audience to the area.

Ely Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Eva Sebesta, said, “We are thrilled to learn this musical is coming back and even happier to have it occurring during our Harvest Moon Festival in September this year. Just another great reason to visit Ely!”

“Root Beer Lady – the Musical” is based on the book “Root Beer Lady” by Bob Cary. The script and score were created by Bob’s daughter Barb Cary Hall.

“I’m excited to be bringing back this passion project of mine that has brought so many people so much pleasure,” Cary Hall, the playwright and Ely resident recently said. “Over the last two years, I’ve fine-tuned the production by changing out songs and adding new characters to create a high quality theatrical production that is both entertaining and enriching for all ages.”

Through song, dance, and narration, “Root Beer Lady-the Musical” offers a window into the inspirational life of Dorothy Molter, a local woman who was the last non-indigenous person to live in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The production features an “all local” cast and company.

Tickets can be purchased in advance on Ely’s Historic State Theater webpage elystatetheater.org for evening and matinee shows Sept. 7-10. For more information email bottle.capVP@outlook.com.

Historic church hosts concert May 21


EMBARRASS- Sisuh Heritage, Inc. will host a concert by Don and Bonnie Guttormson on Sunday, May 21 at 3 p.m. in the old Embarrass Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church on Hwy. 21. The husband-and-wife duo from Gilbert has been harmonizing and playing together since the 1970s. They offer a musical mix of Americana, bluegrass, light pop and country. Admission is \$10 for adults; children 12 years and under are free.

The historic church building was gifted to Sisuh by its former congregation and is a great venue for live music. Parking is available on the lawn. The address is 5083 Hwy. 21, across from Hope Lutheran Church.

This family-friendly concert is sponsored by Sisuh Heritage, Inc. and Knuti Farm of Embarrass. For questions or further details, call 218-984-3012 or visit sisuheritage.org.

Finnish Americans and friends to host Markovich at May 2 meeting

HIBBING- At the Tuesday, May 2 meeting of the Finnish Americans and friends Sandra Markovich will present information on the Aarikka company, which is known for its designs that are “small, wooden and round.” The meeting is scheduled for 3 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church located at 4010 9th Ave. Everyone is welcome to learn about this Finnish/Nordic design company. Coffee and light lunch will follow the program.



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MESABI TRAIL

Never Surrender, Inc. announces Tomassoni Tour – Cycle for ALS

The historic \$25 million dollar gift the late Senator secured against the ALS fight continues to fuel new initiatives on the Iron Range.

EVELETH – Representatives from Never Surrender, Inc. recently announced that a new fundraising event will be launched on the Iron Range in honor of former Minnesota State Senator David Tomassoni who passed away from ALS in 2022. The Tomassoni Tour – Cycle for ALS is a multi-day trail ride that will take place Sept. 14-16 on the Mesabi Trail, using Fortune Bay Resort Casino as their home base.

“The Tomassoni Tour was an idea that started a few years ago by Todd Lauer who was diagnosed with ALS in 2015,” said David Kolquist, President of Never Surrender, Inc. the nonprofit behind the event. “Todd and Senator Tomassoni became friends through their diagnosis, and we were able to get the event concept put together before Senator Tomassoni passed away. It was an emotional day for all of us involved when we told the senator that plans were in motion. We are honored to continue his legacy in hopes of one day finding a cure for ALS.”

The former senator was involved in numerous projects across the Iron Range including the Mesabi Trail and Iron Range School of Engineering. Organizers are bringing these groups together in a unique way to get this event off the ground. “Senator Tomassoni was instrumental in helping to get the Iron Range Engineering school open,” said Todd Lauer, Tomassoni Tour Committee Member and ALS Warrior. “We’re working directly with the students on designing bike racks



Above: Dante Tomassoni (son of the late David Tomassoni) is interviewed on left while President of Never Surrender, Inc., David Kolquist, is interviewed on right. In blue shirt and glasses is Tomassoni Tour Committee Member and ALS Warrior, Todd Lauer.

that can transport up to forty bikes at a time across the trail to provide the red carpet service that Never Surrender is known for providing their participants.”

Never Surrender, Inc. also produces the Black Woods Blizzard Tour and the Kolar Toyota ALS Fishing Tournament. The organization has raised more than \$20 million in the past 27 years and is known for cultivating relationships across their fundraising events. This strategy has created a ‘family’ who has banded together - Never Surrendering to ALS. Never Surrender, Inc. is relentless in their drive to fundraise and help as many people as they can who are living with ALS.

The organization recently gifted

\$50,000 to Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute based in Duluth, an adaptive program that helps people with disabilities lead active and healthy lifestyles. “We are thankful to receive this gift, as it is allowing us to purchase adaptive bikes and other equipment which will help people remain active—particularly in the outdoors,” added Eric Larson, director of Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute Northland. “We are fitting Todd Lauer for an adaptive bike, so he can safely participate in the Tomassoni Tour and be part of something he helped to create.”

This first year of the Tomassoni Tour – Cycle for ALS will offer a Full Ride which will be upwards of 100-120 miles over the course of two days. The Half Ride will offer cyclists a ride between 50-60 miles. The Half Ride will also allow e-Bikes in addition to a standard trail bike.

Registration is now open at www.NeverSurrenderInc.org.

ARTS IN ELY

Gardner Humanities Trust awards \$8,800

ELY- The board of the Donald G. Gardner Humanities Trust voted to award \$8,800 to local artists, art organizations, and fine arts events at its April 12 board meeting.

“The Gardner Humanities Trust had an unprecedented number of submissions this spring, with the requested total in excess of \$30,000 more than three times the amount budgeted for the grant round,” stated Peter Schamber, executive director for the Trust in a statement. “It was a difficult process to evaluate so many outstanding applications, but I am proud to see such a wonderful turnout. I take this as a very healthy sign that more and more artists and organizations are expanding their plans each year since the pandemic.”

► Ella Rue was awarded \$750 to participate in competitive dance

through lessons at Legacy Studio Dance.

► Scott Stowell was awarded \$1,000 to self-publish a book of approximately 40 essays about northern lifestyle and the natural treasures of the Minnesota Arrowhead. In addition, Stowell will host public readings to share his work with the community.

► Shaun Chosa was awarded \$250 to create art for a new art show in Ely featuring large acrylic paintings.

► Boundary Waters Choral Festival was awarded \$1,000 to assist in the Ely High School production of Disney’s “Frozen, a Broadway Musical”.

► Reflections Dance Company was awarded \$1,000 for the summer show “Matters of the Heart” featuring local dancers of all ages and local musicians.

► Mesabi Symphony Orchestra was awarded \$1,000 to present a New Year’s Eve reception and concert in conjunction with Northern Lakes Arts Association and Ely’s Historic State Theater featuring music from Frank Sinatra performed by the MSO Pops Orchestra.

► Ely Folk School was awarded \$1,000 to continue their very successful community dance series from August through March.

► ISD 696 was awarded \$1,000 for elementary and middle school students to work with local artists to design and create two hallway murals in the school.

► Northern Lakes Arts Association was awarded \$1,000 to create a six-day youth theater workshop where youth will learn several numbers to perform alongside professionals during NLAA’s

Broadway in the Boundary Waters Gala.

► The Northern Lights Music Festival was awarded \$800 to present three chamber music and children’s concerts in Ely.

► The Trust allocated \$3,000 for use by the Ely Public Library this year.

The Trust will have a fall grant round with applications most likely due by the end of September. The actual deadline will be published in the newspapers as well as on the website by August.

Any questions about the grant programs, the Gardner Trust, or ways to support the arts in Ely can be directed to Schamber at 218-365-2639 or at info@gardnertrust.org.



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EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

Significant damage from fire at former dairy

PIKE TWP— More than 20 firefighters from five area departments spent more than eight hours on a stubborn, smoldering blaze at the former Aysta Dairy building on Hill Road on Saturday, April 22. The fire, reported shortly before 10:30 a.m., was largely confined to a difficult to access attic space that defied repeated attempts to gain access through the roof. Several layers of roofing materials and dense foam insulation hampered access to the fire and produced considerable amounts of noxious smoke.

Eventually, a large excavator was deployed to remove a portion of the roof to finally extinguish the fire. The cause of the fire is under investigation by the Minnesota State Fire Marshal’s Office.

Fire departments on the scene included Pike-Sandy-Britt, Ver-



million Lake, Embarrass, Cook, and Mt. Iron. One firefighter was transported by a Virginia ambulance to a local hospital and was treated for exhaustion.

The Northland Fire Wire contributed to this report. Photo by P. Makoski

Park superintendent arrested

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Voyagers National Park Superintendent Robert “Bob” DeGross was booked into the Koochiching County Jail on Saturday on a fourth-degree misdemeanor charge of driving while impaired.

According to information provided by Minnesota State Patrol spokesperson Gordon Shank, a trooper stopped DeGross, 54, of International Falls, for speeding on Hwy. 11 in Rainer, just after 7:45 p.m. DeGross showed suspected



signs of impairment, and after further investigation, was placed under arrest on suspicion of driving while impaired.

After completing the processing for driving while impaired, DeGross provided a test that showed he had a blood alcohol concentration of .09, Shank reported. This remains an open investigation, he added.

Fourth degree misdemeanor DWI citations are the lowest level of DWI offenses and typically issued to first-time offenders without mitigating circumstances, and a search of court records conducted by the *Timberjay* found that DeGross has no prior offenses listed. Possible penalties could include 30 to 90 days in jail, and a maximum fine of \$1,000.

HEALTH CARE

Nursing home crisis gets little aid from massive surplus

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

Only \$3.9 million of new money allocated to ailing industry

REGIONAL- Going into a legislative session with a \$17.6 billion surplus to spend, Minnesota’s nursing home industry was hopeful Minnesota legislators would come through in a big way to help with a growing financial crisis that has forced closure of 15 nursing homes in the past year.

But it appears those hopes will go unrealized, as the DFL-controlled House has only allocated \$3.9 million toward nursing home support in the budget, according to senior care advocates.

Nursing homes received some additional one-time assistance during the COVID pandemic, as the state temporarily raised reimbursement rates and approved \$500 million in payments to frontline workers, which included nursing home employees.

But the pandemic brought down a big hammer on the industry in the form of employee flight. Rather than work in envi-

ronments where residents were hard hit by COVID and caregiving became exceptionally tedious, thousands upon thousands of Minnesota nursing home workers quit their jobs, and facilities have not recovered. The Long-Term Care Imperative (LTCI), a partnership of advocacy organizations Leading Age MN and Care Providers of Minnesota, reports that there are 20,000 vacant caregiver positions in senior care facilities.

Those staffing shortages have forced facilities to cut back on the number of residents they can take, directly threatening the bottom line. While 17 nursing homes have closed since 2020, the impact of staffing shortages has reduced capacity by 2,597 beds over the same time period, the “equivalent of 50 average-sized nursing homes,” LTCI reports. In October, 11,000 requests for nursing home care were denied.

And nursing homes are further threatened by a

huge lag in the receipt of state reimbursement of 15 to 27 months.

At the end of the 2022 legislative session, the DFL and Republicans had brokered a deal to allocate about \$1 billion from the then \$9 billion surplus to address the nursing home crisis before the entire budget deal collapsed, leaving the surplus unspent and carried over to this year. No such collaborative agreement to help the industry has been engineered this session.

And when Leading Age MN posted to its Twitter feed on April 21 that “the House Human Services bill has only \$3.9 million in new \$ for nursing homes,” that apparently didn’t sit well with the Minnesota House DFL Majority, which responded: “Fact: The House DFL Majority Caucus is providing nursing homes with the largest amount of funding they’ve received in state history. We’re also significantly increasing wages for the people who

care for our loved ones. Those who say otherwise are misleading Minnesotans.”

A *Minneapolis Star Tribune* editorial published last week indicated that the DFL majority contends that 2015 reimbursement payment reform will automatically adjust for cost increases, bringing in \$847 million over the next four years in both federal and state dollars. But nursing home industry reps counter that the reimbursement delays of up to two years means the impact of the reforms will be delayed, and that more nursing homes could close in the meantime. The reforms also won’t cover all the costs for traveling nurses, something nursing homes have been dependent on to cover shortages. The *Star Tribune* editorial board concluded that, “These facilities are now facing an existential threat from financial headwinds, and Minnesota lawmakers need to take heed and act swiftly.”

On Monday, Republicans attempted to funnel more money to nursing homes through an amendment to the omnibus jobs, economic development, labor and industry finance bill. The amendment would have reallocated \$68.97 million from five miscellaneous grant programs for nursing home stability grants for worker recruitment and retention.

The amendment failed along party lines.

The CEO of RiverView Memory Care in Crookston, who announced in March that the facility would be closing, had sobering words for the *Star Tribune* editorial board.

“I don’t know of a nursing home in our state that isn’t in trouble; it’s just the degree of trouble they’re in,” said Carrie Michalski.

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OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

Editorial

Fox News and its lies

The “news” network created an audience that prefers propaganda to the truth

Fox News lies to its viewers for money.

That’s among the many revelations that emerged in the lead-up to what many expected would be a blockbuster trial between Dominion Voting Systems and Fox News over that “news” organization’s repeated defamatory falsehoods over the 2020 election.

Rather than apologize, or admit its wrongdoing to its viewers, the company agreed to pay out a record \$787.5 million to settle the defamation case with Dominion. At the same time, Fox News issued a statement saying that it does not contest the findings of the court that many of the claims made by guests and its own hosts about the 2020 election were false.

The settlement provides a huge windfall for Dominion, a cash payout many times the valuation of the company and much more than the company likely would have ultimately received from Fox News, even if the jury had awarded far more. Fox News would have appealed, dragging the case out for years. And big jury damage awards are routinely sliced sharply at the appellate level.

The settlement certainly makes Dominion whole, but when are we, as Americans, made whole for what Fox News and others perpetrated on our democratic institutions? When do we, as Americans, get to hold Fox News accountable for the damages its lies did to our system of governance?

Polls show that majorities of Republicans still choose to believe that the 2020 election was stolen, and that’s in no small thanks to Fox, which continues to tout false election conspiracies to this day. That belief was, without question, responsible for the attack on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and it has contributed to the descent of one of our two major parties down a rabbit hole of deceit and self-delusion.

Fox News has, for years, portrayed political propaganda as “fair and balanced,” feeding a steady diet of extremist opinion, racism, and outright lies to a huge audience that has come to see this twisted version of reality as their truth.

In the wake of the 2020 election, Fox News had the choice of fostering conspiracy theories that the organization knew to be false, or telling the truth that Joe Biden won the presidency fair and square. At first, the legitimate journalists at Fox News tried to do just that, regularly fact-checking false claims from the Trump team. Even some of big-name commentators, like Tucker Carlson, Sean Hannity, and Laura Ingraham, tried at first

to ride the reality train, initially dismissing the conspiracy theories touted by Trump’s lackies.

But when viewers complained and Fox News’ ratings sunk as viewers, who had grown used to the steady diet of right-wing propaganda, switched to sites like Newsmax and One America Network where Trump’s lies still dominated coverage, Fox News shifted gears.

Actual journalists were put on a tight leash. Chris Stirewalt, the head of the election night team that accurately called Arizona for Biden was canned from Fox News within weeks and there was pressure to fire other legitimate journalists at the network.

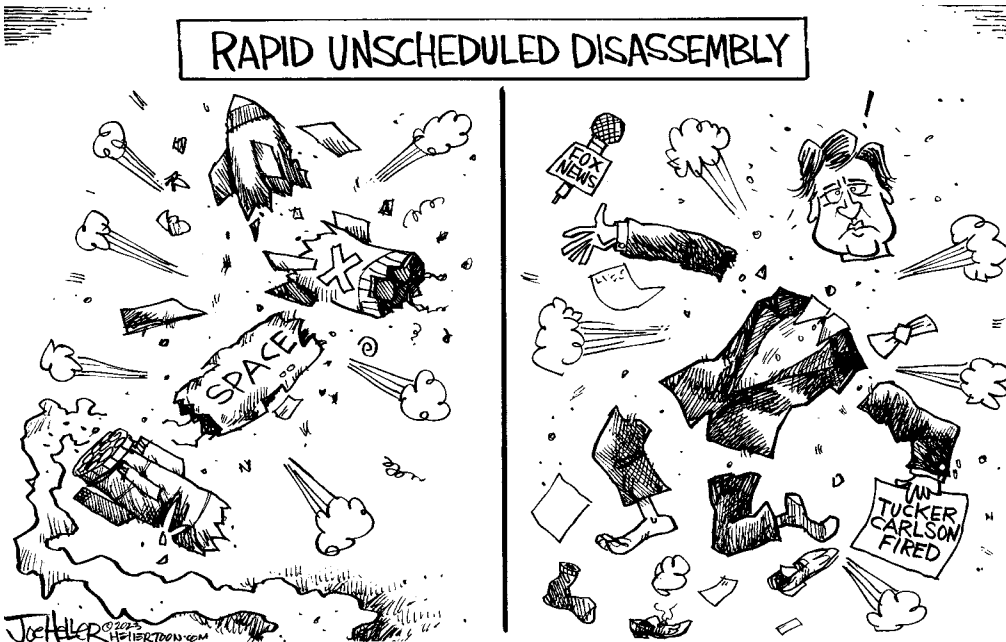
As emails and texts released as part of the Dominion case revealed, Fox News’ big-name hosts privately used language like “ludicrous” or “nuts” to describe the conspiracy theories being touted by their own guests, but soon started playing believers while on the air. Texts from Fox News CEO Suzanne Scott got to the heart of the company’s concern in an early December 2020 email to a network vice-president, referring to one of its reporters who was trying to fact-check some of the Trump team’s many lies about the election.

“This has to stop now. This is bad for business... the audience is furious.” Fox News Senior Vice President Raj Shaw noted that the company was “under heavy fire from our customer base,” and was facing a “brand crisis” and “open revolt from viewers.” Sean Hannity got to the nub when he wrote “respecting this audience whether we agree or not is critical.”

Of course, “respecting” in Hannity’s mind meant giving the company’s audience the lies it craved, and still wants to hear. Fox News created a monster, and it now demands to be fed.

Those lies damaged the reputation of Dominion, as well as Smartmatic, another voting systems company that is seeking \$2.7 billion in damages in its own defamation case against Fox News.

But the real damage— the potentially existential damage— has been done to America. By helping to convince millions of our fellow citizens that elections are frauds, Fox News has contributed to the disintegration of our body politic, elevated extremism, and raised the risk of civil conflict and violence. While Fox News likes to wrap itself in the flag, their actions have shown everyone the truth. They’ll sell America down the river for a buck.



Letters from Readers

Please install carbon monoxide detectors in your home

In recent months, the Ely Fire Department has responded to several carbon monoxide (CO) alarm calls, both in homes and businesses. In all instances, building occupants were notified of excessive levels of carbon monoxide via CO detectors installed in these buildings. CO is produced by appliances such as boilers and furnaces, water heaters, stoves and ovens, and clothes dryers that burn fuel oil, propane, or wood. When these appliances are maintained and operating properly, CO is safely vented to the outside. When not operating properly, however, CO can build up within a structure creating a hazardous condition for those inside. Since CO has no odor, color, or taste, it cannot be detected by our senses. To protect yourself and your family from CO poisoning, keep all appliances properly maintained in good working order. To ensure appliances draft properly, do not point floor fans directly at furnaces and boilers. Symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to the flu including headache, fatigue, dizziness, and nausea. Pay attention if all members of a household are feeling ill at the same time and if you feel better when not at home. Pets may also appear ill. Most importantly, be sure CO detectors are installed in your home. Minnesota state law requires every home to have at least one operational CO alarm within 10 feet of every room legally used for sleeping. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for placement of the alarm and take note of the suggested replacement date. CO detectors are available at local hardware stores. When a CO detector alarms, get out of the house and call 911. Following these simple steps can protect you and your loved ones from the dangers of carbon monoxide.

Dave Marshall
Ely Fire Chief

If you think drag is bad, imagine clowns!

I was glad to read in last week’s *Timberjay* that some folks were planning to protest against a drag show performance coming to Ely. Watching men in costumes, wearing heavy makeup does sound terrifying and should be prevented. But why stop there? Have any of these folks ever been confronted by the specter of a circus or rodeo clown, mime, or worse yet, an actual clown show? I still bear the psychological scars from attending a Bozo the Clown TV show as a child. My best friend Dave was even more affected: after seeing the show, he wanted to become a clown. Only through intensive conversion therapy was he saved from this unholy outcome. I wasn’t so lucky. I’m still haunted by memories of a man wearing hideous makeup and cracking bad jokes. Thank goodness there will be protestors at the Ely performance to keep the poor, impressionable Ely folk from a similar fate.

Steve Wilson
Isabella

Congratulations, DFL Sen. Grant Hauschild!

For a first-term legislator you’ve already hit the jackpot, attacked by well-funded special interests who have placed misleading full-page ads in area newspapers and have even put your face on a billboard near the State Capitol in St. Paul. Coming from Minnesota’s most rural district, one larger in area than nine U.S. states, you’ve achieved recognition veteran legislators can only dream of.

I’ve observed you at bipartisan town halls, and I was impressed by your willingness to listen to your constituents, not just complaining about problems but actually providing detailed knowledge of issues and legislation. You’ve hit the ground running with bills of your own, and that has put the special interests

on guard, recognizing that you aren’t just another suit in St. Paul.

Politics is a dance, and it takes two to tango. Everybody talks about bipartisan action, but you’re actually serious about that. Your new District 3 colleagues on the House side, Republicans Roger Skraba and Natalie Zeleznikar, can learn something from this. Constant nay-saying is not the way to move solutions forward.

We live in a rapidly changing world. Our rural areas are depopulating, and staying in place or wanting to move the clock backward is not going to provide a reason or the opportunity for our young people to remain here and build for the future. As a young parent, Sen. Hauschild, I think you’re very conscious of that reality.

So, again, whatever you’re doing, keep it up. You’ve touched a nerve. That doesn’t mean I will always agree with you. I don’t expect to, but it’s refreshing to see a legislator who actually wants to move this state into a better future and has the drive to make it happen.

Fred Schumacher
Gheen



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!

Leaving the earth a better place

Three young men work in silence excavating the place where their grandmother’s body will be buried — free of harsh embalming chemicals or the effects of a fiery furnace. No concrete vault or steel casket. Her remains are “dressed” in her favorite pajamas and wrapped in a simple white cotton shroud, ready to be placed in a designated plot of ground at what is called a “conservation



KATHLEEN MCQUILLAN

site”. A hand-made wicker basket housed her body for the length of time it took to decompose. The lid was covered with dried ferns, rose petals, and her favorite wildflowers. Although the men have agreed to silence, nothing stops a steady flow of memories, some of which will be shared for the lowering of her body into this

hallowed ground. With explicit details on how to prepare the site, they are fulfilling their role in what will be remembered as their family’s ritual of final good-byes.

As I read this story, I recalled the burial rite for my mother who died five years ago. My brothers and I agreed to dispense of a formal funeral because most of our extended family were scattered across the country and all of my mother’s closest friends had predeceased her. Not aware of alternatives, we decided on a simple cre-

mation and planned to disperse Mom’s ashes at a place we’d named “Karen’s Rock”.

Located up a hill and across an abandoned pasture left fallow for at least thirty years, a massive granite boulder rises out of the willow brush and wild plum. My guess is that it was deposited there by an advancing glacier scraping its way across the landscape some ten thousand years ago. When my sister died in 1997, this was where I sprinkled her ashes with my family in full agreement that this unique rock monument would act as a

suitable headstone. On the day we sprinkled our mother’s ashes, I and my siblings shared a warm and comforting thought. Our mother was finally reunited with her daughter.

The opening to this story was inspired by an article entitled “Down to Earth” by Kathy Jesse that appears in the Spring issue of the *National Wildlife Federation* magazine. It examines “eco-friendly alternatives” to the conventional funeral

Sen. Hauschild is making a difference

Recently, I attended our local annual rural electric cooperative meeting. The purpose of the annual meeting is to gather together all of the member owners of the co-op to share important information about the status quo of our rural utility company. It is an open meeting with member owners encouraged to use the microphone and voice their concerns.

What could have been an energizing, uplifting meeting, especially in light of the recent Inflation Reduction Act provisions and financial support for transitioning to clean energy, unfortunately turned out to be quite a disappointment.

Many of the voices that were loudest in the room were in opposition to the necessary changes we need our rural cooperatives to make to move away from costly and dirty, fossil fuel-based energy sources to clean affordable energy. Clean energy sources are wind, solar, and hydro power with battery storage to back up for the times when the sun isn't shining and the wind isn't blowing. I certainly wish that more voices had addressed the misinformation from the loud voices in the room.

We feel very fortunate to live in a state that has been successful in passing the 100 percent Clean Electricity by 2040 law. This law will move us off of our current dependence on dirty fossil fuels to clean energy by the year 2040. Using clean energy reduces pollution, creates jobs, improves health and is a cheaper source of energy than relying on fossil fuels. WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE ABOUT THAT???

I want to thank our state Sen. Grant Hauschild for his critical vote in passing the 100 percent

by 2040 Clean Energy Bill. Sen. Hauschild is genuinely looking out for our best interests here in District 3. I am grateful to have a man of his integrity and sincerity representing our district in the Legislature and doing what's best for us. This historic bill would never have passed without Sen. Hauschild. He's delivering for our district.

Lucy Grina
Two Harbors

Delivering for his constituents

Senator Grant Hauschild, representing NE Minnesota District 3, has kept his promise of delivering for his constituents. He has been the chief author of 90 Senate bills designed to help our NE Minnesota families and communities, and he has co-authored 181 bills since the legislative session began on January 3rd, 2023: a truly incredible accomplishment!

Sen. Hauschild was the chief Senate author of the bipartisan legislation that brought extended unemployment benefits to address the terrible financial situation faced by over 400 Northshore Mining families of Silver Bay; and he helped get it signed into law in less than one month:

[https://northshorejournal.co/business/gov-tim-walz-signs-senator-grant-hauschilds-proposal-to-extend-ui-benefits-for-northshore-miners-into-law/]

He was chief author of the Minnesota Great Start Childcare and Early Learning Workforce Grant Program to permanently help young, struggling Minnesota families access important childcare services and support these important childcare providers with improved compensation for their critically important early childhood development work:

[https://www.duluth-

newtribune.com/news/local/hauschild-aims-to-help-families-workforce-with-child-care-tax-credit]

Senator Hauschild has authored and supported many important bills including the Minnesota schoolchildren's universal breakfast and lunch providing low-income children critical, basic food security:

[https://senatedflmn/senator-heather-gustafsons-universal-school-meals-bill-passed-in-finance-committee/]

As a healthcare professional, I am proud that he is standing tall against the greed of drug companies, ensuring that all Minnesotans can afford the medicines they need:

[https://senatedflmn/senator-grant-hauschild-slams-big-pharma-for-attack-ads-touts-work-to-make-prescription-drugs-more-affordable/]

His vote made Minnesota a national leader in our transformation to a more affordable, reliable and clean, renewable energy economy. Minnesota industries now can out-compete in international markets with decarbonized, "green" manufacturing, creating opportunities for sustainable, beneficial, clean-energy jobs supporting our families and communities with good living wages:

[https://fresh-energy.org/minnesota-100-clean-electricity-bill-explained?utm_source=Google&utm_medium=CPC&utm_campaign=Suburban%2BClimate%2BActivists&utm_content=Site%2BLink&gclid=Cj0KCQjwxY0iBhC9ARIsANiElfa5ngQNpWJ-T61S1OQd-NUHH-majIJUZr4_ix-7f2jz5xZkCXP4VoOywaAtZREALw_wc]

Senator Hauschild has listened carefully to his constituents, and he has worked hard, with great integrity, to help them from St. Paul. We

can be thankful he has chosen to give so much of his time and energy to listen and deliver for all the families and communities of NE Minnesota.

Michael Overend
Two Harbors

The young child learns from observation

Those who think that drag queen shows are harmless for children need to read the academic paper entitled "Drag Pedagogy: the Playful Practice of Queer Imagination in Early Childhood," that was published online in *Curriculum Inquiry*, an educational journal. The paper was written by Harper Keenen and Lil Miss Hot Mess, a founder of Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH), who describe themselves as "a gender-queer drag performer/scholar and a trans scholar." Queer in this context comes from Queer Theory which asserts the idea that sexual norms are oppressive. DQSH is a "preparatory introduction to alternate modes of kinship" meaning that the authors want to eradicate the traditional family by grooming children to join the "family" of queers.

Do people really think that it is harmless to bring children to see sexuality portrayed, not as a sacred expression of love for one special individual, but as frivolous "desecrating" for the benefit of any and all strangers? To see sexuality, which is intensely personal, selective, and meaningful, made voyeuristic, indiscriminate, and meaningless? The young child learns from observation, he learns from absorbing his environment. Everything that he sees and experiences makes an impression upon his mind before he has the ability to evaluate it. The "desecrating" of sexuality will make a child's mind abnormal regarding sex

and all cognition, and that is exactly the goal of the drag queens. The concerns about DQSH aren't baseless, and DQSH isn't harmless. It is precisely child abuse.

Charlotte Cushman
Tower
Montessori educator and author

Time to increase the homestead credit

Last night I attended the Board of Appeal at the Babbitt City Council meeting. Now, I'm a Realtor, and have been for 20 years, and have gone alongside with the assessor's saying: "Would you sell it for that price?"

However, after looking at our tax values, and pulling up the comparable sales, the answer is, yes I would, IF I could get it, IF the qualifying financing would be there for the property, etc. etc. While I anticipated valuation increases, I certainly did not expect any of this size. I crunched numbers, compared values, pulled all the information I could from the three MLS systems I belong to, and looked at county comparables. I sent an email to the assessor, with all the values I questioned. My values had increased (from last year) anywhere from 46-89 percent with NO improvements. I have heard of others going up even more.

Everyone is getting a flat average assessment based on statistics. I don't know the sample group for these statistics, but the homes are vastly different throughout the state, county, city, and even block. Ideally, a licensed appraiser takes three homes, exactly the same, that have sold within six months in a three-to-five block radius. Now, that is not always possible up here, in fact it rarely is. I argued some of the property values at the recent

meeting and got zero response. I get that people complain to them all the time. They merely stated, they'd like to come inside the home and assess the value further.

Ninety-nine percent of the people who attended the packed room were homeowners. Their property values went UP, and their homestead credit went DOWN. Here is what I found amazing. The top value of a home to get the max homestead credit, in the state of Minnesota is \$76,000. Once your value exceeds \$76,000 your homestead CREDIT goes DOWN. So, you are paying more tax.

Currently there are 794 homes in Babbitt, and 94 are at \$76,000 or below. The rest are above that. That's 88 percent that are above that value, and only 11 percent that are below.

And guess what, folks, that \$76,000 value was chosen in the 1990s, or 30-plus years ago! That value never went up as the price of homes went up. Was it even addressed, or considered to be adjusted with the cost of living? Heck if it went up to \$100,000 that would be a great tax savings for people in the entire state. I'm sure most of the 887 homes in Babbitt 30 years ago were at or below that \$76,000 price range. The assessors said it was all driven by the Legislature and to reach out to your legislators for change. I suggest everyone, and I mean EVERYONE do that, via email, phone, letter, call to action, whatever it takes! That value needs to go up. The squeaky wheel gets the grease, and we have a lot to squeak about up here in Greater Minnesota. Enough is enough. Time to make them give us that grease and be heard.

Andrea Zupancich
Babbitt

BURIAL...Continued from page 4

practices of embalming and cremation. I'd heard of "green burials" but never "natural organic reduction" or NOR, a process that places human remains in a specialized vessel with a mixture of organic materials that hasten decomposition. After six weeks, the body is fully transformed into compostable soil that is, in most cases, returned to the family for final disposition. There are twenty NOR facilities in seven states with accompanying tracts of land called "conservation burial sites" where composted remains can be buried and the land eventually available for reclamation and reforestation. Minnesota is not among them.

Interest in alternative burial practices is increasing, partly because of growing environmental concerns with embalming and cremation, and also due to increased use of services provided by hospice professionals and death doulas dedicated to educating and supporting families' direct involvement in end-of-life decision-making and caregiving. Americans, as a whole, are becoming more at ease with issues surrounding the final stages of life. More of us are completing Advanced Directives that clarify our preferences regarding medical interventions as death draws near. Books and podcasts abound that focus on death as an inevitable and natural part of

life to be discussed openly rather than denied, avoided and feared.

Since the mid-1800s, Americans have adopted embalming, burials in vaults and caskets, and more recently, cremation as our conventional methods for disposing of our bodies after death. These practices have become increasingly expensive, creating enormous financial burdens on grieving families. According to Jesse's article, a study conducted by the National Funeral Directors Association in 2021 states "the average cost of a casket burial in the United States is \$7,848, with cremation averaging \$6,970." And these figures don't include the cost of a burial plot.

Green burials and NOR are significantly less expensive. They also inflict far less harm on the environment. As earth's human population approaches 8 billion, how we handle our physical remains becomes an ever-increasing concern. Most of us are clustered in urban areas. The land available for burials is rapidly declining. When we take a look at the volume of natural resources consumed each year for burials — an estimated 20 million board feet of hardwoods and 64,500 tons of steel used for caskets, and 1.6 million tons of concrete for burial vaults; the toxins that leak into the soil from an estimated 4.3 million gallons of

embalming fluid made of formaldehyde and other carcinogens; and atmospheric pollution from crematorium emissions estimated conservatively at 140 to 250 pounds of carbon dioxide per person — the need for less polluting alternatives becomes ever clearer!

Dr. Sara Kerr PhD., a Canadian educator, certified death doula, and founder of The Centre for Sacred DeathCare in Calgary, Alberta states on her website that NOR uses 1/8th the energy of cremation (furnaces must reach 1900 degrees F. and maintain that temperature for two hours), and NOR sequesters its carbon (about one pound per person) back into the soil. She describes human composting as "a collaborative vision in service to ecological restoration, regenerative

agriculture, grief-tending, and land-based healing."

Just imagine... our bodies giving back to Nature ... a final gesture of good will in return for the life it gave us. As this method gains greater acceptance, our death rituals will evolve, bringing us together to mourn and celebrate the lives of our deceased and with a deeper understanding that death is less an "ending" and more a "returning". For those of us standing by, we can be comforted knowing that this final act did not degrade the earthly home left behind, but instead helped to restore it.

For more information: Search "natural organic reduction in Minnesota". HF 2669 seeks to make NOR legal in MN. It was introduced in the MN House of Representatives on March 15, 2023.

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the TIMBERJAY

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

Week of May 1

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 May 16

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.



Little League sign-up on May 6
SOUDAN- Tower-Soudan Little League sign-up will be held on Saturday, May 6 at 10 a.m. at the Soudan Ballfield. Registrations also taken online (scan the QR code above), or email towersoudanlittleleague@gmail.com.
Little league is open to all area children ages 4-8. Cost is \$25 per child. The first day of practice will be held on May 6, following registration.

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 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.

Vermilion Lake Township cemetery cleanup day April 29
VERMILION LAKE TWP- Vermilion Lake Township will host their annual Cemetery Work Day on Saturday, April 29 starting at 1 p.m. Rain date will be May 6. Please bring shovels and rakes, if possible.

100th Birthday
Open House
for
James Charles
Sunday, May 7
1-3 p.m.

Lake Minnetonka Shores
Presbyterian Home
4559 Shoreline Drive
Spring Park, MN 55384

Send well wishes to:

James Charles
Apartment 406
Lake Minnetonka Shores
Presbyterian Home
4559 Shoreline Drive
Spring Park, MN 55384

MAIN STREET

Tower teen about to become published illustrator

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

13-year-old Eva Larson gets her first professional art job



Above: Eva Larson shows off some of her illustrations.
photo by J. Summit

Right: The book cover.

Below: An illustration from the finished book.



When Luke is diagnosed with a very rare type of childhood cancer, he and his whole family have to learn how to be brave, courageous and bold so they can all fight together. Luke shows us that you can be brave even when you’re scared. He shows us that you can still be courageous even when you have to get poked and poisoned and hurt. He shows us that you can still be bold when you are very sick. Written by his mom, this story serves as a reminder to us all that childhood illness affects the entire family and even when it seems very scary, we can all be... BRAVE, COURAGEOUS and BOLD.

Proceeds from this book will be donated to Gold Together at the American Cancer Society and to the Histiocytosis Association. Information about purchasing the book is available at <https://www.bellasteri.com/>. The book is also available on Amazon, but when purchased from the publisher’s website, the publisher is able to make a larger donation to the ACS. The book is available in hardcover, paperback, and on kindle. The kindle edition is already on the Amazon best seller’s list. The book’s publication date is May 26.

LAKE COUNTRY POWER

Co-op community connects for Lake Country Power Annual Meeting

COHASSET – A community of cooperative members gathered at the Cromwell-Wright School in Cromwell for the annual membership meeting on Thursday April 20. More than 145 members and guests gathered to hear how soaring material and labor costs are driving recent rate increases, and the challenges of supply and lead time issues for essential equipment needed to provide reliable and affordable electric service.
A presentation by Lake Country Power’s wholesale energy provider, Great River Energy, highlighted the ever-changing landscape for the future of power generation and transmission in Minnesota as current legislation moves electric service providers

away from fossil fuels toward renewable power sources.
Members learned of the steady climb in cost increases for line materials since the 2020 pandemic, including supply chain issues. In 2022, the average increase was 30 percent more for materials but was surpassed at the beginning of 2023 with an average price increase of nearly 70 percent for those same materials. Lengthy lead times to receive necessary materials and equipment is also concerning.
As a result of multiple inflationary factors, Lake Country Power had no choice but to adjust load management rates on January 1 and general service rates starting March 1 including an increase in the service avail-

ability charge from \$42 to \$48 per month.
A special presentation during the annual meeting recognized 11 school districts within Lake Country Power’s service area with funding through the cooperative’s new Education Improvement Program. The program is funded through abandoned and unclaimed capital from previous members who can no longer be located. The State of Minnesota allows cooperatives to distribute these funds to tax-exempt organizations and cannot be used for internal operations at the co-op.
Annual meeting videos can be found on Lake Country Power’s website, www.lakecountry-power.coop, or the co-op’s YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/lakecountrypower,

starting the week of April 24.
Director election results were announced. Districts 4 and 8 held a special election to fill a two-year vacancy. The other three districts will fill three-year terms. Candidates ran unopposed in Districts 3 and 7.
Immediately following the adjournment of the annual meeting, the board of directors held a re-organizational meeting. Board officers are: Craig Olson from District 7, President; Daniel Kingsley from District 6, Vice President; Mike Forsman from District 2, Secretary; and Jason Long from District 1, Treasurer.

EDUCATION

STEM day for girls at the Vermilion Campus

ELY- Twenty-seven girls from grades 5 through 8 attended the Science Technology Engineering and Technology (STEM) Workshops on April 22 hosted by the Ely chapter of the American Association of University Women. The workshops were making lava lamps, programming Mars Rover model robots, and studying vernal pools with USB microscopes. The workshops were supported through a grant from Lake County Power Operation Round-Up and manned by volunteers from AAUW and the Duluth STARBASE organization that specializes in STEM education.



The students in the vernal pools workshop were given USB microscopes to examine materials from vernal pools. The students soon were displaying on the computer screen anything they could magnify with the microscopes, including a spider and each other’s hair (see inset) From left-to-right: Beck Sponholz, Scarlett Vieau, Eleanor Nyquist, and Lucy Luthens. photo C. Clark



Katy Brophy and her lava lamps in an early stage of creation, exploring chemical reactions and density differences. photo by C. Clark



Molly Keen (left) and June Nelson (right) programmed and then “drove” a Mars Rover model through planetary science tasks. photo by C. Clark



Abby Sirek (standing, right), a pharmacist from Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital, taught the lava lamp workshop. photo by C. Clark

In Brief

Tuesday Group schedule

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

Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

➤May 1: **Monday event**, Climatologist Happy Hour, location TBA

➤May 2: MN DNR Climatologist Kenny Blumenfeld

➤May 9: Introduction to TransNorthland, a non-profit organization providing support, advocacy, education & connection to the transgender communi-

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2023



birds around the town
robins as sure signs of spring
may day coming soon

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.

Ely Area students at “Frozen” musical in Milwaukee

by Mike Rouse
Ely School Music Teacher

REGIONAL- Ely’s “Year of Frozen” as proclaimed by Proclamation by Mayor Heidi Omerza, took a giant step forward in the middle of April with forty students traveling to Milwaukee to see the touring production of Disney’s “Frozen, the Broadway Musical.” The Ely Music Boosters and other donors sent Ely choral and music theater students and one student from Northeast Range on a very busy three-day trip.

Day one was a trip to the University of Wisconsin-Superior (UWS). We were greeted by the choral and theater students and their professors.

We finished at UWS with watching a choir at one of their first rehearsals after vacation. and they were working.

The UWS choir knew that Ely had won the rights to present Disney’s Frozen the Broadway Musical and finished our visit singing “Vuelie” which is a number from the musical. Vuelie was also our Pop Choir’s contest selection, so for the grand finale, the Pop Choir was invited to sing this song with the UWS choir.

We finished the day at Kalahari Hotel and Waterpark at the Wisconsin Dells. We heard rumors that Mr. Rouse tried the wave board.

On Thursday, we boarded the bus and headed to Milwaukee’s Ambassador Hotel, where we checked-in. We then toured the city. We saw the new facility where the Milwaukee Bucks play, the art museum on the shore of

Lake Michigan, and the beach. It was amazing to see people soaking in the sunshine, knowing we left home and snow the day before.

We visited at the Milwaukee Public Museum. We want to thank the Nickolson family for this experience.

We had about 45 minutes to get dressed up for a delicious three-course dinner prepared by the chef at the Ambassador Hotel. Then we boarded the bus for for the Marcus Performing Arts Center.

After being dropped off at the stage door, Disney allowed us early access to the theater to watch the pre-show activities of light, sound and stage checks. It made us realize all the work that goes into a production of this size. And then we saw “Frozen” on stage.

We had notebooks with us to record what we saw and heard so we could see what we could bring back to our own stage.

It also began to sink in that we, Ely, represent the entire state of Minnesota. After the show, we met with some cast and crew. They encouraged us to be authentic, to work hard, and to have fun.

In the morning, we boarded the bus and headed home with our imaginations on overload. The students really wish to thank all of our chaperones, our bus driver Gier, the Ambassador Hotel and general manager Jon, the Marcus Performing Arts Center and the general manager John. We could not have done this trip without the support of the community, the school, and Music Boosters.



The “Frozen” trip attendees at dinner at the Ambassador Hotel in Milwaukee. submitted photo



The “Frozen” trip attendees at the post-show Q&A with the musical’s actors. submitted photo

One Milwaukee trip attendee’s input

After the Milwaukee trip, the *Timberjay* spoke with Adam Bisbee, who attended the trip in his role as a volunteer working with Ely’s “Frozen” production. He remarked, “It was absolutely spectacular. We got to do so much and in just a short span of time.”

Bisbee saw all sorts of connections of the places they visited besides the musical. For example, Bisbee explained, “The Natural

History Museum in Milwaukee had an amazing butterfly exhibit. A lot of people spent a lot of time in the butterfly exhibit, because the life stage of the butterfly is similar to the character change of Elsa throughout that story of “Frozen,” going from seclusion in a cocoon-like state and then opening up and saying this is me, and really showing those butterfly wings. She’s such a princess for doing so ... And the kids were just fantastic. Just fantastic. Such a well-behaved group of kids.”

Upcoming Events

Northern Lakes Arts Association

ELY- The Northern Lakes Arts Association April Art Show displaying the work of Heather Wright began on April 17 at the Ely’s Historic State Theater. The show closes on April 30. A reception for the artist and her work will be on April 29 from 5-7 p.m. in the lobby at the theater.

Ely Public Library

ELY- The Library board will hold its monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 3, from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

The Library Scientists group for grades 3-5 will meet on Thursday, May 4, from 3-4:30 p.m. Participants will learn the principles of how simple machines work, and will make at least one machine of their own to take home. Please register in advance so the library can order enough 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 Community Education

ELY- 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>.

Ely Young Life Auction

ELY- Bidding will close on the Ely branch of Young Life 2023 online auction on Sunday, April 30. The auction will stagger the end of bidding for specific items every 30 minutes, starting at 2:30 p.m. and ending at 6 p.m. Young Life is an international, inter-denominational youth organization. The auction proceeds fund youth activities in the Ely area and helps fund scholarships to the Ely Young Life summer camp. More

details and the link to the auction site are online at ely.younglife.org.

100 Ely Women Who Care

ELY- 100 Ely Women Who Care will hold its Spring 2023 Event on Sunday, April 30, from 4-5:30 p.m. at the Ely Senior Center. 100 Ely Women Who Care is a giving circle where the members nominate and then vote on a local 501(c)(3) to receive their combined charitable donations. Over the past eight years, 100 Ely Women Who Care have donated over \$70,000 dollars to local charities.

All interested women are welcome. More information will be posted on the “What’s up? Ely” Face-

book page—or visit the website at 100elywomen-whocare.org

Summer Arts Market

ELY- For over 15 years, NLAA has hosted the Summer Arts Market alongside the Ely Farmer’s Market, every Tuesday, June through September, 5-7 p.m. Participation costs for artists and crafters wanting a spot to sell their works are \$10 per week or \$100 for the entire summer and can be paid ahead of time or at the first market of the year. Use forms. gl7gmqValeiedbu7 to fill out an interest form and the NLAA will be in contact during the first weeks of May.

NORTH WOODS SCHOOL

School bands perform to nearly full house



Some of the North Woods School band members performing at last Friday's concert were:
Above: Jackson Long
Below: Sophia Hoffman and Sophia Bangs

FIELD TWP- Instrumental music echoed through the halls of North Woods School last Friday as the elementary, junior high, and high school bands performed familiar show tunes and a little more for their spring concert.

Band director Paige Stanislawski praised the progress shown by the bands since the fall concert.

“I’m so proud of everything they’ve done,” she said. “We have really put a lot of focus on rehearsal time. I’ve actually given them a couple more breaks than I usually would, and it’s kind of had the opposite effect. We’ve gotten so much more work done than without the breaks.”

Stanislawski said that she and the bands collec-

tively have taken steps to build a stronger music culture at North Woods.

“We’re taking baby steps right now,” she said. “The music community is growing. We’ve got a big number of elementary band kids coming up and we’ve got more fourth graders on the way next year. That’ll be exciting.”

Stanislawski said she’s appreciative of all of the support she’s received from parents and the school in her first year at North Woods.

“It was almost a full house tonight, I was very impressed,” she said. “Everything has been so supportive. I’m super, super lucky to be a part of this school and to work with all of the staff here and the students. They’ve been so great.”



Above: Kaidence Scofield, Curtis Krecklau, and Lyla Rautiola.
Below: Rebecca Koch, Merilee Scofield, and Grace Bundy. photos by D. Colburn

Change is afoot in Orr as Carter retires, Scott calls it quits

Discouraged council member says he’s lost all confidence in the city

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- A major focus of last week’s regular Orr City Council meeting was figuring out just what the city needs to do to accommodate the retirement of longtime city clerk/treasurer Cheri Carter. But it’s altogether likely that the council will also have to replace one of its own, as member Lloyd Scott announced his intention to resign from the council following the May regular meeting.

Scott made his pronouncement after Mayor Robert Antikainen asked if he would consent to being a signatory on one of the city’s bank accounts.

“Mr. Mayor, for (unintelligible) reasons my blood pressure is totally over and now I’m losing confidence in the city I want to turn in my resignation effective the end of next month’s meeting. I’m done. I’ve lost confidence in everything.”

Earlier in the meeting Scott was a primary contributor to a sometimes tense discussion

about paying mileage reimbursement to new deputy clerk Jennifer Whittemore. She uses her personal vehicle for city business to go to the post office and bank every day, and asked to be paid mileage for the 1.2 mile daily trip.

Scott was immediately skeptical.

“I don’t know,” he said. “If we do that we probably owe Cheri about \$5,000 because she’s been doing it for many years without pay. My theory is we can’t start having employees tell us how much to pay them and when we’ve got to pay them. That’s up to the council. I’d like to make a motion and say no, that’s part of the job description. The job description says pick up mail at Post Office each day and that doesn’t say anything about getting compensated.”

Whittemore responded.

“As a government entity, if you’re requiring an employee to use their personal vehicle you are obligated to pay for mileage,” she said. “I used to

be a human resources director ...”

Scott interrupted her at that point.

“Go back to that job,” he said.

Whittemore stood her ground.

“It’s a law, it’s a Minnesota state law,” she said. “You could deny an employee the right to their benefits, but then you’re going to”

Scott, clearly agitated, interrupted again.

“This ain’t New York City or nothing like that,” he said. “This is a little bitty town. Cheri’s been doing that running for mail and stuff for 14 years and she hasn’t asked for compensation. I guess I’m against it. That’s all I’m gonna say.”

Several people entered the discussion to try to determine if it was a state law or perhaps an IRS regulation, and the council decided to table Whittemore’s request in order to gather materials necessary to make an informed decision.

Filling in

Carter was scheduled

to end a 13-year stint with the city this week, and one of the primary areas of discussion focused on how to retain her services to assist Whittemore, who will assume responsibility for many of the clerk/treasurer’s duties, and to help train her eventual successor.

“If you’re asking if I can step into Cheri’s shoes, not at all,” Whittemore said. “But if Cheri’s willing to subcontract to help as needed that’s going to benefit you guys as a board more than it is anything else.”

Whittemore commended Carter for helping her ease into her position.

“Cheri’s been an awesome support,” she said. “The institutional and historical knowledge that she possesses is amazing. I go home with my head aching every night with all the information she’s imparted to me.”

Former deputy clerk and current liquor store manager Laura Manai will be able to provide some additional support, Whittemore said.

“Laura has offered

to help,” she said. “I’ve done billing once and the next billing will come out the Monday after Cheri leaves, so I’m definitely going to need help with that. This is a massive job.”

Ambulance director Donna Hoffer said that Carter has also been the contact person for the Center for Medicare and Medicaid, and that the process to update to change that is a cumbersome one.

There will also have to be extensive documentation of the ambulance service collected for federal and state surveys of the service, Hoffer said.

Carter indicated her willingness to continue to help out as her schedule allows, but also noted that she needs to determine what sort of hours and earnings limitations her retirement system has so that her benefits aren’t affected.

Council members agreed to start the search for Carter’s replacement immediately. Whittemore recommended the council look closely at the com-

pensation and benefits for the clerk/treasurer position, as wages have increased over time and will likely impact the talent they will be able to attract.

In other business, the council:

➤Approved a change order to amend the city’s contract with Utility Systems of America to include updated federal labor standards.

➤Approved participation in the Minnesota Snowmobile Trail Assistant Program on behalf of Voyageur Trail Society, Inc. The council gave its approval last year, but VTSI did not have all the necessary permits in place. They are now ready to reapply to DNR for trail improvements.

➤Heard that assistant maintenance worker Christopher Kelly had submitted his resignation effective April 22. John Hess has been asked to fill in part time while a committee goes through the hiring process.

COMMUNITY NEWS

NWFA announces upcoming events

COOK- Big things are coming to the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook in May and June.

“Bur Oak” Exhibit

The work of Jon Bryan Burley will be on display in the gallery May 6-27. Burley has painted since he was 14 years old. “Bur Oak” was a nickname given to Burley by his peers when he was in college studying landscape architecture. According to Google Scholar, Burley is one of the top 50 cited landscape architecture scholars in the world. Two of his books published are about surface mine reclamation and landscape, art, and architecture history.

The exhibit will open with a reception on Saturday, May 6 from 1-3 p.m. You don’t want to miss this exhibit or miss meeting the artist, "Bur Oak," who has roots in Cook. His website is: www.buroak.space.

Spring Art Expo

The annual Spring Art Expo will be June 7 to June 23. Artists are invited to display and/or sell their work at NWFA Gallery and take home the entire proceeds from the sales. The deadline to register is May 20.

The only fee for artists and craftsmen to display and sell will be the \$15 registration fee for NWFA members or a \$30 registration fee for nonmembers.

Open Art

Join other artists every Monday from 6-8 p.m. in the Wolfe Den classroom of NWFA Gallery, bringing your projects and supplies to share. Experiment with new ideas with Jody Feist and other artists. No registration is required.

Woodcarvers

On Thursdays from 6-8 p.m., the Cook Woodcarvers Group meets in the The Wolfe Den . A talented group of carvers meet and share the joy of carving on wood and help beginners by sharing experience and know how about tools and wood. Beginners are welcome without registration. Some tools are available, but participants should bring their own. For information about the carvers contact Howard at 218-290-1391.

Classes

The always popular NWFA art classes begin again in May. Upcoming offerings include:

➤Saturday, May 20, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. – Watercolor Pouring with Linda Smith. \$15 for members & \$20

for nonmembers. \$3 supply fee.

➤Thursday, June 8, Timber Days 2022 will be on the schedule, and with Kris Musto. \$15 for new entertainment is being added. The spectacular fireworks show will be on Saturday night, and Timber Days will culminate with a huge parade on Sunday.

➤Thursday and Friday, June 15-16; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. – “Watercolor: Messing With Masa” with Mary Beth Downs. \$65 Members, \$80 nonmembers. Supply list needed.

To register for a class Call Alberta at 218-666-2153 or write to nwfamn.org@gmail.com. A complete list of classes is available online at www.nwfamn.org.

The gallery at 210 S River St. is open for viewing and shopping from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Saturdays it opens at 9 a.m. and closes at 1 p.m.. There is a full schedule of classes on the website.

Cook Timber Days is scheduled for June 9,10, 11

COOK- The Timber Days committee is pleased to announce that Cook’s Annual Timber Days festival is now being planned.

Dozens of food and craft vendors will once again be in Cook all week-

end. Favorite shows and events enjoyed during

Flyers with the events schedule will be published and distributed in the com-

ing weeks. Photos and details will also be posted on social media. Mark your calendars to attend the festival on June 9-10-11!

LIONS DONATION



Members of the Cook Lions Club delivered a number of tie blankets, stuffed lions, and children’s books to North Woods School. These items along with a Lions travel bag will be distributed to children in need or those who have recently experienced a traumatic event. Pictured are Lions Club President Steve Kajala and North Woods Student and Family Advocate Megan Nemec.

THEFTS...Continued from page 1

easily preventable.

“The statistics, when I first saw them I was sort of shocked myself in terms of the amount of car thefts where the keys were in the car,” said Jackie Olson, Assistant Commissioner for Enforcement at the Commerce Department. “That’s why we’re trying to address that specifically, to hopefully empower consumers to take that step to make sure they have their keys with them when they leave their car.”

The initiative is coming from the Commerce Department, Olson said, because they are charged with the statutory role of regulating auto insurance, and auto theft can contribute to higher premiums. *Money* magazine reported in January that State Farm and Progressive have raised rates and in some areas stopped writing auto insurance policies altogether for certain vehicles that have high theft rates, such as some model years and trim levels of Kia and Hyundai vehicles.

“It does affect all Minnesotans and all different kinds of cars and models,” Olson said.

Car theft is frequently a crime of opportunity, one made possible when keys

Local car thefts over the past two years

| Date | Address | Town |
|------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1/6/2021 | Holter Rd/Lost Lake Rd | Greenwood Twp |
| 6/1/2021 | Hwy 53/Hwy73 | Field Twp |
| 6/15/2021 | 2300 blk Hwy 53 | Field Twp |
| 6/22/2021 | 100 blk 5th St. SE | Cook |
| 7/2/2021 | 10500 bkk Hwy 23 | Leiding Twp |
| 7/10/2021 | S 6th Ave E/Harvey St. E | Ely |
| 7/18/2021 | 4500 blk Lake St. | Orr |
| 7/24/2021 | Zero blk Chapman St W | Ely |
| 8/24/2021 | 1300 blk Harvey St. E | Ely |
| 9/24/2021 | Hwy 22/Samuelson Rd | Alango Twp |
| 10/25/2021 | 8400 blk Hwy 135 | Kugler Twp |
| 11/16/2021 | 900 blk Washington St. E | Ely |
| 12/8/2021 | 12500 blk Sethers Rd | UT 63R21 |
| 4/3/2022 | 6500 blk Tarkman Rd | Vermilion Lake Twp |
| 5/21/2022 | 900 blk Sheridan St. | Ely |
| 8/15/2022 | 7200 blk Giants Ridge Rd | Embarrass Twp |
| 8/31/2022 | 7200 blk Pike Rd | Pike Twp |
| 10/14/2022 | 10600 blk Hillcrest Dr | Orr |
| 10/17/2022 | 300 blk Main St. | Tower |
| 10/25/2022 | 1400 blk Walsh Rd | Eagles Nest Twp |
| 10/26/2022 | 9900 blk Hwy 22 | Alango Twp |
| 2/3/2023 | Camp St. E/N 17th Ave. E | Ely |
| 2/3/2023 | 1900 blk Camp St. E | Ely |

are left in the car.

“There’s lots of reasons to steal a car – it may be for joy riding, or maybe they committed another crime, it might be for any reason at all, but there are definitely people out there who do look for those opportunities,” Olson said. “Especially in greater Minnesota, I think the key problem is probably much higher, so we wanted to make sure that we all stop and think no matter where you live.”

St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office Lt. Jason

Lukovsky took a deeper look at the list of motor theft incidents compiled by the *Timberjay* and confirmed that key availability was a major contributing factor.

“In looking through them, there’s really no consistent theme aside from the fact that of the vehicles that were stolen a majority of them had the keys left in them,” Lukovsky said. “That’s significant, regardless of where you live. Sometimes in the country people are a little more lax where they park the vehicle and leave the keys right

there in the console. It’s really not wise to do that.”

Lukovsky said reporting practices make the problem of vehicle theft as illustrated on the crime map appear more prevalent than is actually the case, because at least six or seven of the cases listed involved theft of snowmobiles or ATVs.

“It’s kind of misleading because you automatically assume they’re vehicles, but oftentimes they’re not,” he said. “The reason for that is the VIN numbers. All those different vehicles have a VIN number, so that’s why they’re categorized that way. And some were actually recoveries, so they weren’t even stolen in our area but were recovered in the jurisdiction.”

Another issue coming out of Lukovsky’s analysis was that in six of the instances on the list, the thief actually knew the person whose car was stolen.

“I think there were four instances where somebody was couch-surfing, got up the next morning and took the vehicle of the person who they knew,” he said.

Lukovsky said that cases the sheriff’s office encounter where an individual intends to steal a random car are “minimal”,

something he attributes in part to the inability to just hotwire newer cars to start them.

“It’s difficult now to steal a car unless you have the keys,” Lukovsky said, reinforcing the message to take your keys with you. “Usually there’s a connection between the keys and what I noticed going through the calls. Over the last month, the one that stands out to me as a bona fide motor vehicle theft was in connection with some rural cabin burglaries in the Aurora area in one of the townships. The vehicle that was taken from a cabin, they got lucky and found the keys. They were there to break in and ended up taking the vehicle.”

Car theft also has a seasonal component, Lukovsky noted.

“We see an uptick in the wintertime because everybody’s warming up their vehicles to go,” he said.

He also noted that leaving a car running when going into a convenience store is not a good idea.

“Convenience stores are a big hangout for people that are looking for a quick ride,” he said.

And while Lukovsky couldn’t put a percentage

on the rate of recovery of stolen vehicles, he said, “We’re more successful than not. Gone are the days when there would be a chop shop in the area, and that’s where we were most unsuccessful. We end up finding them more often than not because somebody’s using the vehicle for a specific purpose to get somewhere, and we end up finding it abandoned.”

Olson said that the Commerce Department is thankful for the partnerships they have with local law enforcement agencies and the media to help raise awareness about auto theft. “We hope to start the conversation and get more people aware of the issue and hopefully build a better way to understand what’s happening within the community,” she said. “Even if you’re not a direct victim of car theft, there might be indirect consequences, too. Whatever we can do to help consumers take that one step and take their keys, or if you’re a passenger in the car check with the driver and say take your keys, we want to do something to try to change habits.”

DRAG...Continued from page 1

focused on the impact of drag performances on children, sporting brightly colored signs with slogans like “Keep our children innocent” and “Protect our children - No drag!” They spread themselves along Pioneer Road across the street from GEL, between the two driveways into the resort. They waved, smiling, at cars driving by. Some vehicles honked. Some drivers gave finger gestures as they passed. The two shows were staged by Flip Phone Events, with an all-ages showing at 11 a.m. and a 2 p.m. adults-only version at 2 p.m. The adult performance was sold out, while the kid-friendly version had about ten tickets still available as of Saturday morning. The *Timberjay*, which had a reporter in the audience at the morning performance noted that other than a few suggestive alterations in Disney heroine costumes, there was nothing overtly sexualized in the perfor-

mance. A scattering of children were in attendance, and they appeared to enjoy the show.

Flip Phone Events LLC, held two previous sold-out drag shows at the GEL last year in August and December, with no apparent outcry.

A grassroots protest

Protests this time around were precipitated by a letter in the *Ely Echo*, written by an area minister. The letter, by Pastor Bob Dalberg, wrote that he opposes drag shows as insulting to women and for sexually conditioning children.

Several area churches, ranging from Ely to the Cook area, got involved in the protest. On the picket line, the protesters identified Rev. Daniel Kerr, pastor of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church of Alango, as the event’s organizer.

Kerr said their intent was to protest the inclusion of children in the audience at the 11 a.m. show. “It

really boils down to what are we doing with our kids? And do we say that this is somehow okay? And when you have this push, you know, my big concern, my big question is, why are they so insistent? On performing to kids?”

Kerr said he believes the focus on drag performance is an effort to normalize drag.

“And that’s what you’re looking at (here) is an attempt to do that. But when you combine that (repetitious training) with drag queen reading time, drag queen this, and drag queen that, then it does become an indoctrination.”

The *Timberjay* asked if Kerr and his colleagues would have the same objection to the adult-only drag shows. Kerr replied that while such shows were not biblically moral, “Adults are going to do what adults are going to do.”

Like Dalberg, whose letter prompted the protests, Kerr was unaware that drag

shows were being staged in Ely starting in 2022, until a few weeks ago.

“I didn’t even know this was going on here. And neither did most of the people I talked to. Grand Ely Lodge doesn’t advertise this on their web page. This was all done in the darkness.”

Kerr remarked that he had been targeted with a lot of negative feedback for expressing his views. “The amount of pushback that I’ve gotten, I’ve been doxed, you know. There’s such a tremendous pushback from the community that wants (drag shows for kids) to happen, which shows logically that there’s something wrong with it.” Kerr said that he and his colleagues would keep searching for more options to stop drag shows in front of children.

While Kerr was the organizer and spokesperson, all the protesters were happy to share their views. “We’re here because

we’re concerned for the children,” said Burnie Stahl, another protester and the associate pastor of Community Gospel Church in Ely. “We’re not haters. We want to see these people come to the lord. That would solve a whole lot of everybody’s issues on this. That’s why we’re here. We want a peaceful protest. We’re not angry. We don’t hate these people. We’re just concerned about our community here in Ely and the kids.”

The drag shows

Flip Phone Events LLC has been staging drag shows across the country for 10 years. Chad Kempe, one of the owners of Flip Phone, was on-hand at the GEL on Saturday and he offered his own thoughts on the show and the protest.

“We’re thrilled to be here for a third show in Ely,” Kempe told the *Timberjay*, “for an all-inclusive family show that spreads love and positivity to everyone who attends.”

Kempe, meanwhile, questioned those who came to protest. “You would think somebody who is religious, who is protesting, would devote their time to other issues besides this. Perhaps helping the homeless or less needy in the community, but instead, (they are) spending a day out in the freezing cold to hold illegible signs on an issue that makes no difference to their lives at all.”

When asked about the bans in some states, Kempe said Flip Phone was adjusting. “We actually do drag shows in eight states, including Tennessee, right now, where they are banning it. It’s not fully banned. It’s a different set of (laws for) how they’re doing it in each of those cities. People are figuring out ways of how to keep this art alive where there are different rules and laws to stop it.”

MARIJUANA...Continued from page 1

was scheduled for a vote Friday, and if differences in the bills can be ironed out in conference committee, Gov. Tim Walz is expected to sign the measure.

“Cannabis will be no longer illegal this summer,” said the House bill’s lead sponsor, Rep. Zack Stephenson, DFL-Coon Rapids, noting that the bill would go into effect in August. “The regulation, rulemaking and licensing process will take many more months. Beyond that you will of course also be able to home grow starting this summer, so it will be a while before Minnesotans can expect to see a dispensary open up.”

An expected House vote on Monday was delayed as the floor debate on the bill didn’t begin until almost 9:30 p.m. and House members pushed consideration of 19 proposed amendments just past midnight, triggering invocation of a House prohibition against deliberations after 12 a.m. to provide for members’ safety.

All but one of the amendments were offered by Republicans and primarily focused on modifications of proposed regulations of the hemp-based cannabis

products industry, giving more local control to cities, increase funding for law enforcement, and reducing the potential impact of legalization on those under 25 years of age.

Rep. Nolan West, R-Blaine, proposed an amendment that would have grandfathered in and essentially exempted from the new regulations all hemp-based edibles producers and sellers who began operating under legislation signed into law last summer. West maintained it was unfair to change the rules after hundreds of people invested thousands of dollars and had operated safely for a year. He asserted that certain provisions of the bill threatened the viability of those businesses.

Stephenson responded that the bill had been modified in committee to address some of those concerns, and felt the bill provided appropriate regulation for the industry that wasn’t provided under last year’s bill. He recommended the amendment be rejected, and it was.

Dispensaries will be licensed by the state and cities will be required to provide licenses to those businesses by the bill.

Giving cities more local control was the focus of multiple amendments offered by Republicans, who argued that locally elected officials should be able to make decisions that reflect the culture of their communities.

Former Ely mayor and now District 3A Rep. Roger Skraba was among the speakers who argued for more local control on Monday, and he reinforced those remarks before the vote on Tuesday.

“One of my biggest concerns from me being involved in small government, being a mayor, city councilor, is meaningful local control,” Skraba said. “I need to see more on that. I need to see more recognition of the costs for local government in the revenue sharing. Where I’m from, when we get someone that gets arrested we have to drive them 55 miles one way to jail and then back. So, the cost is a lot more in our area, because we don’t have jails everywhere. I don’t know why it’s so hard for me right now. You know, I got four more emails this morning saying please support this, it’s kind of a big deal. But at the same time being a

mayor, I understand that local control. I did talk to several communities and their concern is that that is if the businesses get too big, how are they going to manage it? How do they function? Some of our communities don’t have local police, they have the sheriff. So, with that I think I’m leaning more on the red (no).”

Skraba ended up voting against the bill.

One of the more significant proposed changes to the bill, which also failed, was advanced by Rep. Dave Baker, R-Willmar, who tried to increase the legal purchase age to 25, citing concerns over the drug’s effect on brain development in teens and young adults. Those concerns were supported by statements from leading medical and psychological professional associations in the state, but that wasn’t enough to sway the vote Baker’s way.

Rep. Jessica Hanson, DFL-Burnsville, argued that it didn’t make sense to set an age limit higher than that for other things like alcohol and tobacco.

“We allow 21-year-olds to legally consume toxins like alcohol, nicotine

and tobacco,” Hanson said. “We allow 18-year-olds to gamble, join the military, work in dangerous facilities and to serve those toxins to other people and, in my opinion, one of the more dangerous ones -- to get married, right? Unless and until we are going to stop all potentially life-altering decisions from happening before 25, we really can’t start with cannabis.”

House members also rejected a Republican amendment that would have placed potency limits on cannabis and cannabis-based products.

Several minor amendments to the bill were approved by members, including:

► A proposal not related directly to cannabis to make fentanyl test strips more widely available, including through retail outlets such as liquor stores.

► Eliminating a requirement for having a second individual in delivery vehicles making deliveries of hemp-based THC edibles.

► Prohibiting the Director of the Office of Cannabis Management from becoming an industry lobbyist if they should leave the position.

► Adding a zero-tolerance prohibition for school bus drivers to drive a bus when there is any physical evidence present in their body of consumption of cannabis or cannabis-derived products. Members rejected a similar amendment for metro transit drivers.

Unless the Senate bill is amended during floor debate, representatives from the two chambers will have at least two major differences to work out in conference committee.

The House version would allow home possession of two pounds of consumable marijuana. The Senate caps the possession amount at one-and-a-half pounds. That eight-ounce difference is the equivalent of 448 half-gram joints.

Also at issue is the level of taxation on cannabis products. The House bill calls for an eight percent gross receipts tax, while the Senate version would levy a 10 percent tax.

“We’re going to have a good discussion about that in conference,” Stephenson said, noting that House Democrats prefer the lower tax rate.

VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK

Park users sound off on ice road plan

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- A draft proposal for a Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan at Voyageurs National Park got a chilly reception from area park patrons in three public meetings last week, with the overriding question being why such a plan was necessary when the current largely unregulated system has worked since the park’s founding in 1971. The Kabetogama Town Hall was filled nearly to capacity for the first meeting on Tuesday, April 18. VNP Superintendent Bob DeGross facilitated the meeting, which began with an overview of the plan and the rationale for it. A virtual meeting was conducted on Wednesday, April 19, and another in-person meeting was held in International Falls on Thursday, April 20.

Current conditions

Ice roads on Kabetogama and Rainy lakes were common prior to the establishment of the park, and in 1979 the National Park Service began plowing ice roads on Rainy Lake. Today, ice roads are created and maintained on both lakes by park staff. A designated snowmobile trail system provides access to greater portions of the park. However, visitors use a variety of off-road vehicles including ATVs, UTVs, street-legal vehicles, and other non-snowmobile vehicles on areas away from the ice roads, a practice that doesn’t comply with federal regulations for national parks. Ice fishing is allowed in the park, but over time ice houses have evolved into essentially campers that can be lowered onto the ice.

Rationale and plan

An access and use plan is necessary, park officials say, because the management of vehicles on frozen lake surfaces is out of compliance with relevant federal regulations for off-road usage, and that an unregulated increase in the number and weight of ice

shelters raises concerns for safety, visitor experiences, and the park’s natural resources.

The preliminary proposal formulated by park staff would create two usage zones in the park.

A moderate use zone that would include Lake Kabetogama and part of Rainy Lake would include 20-26 miles of ice roads, based on weather conditions, available staff, and funding. An access fee would be charged to use the ice roads. Off-road vehicle use, parking, and ice shelters would be allowed within 300 feet of ice roads. ORVs, which must be licensed or registered by the state, would not be allowed to operate outside of the 300-ft. parking area and ice roads. No limits for the time being would be placed on the number and size of ice shelters. If an ice shelter is placed beyond 300 feet from an ice road, it would have to be transported by snowmobile or non-motorized methods.

A low use zone would include all of Rainy Lake east of Cranberry Bay, Namakan Lake, Sand Point Lake, Mukooda Lake, and interior lakes associated with a designated snowmobile trail. The low use zone would be open to snowmobiles only, not off-road vehicles. All types of ice houses would be permitted, provided they are transported by snowmobile or non-motorized methods and are occupied. Commercial Use Authorization permit holders could be left for longer terms with prior approval.

Kabetogama comments

The *Timberjay* obtained an audio recording of the public comment portion of the Kabetogama meeting, which was conducted in a format different from what park officials had originally planned, which was to have attendees present their feedback individually to park personnel placed around the room.

But it became clear that the large crowd in attendance wanted to hear all the feedback.

“What you hear from people here is, I believe, very meaningful, and that’s what we’re missing in our society today,” one woman said. “People want to hear what everybody has to say.”

“It’s called dialogue,” another person said. “How about some?”

DeGross was immediately accommodating.

“I’m more than willing to take the time to do that,” he said.

Multiple comments hit on the timing of the plan, asking why it’s being rolled out now when the park has evidently been out of compliance with federal regulations with no apparent issues for a long time.

“The reason why it came up is because I’ve been getting a variety of different requests for realigning the ice roads, for people who have different kinds of vehicles who come up and (ask) do we allow this kind of vehicle, and also the Mukooda Portage came up a couple of times,” DeGross said. “I regularly get requests for things that would be out of alignment with the Code of Federal Regulations, and my answer to them is no we really can’t do that. My goal for this is to try to accommodate as much of the reasonable recreational actions that we can while passing the requirement I have to assure that we are in alignment with the regulations.”

“Of all national parks,” one person called out. “Voyageurs National Park is a hell of a lot different than a lot of other national parks.”

“Codes can be changed,” another said. “Why can’t we set up a code that’s appropriate for this park for the way it’s used and the way it’s accessed. Why do you have to abide by a standard code everywhere when it can be modified by law?”

“Right now, we’re just having this conversation, and based on the feedback that we get that will help us determine the path forward,” DeGross responded.

ed. “Right now, I don’t think there is support in the agency as a whole to consider a change to the regulation.”

But participants asserted that they believe it is DeGross’s responsibility to advocate for changes for his park.

“You’re the one who can drive that. This is a unique park,” one said.

“You have to speak for us. You are the driving force. Everybody here is coming to you saying what are you going to do for us?” another said.

DeGross didn’t disagree, but noted he has limitations.

“In this process, I am not the final decider in what the final outcome is,” he said, indicating in a later comment that NPS Regional Director Bert Frost would have to sign off on VNP’s plan.

Another concern raised was about the impact vehicle restrictions could have on people with disabilities accessing the frozen lake surface for recreational activities.

One commenter suggested people should be allowed to get a special permit for vehicles to accommodate people with special needs.

That led to a question about the proposed fees for access, and DeGross said nothing had been decided about that yet. If fees would be assessed, the money would be used to help with the costs of maintaining the ice roads.

Another point of contention had to do with the occupancy requirement for ice houses in the low use zone.

“I don’t understand why you can’t have a fish house out overnight just because you’re in a low use zone. State regulation says you can,” someone said.

DeGross indicated that numerous people seemed to think that was a “silly” requirement and encouraged people to submit their written comments about it.

The state Department of Natural Resources was represented at the meeting by DNR Northeastern Region Director Shelly Patton, who spoke to the need for a collaborative discussion with park officials given jurisdictional issues impacting the park.

“The state of Minnesota, we’ve got a state statute that says the waters of Voyageurs National Park are under the state’s jurisdiction, and also that we did not cede the waters of the state to Voyageurs National Park. What we need to do is to research and analyze the federal regulations and state statutes and see how they intersect,” Patton said. “I want to let you know we’re committed to researching this. We plan to provide our written comments. It’s a very important issue. In Minnesota, surface water use is also under the jurisdiction of the counties. When there is unsafe ice or there’s navigational hazards out there, the county sheriff’s department, it’s their authority to mark those. We have three different entities here, county, state and federal.”

Others cited a history of broken promises from past park managers in explanation of the current skepticism about the plan.

“I hear what you’re saying about past management,” DeGross said. “I know that my commitment is to work through this process so that everyone has an idea of what is allowed and isn’t allowed.”

Numerous other issues and questions were raised in the public comment period that lasted just over an hour. A recurring theme for DeGross was emphasizing the importance of submitting written comments about concerns and recommendations, noting that the period for submitting comments has been extended to June 3. Comments can be submitted electronically at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/VOYA-frozen>, or via U.S. Mail to Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan, Voyageurs National Park, 360 Hwy 11 East, International Falls, MN 56649.

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EARTH DAY

New venue gives this years Earth Fest room to grow

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

VIRGINIA- A new venue and increased interest from exhibitors and vendors helped contribute to what was possibly the Iron Range’s largest Earth Fest event yet. The free event, sponsored by the Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability (IRPS) counted over 1,200 attendees this year at the Iron Trail Motors Event Center on Saturday, April 22, which also is celebrated as Earth Day.

IRPS executive director Missy Roach said they were “really happy” with the new venue.

“It was a great turnout,” she said. Roach said IRPS knew they had outgrown their original venue, and they were excited to be able to work with the city of Virginia to locate at the new event center this year.

In previous years, the event was held in three separate buildings in Mt. Iron (the community center, Merritt Elementary, and Messiah Lutheran Church), with attendees walking or getting rides between buildings.

The new venue located everything under one roof, with plenty of room for the over 60 exhibitors, vendors, and demonstrators who filled the hockey arena floor, as well as ample parking.

There was live music, food, children’s activities, and speakers throughout the day in a separate meeting room.

“We do this for the community,” said Roach.

The commitment to renting the larger venue was a big step for the group, since it was significantly more costly than previous years, said Earth Fest coordinator Marlise Riffel. But the move also gives the festival more room to grow in the future, something that wasn’t possible at the previous location.

“We plan to grow into this new space in future years,” she said. Next year’s Earth Fest is tentatively scheduled for April 27, 2024.

The goal of Earth Fest is to connect people from all over the Range with topics that foster a future that our children can be proud of. “What do we need to do now to leave the Iron Range in better shape than we found it? How can we meet our needs without compromising our grandchildren’s ability to meet theirs? That’s the question we address at Earth



Jasper Strasser, whose family operates Fat Chicken Farm in Embarrass, brought one of his favorite chickens, Snowshoe, to Earth Fest this year. Snowshoe enjoyed walking around the venue and meeting all the visitors. photo by J. Summit

Fest,” said the event organizers.

About 60 volunteers helped run the event, which was funded in part by 23 sponsors. The silent auction tied a record for the most money raised from the event.

Inside the arena there were dozens of booths featuring activities for children, educational displays for adults, solar energy information, and electric vehicles on display, locally raised foods, farmers markets, gardening with native plants, environmental advocacy, naturalist groups, information on recycling, and much more. Speakers included talks on climate change, increasing access to fresh foods on the Iron Range, getting kids interested in gardening, how to talk to children about climate change, and the potential of e-waste recycling for recovery of economically-important rare minerals in the area (including essential minerals needed for electric vehicles and batteries).

The session on e-waste recycling was the most popular this year, Riffel said. E-waste recycling will be a major focus of the IRPS group this year.

New this year was a “repair café” where participants got to see how to repair everyday household items, as well as to make printed fabric patches to create a quilt or use to repair clothing.

Over 1,500 pounds of electronics

were collected for recycling this year and St. Louis County is getting it recycled (Earth Fest paid the associated fees and cost for the trailer). According to the Global E-waste Monitor, North Americans generate an average of forty-six 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 this was a good start. The free e-waste recycling collected desktop and laptop computers, monitors, and televisions under 19”.

As in past years, Earth Fest featured 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. More information is available at <https://www.irpsmn.org>. For more information on recycling visit www.stlouiscountymn.gov/garbage.

IRPS organizes the Virginia Farmers Market. They also host a major fundraiser in October, their Pasty Festival.

Top 10 things to remember about recycling in North St. Louis County

1. Plastic recycling is limited to #1 and #2 items, look for the number inside a triangular-shaped logo on the bottom of a container. Number 5 plastic is not currently recyclable. Styrofoam is never recyclable. Plastic dishes and toys are not recyclable.
2. Clean plastic bags, plastic shopping bags, and plastic wrapping (but not plastic bags that food is sold in because they are treated with other chemicals to help keep food fresh) aren’t recyclable through the county, but these items can be taken to receptacles at Super One, Target, and Walmart.
3. Almost all kinds of paper and magazines are recyclable, except for wrapping paper and packing with plastic or waxy coated interiors such as milk cartons or frozen food boxes. Box board (cereal boxes) get sorted in with regular paper. Corrugated cardboard, which goes in a separate bin, is recyclable. Pizza boxes, paper plates, egg cartons, and construction paper are not recyclable. Any paper with food contamination is not recyclable.
4. All metal cans are recyclable (but need to be clean inside). Aluminum foil and disposable aluminum pie pans/containers are not recyclable because they are too thin and burn up in the recycling process. Aerosol cans are not recyclable and my need to be disposed of as hazardous waste.
5. Paper and plastic labels and wrappings on containers do not need to be removed.
6. Almost all the time, plastic and metal lids on recyclables are also recyclable, but you need to leave them on the container or they will end up in regular garbage.
7. All recycled items need to be at least 95-percent clean. If they aren’t, they get removed because they could contaminate the rest of the lot.
8. Sorting out non-qualified items in the recycling process costs 48-percent of the county’s recycling budget.
9. When you put your recycling out in plastic bags, someone has to take the extra time to empty the bag and throw it away. Plastic bags can clog the facility machinery.
10. St. Louis County has the capacity to process 240-percent more recyclables than the current amount (12,000 tons instead of the current 5,000 tons per year). More recycling generates more sales and revenue for the county and reduces the size of the landfills that the county has to maintain.





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SPRING SPORTS?

Snow delays frustrating for area teams

Some area fields likely won't be playable until May

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — If you've been missing reports on spring sports action around the area in the *Timberjay* lately, you can blame Mother Nature. Local high school athletes are used to postponements of spring sports like baseball, softball, and golf, as winter conditions frequently linger into the early part of the season, but this year the postponements have dragged out longer than usual.

"This [spring] is probably the most challenging and frus-

trating we've had," said Ely Athletic Director Tom Coombe. "I'm hearing the same across the board from coaches and athletic directors. The nice stretch of weather we had a couple of weeks back just teased us. Usually when we get an April snowstorm it melts in the next day or two, but this snow has lingered and there are grass fields up here that may not be played on until May."

As of this week, most area baseball and softball fields were either fully or partially snow covered and continued cool temperatures and mostly

Right: Snow and wet ground is still plaguing area ball fields, like American Legion Memorial Field in Soudan. Lingering winter conditions have delayed the start of the spring sports season by nearly three weeks.

photo by M. Helmberger

cloudy skies the first half of the week did little to help clear the fields. "We're struggling," said Mark Fabish, athletic director for the North Woods School. "Our

See DELAYS...pg. 2B



photo by M. Helmberger

FILM



Erin Mae Miller is in Ely filming a new independent production.

Producer talks indie filmmaking in Ely area

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- — The *Timberjay* recently sat down with movie producer Erin Mae Miller to talk about the business of making movies and how her film landed in Ely. The working title of the film is "Athens," named after Athens, N.Y., which was the original location for this coming-of-age film about a 12-year-old boy attempting to learn the truth about his mother's rape and efforts by adults in his family to keep it a secret.

Miller talked about how she got into the film and TV production business, why she went into independent filmmaking, and why Ely was the perfect location for "Athens."

Indie films

"Athens" is what's known in filmmaking as an indie film and a festival film. Indie films are independent of the Hollywood corporate studios and film distribution companies. A festival film is one that targets the vibrant film festival scene. With the demise of the once robust "art house" movie theaters in the U.S., film festivals can now pave the way to success for an indie film in the face of the film distribution system which makes it difficult to compete for screen time against the big studios.

Indie film production has larger risks but more creative freedom than the corporate studios. As "Athens" producer Erin Mae Miller told the *Timberjay*, "I never even looked to do a studio model or get into a corporation so I could climb the ranks because I want to have a say about the projects that I put my effort and work into. I want the content I make to matter. I don't want to waste my life making crap that I feel is not making the world a better place. I don't want to make junk that, in my opinion, is making culture worse."

Miller talked about how the

See FILM...pg 2B



WOODEN BOAT RESTORATION

Putting a classic back to work

When Ludlow's "water taxi" was crushed in a storm, local craftsmen got busy

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- Restoring wooden boats is not a "copy and paste" job. Every boat has a history, and every boat tells its own story.

Jeff Larson and Dana Hein, who operate Sunrise River Boatworks in Tower, have plenty of stories to tell about the boats they restore, and this winter's newest project is no exception.

The staff at Ludlow's Island Resort, located on a five-acre island on the Cook end of Lake Vermilion, has some unique challenges in serving their guests, specifically getting them to and from the water access-only resort.

Their 20-foot-long utility boat, which is about 60 years old, serves a unique role, as the resort's "water taxi."

"It's rare to see a classic wooden boat being used as a work boat," said Hein. "The boat can haul a lot of guests comfortably," said Larson. "And it's easy enough to operate that it can be driven by resort staff." Powered by a single 60 hp Suzuki outboard, it's an unusual configuration for a boat of its size. "This boat has a lot of soul," Larson said.

But the boat was badly damaged in a severe storm last year when the boathouse that serves as its summer home was totally destroyed by a probable tornado that ripped through the

Top: Dana Hein fits the new windshield in place.

Right: The remains of Ludlow's Island Resort's boathouse lay on top of their "water taxi" following a storm in late June.

submitted photo

Below right: Jeff Larson inspects some of the work on the boat as it nears completion.

other photos by J. Summit

resort on June 20.

Most of the boathouse, along with the neighboring structure, was carried away by the strong wind, but the rest of the structure, including many large beams, collapsed on top of the water taxi.

The boat was an integral part of the resort and resort's guests experience.

"On a busy summer day that boat goes back and forth to shore 10 times each hour," said resort owner Paul Ludlow. "Think of it like our elevator. It is constantly going." The trip from the shore to the island is a short one, about 200 yards, and drivers take the trip slowly, so they can talk with the guests on board.

Ludlow said that Dana and Jeff were "shocked when they saw the boat's frame was intact." The resort initially figured they would need to replace the boat, so quickly had purchased another similar one to put into service.

See REPAIRS...pg. 2B



FILM..Continued from page 1B

pandemic and its economic downturn affected the independent film industry. “In the mid-2010s,” Miller explained, “it was like the independent film was the way of the future. The streamers and the executives at companies like Amazon—they wanted to empower the independent filmmaker and make content that they really believed in. I’m sure they still do want to do that to a certain extent, but ... there’s a lot of things being up-ended.”

Miller said staff cuts across the sector as a result of the pandemic have created major challenges for the entertainment industry and independent filmmakers in particular due to the loss of networking ability. “As an independent producer,” Miller com-

mented, “you’re going out to these (film business personnel), trying to make relationships with all the various distributors and streamers. Then you go talk to somebody, you go to reach out to them, and you discover they are no longer at XYZ. And the people there, they don’t give you someone else to contact.”

The economic downturn hasn’t killed the independent film makers, but it has made filmmaking more challenging.

Miller did affirm that “Athens” will likely be part of next year’s End of the Road Film Festival in Ely. **“Athens” as an indie**

The “Athens” project fits into Miller’s concept of creating films with creative and meaningful messages. “You can go and work for the machine and you can put out junk food for the eyes,

or you can go independent to try to make something that you’re proud of,” she said. “It’s so fulfilling to put together a team of people who are like-minded and work together for the common good of a story that’s going to make an impact... to get people talking about something that’s worthwhile. That’s my goal in producing, to make films that are going to positively contribute to a social conversation.”

Miller has been working on the “Athens” concept for years already. At one level, “Athens” is a coming-of-age story wrapped around a family tragedy. On another level, “Athens” is about how communities react to sexual assault and its victims.

According to U.S. Dept. of Justice statistics, one in five women in the

our film, and she said, ‘Oh my gosh, you’re describing Ely. You have to film this in Ely.’”

The contact at Vermilion then “opened up her rolodex” and provided Miller with the names and numbers of who to talk to in Ely. “Everyone was saying the same thing—that this was just a wonderful, beautiful community that we needed to check out.”

Miller was given even more encouragement when she visited the community. “It was kind of humorous when I came, and people would be like, ‘Oh, have you talked to this person?’” Miller ran into that everywhere in Ely. “It’s such a small town that everybody was happy to connect us to people and make that process easy.”

Miller and Blake looked at several area

communities, like Virginia, Hibbing, Chisholm, and others, but the reception Ely offered to the filmmakers made the difference. “Heidi (Omerza) was the first mayor that met us for any sort of (location) scouting.” The helpful reception of Police Chief Chad Houde was another welcome that Miller mentioned.

Miller mentioned the “timeless” feel of Ely as a community, the beauty of Ely’s two schools and how the new addition preserved the historical feel of the school campus, and even the layout of the town where the main character, Michael, can look out his bedroom window during the film and see his mother come home.

“We started looking around town and fell in love,” said Miller.

REPAIRS..Continued from page 1B

The storm blew through around 9 p.m., when the resort was at 100-percent occupancy, Ludlow said. He was home at the time with his wife Kelly, about five miles away on Niles Bay, where they experienced some wind but nothing like the wind that roared through Ludlow’s Island as well as two other nearby resorts, Muskego Point and Polley’s, all of which sustained significant damage.

As soon as Ludlow got the call, he quickly boated back to the resort.

“We had to replace 14 of our 23 cabins’ roofs,” he said, “and other roofs needed smaller repairs.” The storm destroyed both boathouses and many

docks.

“Every one of our guests said the same thing,” Ludlow said. “It lasted less than 10 seconds and sounded like a locomotive going through.” Thankfully, no one was injured. Most resort guests were inside their cabins when the storm blew through.

Damage at Ludlow’s was limited to the south side of the five-acre island. The north side, only a couple hundred feet away, emerged without so much as a downed tree. While it was not officially called a tornado, Ludlow said the insurance adjusters said this type of damage is caused by “tornadic action.”

A lot of the debris ended up on the east side

of the island. One large white pine had a long 2x4 piece of lumber embedded in the trunk. “You could do pullups on it,” Ludlow said. The insurance adjuster explained this can happen when the tornado-force winds twist the tree trunk, opening up the fibers, letting an airborne object work itself in.

A lot of the missing debris was never accounted for. A 20’x50’ cedar-planked sundeck on top of one of the boathouses totally disappeared.

“No one found any of those cedar boards,” he said.

Rebuilding the classic

Ludlow said that the first sign the boat could be repaired was the fact it was still floating.

But there was still a lot of work to do to get the boat back into action.

Larson and Hein rebuilt the wooden-framed glass windshield, put in new mahogany decking, rebuilt the motor well, repaired the rope crash rails, and gave the boat a new coat of paint and varnish. The boat will be back in action before the fishing opener in May, assuming the ice is off the lake.

The boat was purchased by the resort in 2004 and put into service in 2006, replacing an older wooden shuttle boat that had simply been worked to the bone and was beyond repair.

“The boat was in very good shape when we got it,” Ludlow said. “We just modified it to be a shuttle.”

“It was a special model, a Cruiser [offshoot from the Thompson wooden boat company, now owned by Chris-Craft], called a picnic boat. It came with a table that could pop up in the middle and a built-in cooler.”

The boat undergoes a lot of wear and tear each year. “Every year we repaint and revarnish it,” Ludlow said. He said he doesn’t know of any other resort using a classic wooden boat to ferry guests.

“It’s such an important piece of our resort experience,” he said. “People will be wowed this year when they see it.” The resort is looking to have another busy summer, and over three-quarters of their guests are repeat customers.

Ludlow said they will be taking extra good care of the boat now. Normally they let a wide assortment of staff drive it, but this year, he joked, maybe he would just take on the role.

He admitted that wooden boats do require a lot more maintenance, but said the resort’s history included many wooden boats, and they intended to keep that tradition going.

“We have a lot of classic boats in our fleet,” he said. “They look good parked at our docks.”

The Ludlow family currently owns four other classic wooden boats, some of which have been displayed at the annual classic boat show, on Labor Day weekend at The Landing.

DELAYS...Continued from page 1B

softball field, around home plate, there’s probably still have a good foot and a half of snow on the ground. And it keeps freezing at night so we’re not getting anywhere fast in terms of a melt.”

Area schools had hoped to be able to get games in this week, but when the second snowstorm in a week left at least another eight inches of snow on the ground, it quickly nixed that plan.

Coombe said he’s now “cautiously optimistic” that the baseball diamond in Ely will be ready to go by early next week, but he’s already seen similar hopes dashed this month. “We were days away from being ready when the snowstorm hit the weekend of April 15-16. That set us back two weeks,” he said.

If it’s frustrating for athletic directors, it’s even more so for student athletes and coaches, who have been stuck inside for weeks practicing in the gym. “The golfers have been hitting into a net on our stage for five or six weeks now,” said Fabish, who said he has no idea when area golf courses might be opening for the season. At this point, there’s not even a tentative date when the Ely golf course might be open. “We still have a bunch of snow on the ground, so there are no youth practicing,” said Tim Cooper, with the Ely Golf Club. “It’s a nightmare,” said Fabish. “I don’t have an answer for golf. There’s really no way to make up for missed meets.”

Track athletes have gotten some outdoor exposure, running on roads, while softball and baseball players have been able to play catch in the school parking lot on some of the nicer afternoons. But that’s been pretty limited and can’t provide the full experience of practicing on a field, noted Fabish. Mostly players have been stuck in the gym, relying on hitting practice with indoor batting cages. “We’re all getting pretty antsy,” he said.

In some cases, postponed softball and baseball games can be made up in May, that make-up window is getting more and more challenging, notes Fabish. “We already stack our schedule pretty heavily in May, so we don’t have a lot of room to add all these games back in,” he added.

Opening day for Ely baseball was supposed to be on April 11, at Littlefork. While it’s hardly unusual for lingering snow to force postponements in the first week of the season, most of which are made up in May, after three weeks of postponements as of April 28, the number of games needing make-up keeps rising.

While weather has been the big factor so far this spring, it isn’t the only challenge as coaches and athletic directors try to adjust their schedules. Even at schools like Rock Ridge, Mt. Iron-Buhl, and Mesabi East, where artificial turf was recently installed on ballfields and where snow can be hauled away, other factors have made it difficult to relocate games there.

“It’s nice to have the turf options,” said Coombe. “But it almost takes a perfect storm to get something scheduled. Field availability, an opponent, umpire availability, transportation and finally the weather that day all have to work. If one of those don’t align you don’t play which only compounds the frustration.”

But at least there’s hope for ball players to make up some of what they’ve missed thus far. That’s less likely for students taking part in other sports.

“I really feel for our track kids and our golfers,” said Coombe. “Track meets generally aren’t made up so those that have been lost are just lost. Again, it shortens the season for them and there are missed opportunities to compete, which is really frustrating for teams and coaches who have spent several weeks practicing.”



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Obituaries and Death Notices



Eugene L. Coyer

Eugene Lester Coyer, 95, of Orr, passed away peacefully during the night of Sunday, April 16, 2023, in his “Palace in the Poplar”. An evening visitation will be held on Sunday, April 30 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Dougherty Funeral Home in Hibbing. Visitation will continue for one hour prior to the 11 a.m. memorial service on Monday, May 1 at Calvary Lutheran Church in Orr. Pastor Wendy Deatherage will officiate. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Calvary Lutheran Church in Orr. Arrangements are with Dougherty Funeral Home of Hibbing.

Gene was born on August 12, 1927, in Albert Lea. He grew up in Mankato, was an Eagle Scout, and received his pilot’s license at 17. He went to serve briefly at the end of WWII as a U.S. Navy pilot. He then graduated from the University of Minnesota as a forester. He started working for the U.S. Forest Service in Oregon and returned to Minnesota to work for the state, being transferred from Brainerd to Orr, where he met his future wife, Delores Terska, who was working as a secretary for the DNR. At the time he took a position with Diamond Match, built a home in Orr, and started a family of four children.

In 1966, he moved the family to Grand Rapids, taking a position with Sugar Hills Ski Area where he developed a snow-making machine and was called on by the U.S. Olympic ski team to make snow for them in Colorado and Maine. In 1988, Gene and Delores then made a home in Issaquah, Wash., where he became the maintenance engineer for the Holiday Inn. Delores passed away in 1999 and Gene returned to Minnesota where he lived out his life in a new home on Pelican Lake in Orr, his “Palace in the Poplar”.

Gene loved to hunt and fish his entire life and was also very involved with Boy Scouts. He particularly loved spending

time on the North Shore, trout fishing at the family cabin. Gene had the mind of an engineer as he was extremely inventive, creative and handy. Always an armchair historian with a steel-trap memory, Gene was literate in American history from Plymouth Rock to WWII. He had a passion for the West, and a fascination for Native American cultures. He loved the art of C.M. Russell, and the poetry of Longfellow, Thoreau and Frost. He read everything Ambrose wrote. His early years working in the West always drew him back. He and Delores honeymooned in Yellowstone. He visited Little Bighorn, “where Custer got his arrow shirt,” many times.

Gene had a sweet tooth; every cookie was his friend, especially sugar cookies. He taught himself to cook after Delores passed and developed a fine, small repertoire of dishes he loved to share, like “boobery pie” and “Gene’s Boston Baked Beans”. He was a gifted illustrator and sculptor, and his collection of spearing decoys became quite the exhibit. In his workshop, a box of wooden duck decoy parts, in various stages of completion, demonstrate the transformation from wooden blocks into swimming, lifelike mallards and bluebills.

Gene is survived by his children, Gary (Lori) Coyer, June (Jim) Guertin, Conith (John) Mackner and Daniel Coyer; brother, Martin Coyer; four grandkids and four great-grandkids.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Lester and Orilla Bathke Coyer; wife, Delores; and brother, Burton Coyer.



Lawrence Olson

Lawrence “Larry” Olson, 83, formerly of Crane Lake, passed away peacefully on Sunday, April 9, 2023. Funeral services will be held at 12 noon on Thursday, May 11 at St. Joseph of the Lakes, 171 Elm St. in Lino Lakes.

Larry was born to Mary and Clifford Olson on August 14, 1939, in Hibbing, where he spent his childhood. Larry graduated from Hibbing High School. He married the love of his life, Joan Koslowski of Hibbing, on

Oct. 15, 1960, at Blessed Sacrament Church in Hibbing. For a short period of time, they lived in the Twin Cities where Larry attended Dunwoody College of Technology before moving to Crane Lake to work with his parents at Olson’s Borderland Lodge, which he and Joan later purchased from Larry’s parents and operated together until 1992.

Larry was an avid hunter and fisherman and greatly enjoyed sharing his knowledge of the sport and local area with customers, many of whom became lifelong friends. Larry was an active member of the Crane Lake Commercial Club, Crane Lake Volunteer Fire Department, St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Buick, and was also a member of the Border Lakes Association. After selling and retiring from their resort, Larry and Joan did volunteer work for Voyageurs National Park. Larry loved people and he was always willing to help.

Larry is survived by his children, Jeff (Donna) Olson, Kenneth (Jeanne) Olson, Jeane Olson and Michael (DeeAnne) Olson; grandchildren, Dana, Rebecca, Connor, Nicholas, Colin, Sarah (Joe) Thomas, Emily (Patrick) Jalabert, Isabelle, Sophia and Olivia; great-grandchildren, Eleanor, Liam, Theodore, Leila, Gabriella and Luc; and many other family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Clifford and Mary Basta Olson; and wife, Joan.

Lucy Lynn LaRue Pecchia

Lucy Lynn LaRue Pecchia, 11, of Tower, died as a result of injuries she sustained in an automobile accident on Thursday, April 20, 2023. Lucy and her mother April gained their wings at the same time. Lucy is now our Diamond in the Sky. Daddy loves her and she was the best sister to Zoey and Dane. A memorial service was held on Wednesday, April 26 at the Vermilion Family Wellness Center on the Vermilion Reservation in Tower. Family services were provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower.

Lucy was born on May 1, 2011, in Virginia, while her parents Christopher and April Kesler Pecchia were listening to the song “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds”.

Lucy was a kind-hearted, beautiful, caring, compassionate soul who loved her family and close friends. She especially enjoyed spending time with her siblings, cousins and best friends.

During her short 11 years, Lucy showed everyone she knew her sweet, thoughtful and spunky personality. She radiated love and happiness. Lucy was sugar and spice and everything nice.

Lucy was a sixth-grade student at Tower-Soudan Elementary School. She enjoyed volleyball and drawing. Lucy was also a “water baby” who loved swimming, and she enjoyed her animal friends.

Lucy is survived by her father, Christopher Pecchia; siblings, Zoey Funk and Dane Pecchia; grandparents, Patrick Pecchia, Belinda (Dave) Fazio, Gunner (Jilleen) Kesler and Mary (Jeff) Peterson; great-grandparents, William (Sharon) Tibbetts, Virginia Jacobs, John (Mary Jane) Kesler and Richard Kempf; numerous aunts, uncles and cousins; and many friends who were special to her.

She was preceded in death by her great-grandmothers, Gwendolyn LaRue Tibbetts, Alice Jackson, Carol Fazio, Sandra Kempf and Rebecca Foreman.

April Lynn Pecchia

April Lynn Kesler Pecchia, 35, of Eveleth, formerly of Tower, died as a result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident on Thursday, April 20, 2023. April and her daughter Lucy gained their wings at the same time. A memorial service was held on Wednesday, April 26 at the Vermilion Family Wellness Center on the Vermilion Reservation in Tower. Family services were provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower.

April was born on Oct. 24, 1987, in Ft. Wayne, Ind., to Gunner and Mary Jacobs Kesler. She is a 2006 graduate of Tower High School and a 2011 graduate of DBA. April was united in marriage to Christopher Pecchia on Oct. 24, 2008, in Las Vegas, Nev. April worked as a caretaker which would often cause her to work back-to-back shifts. She was a blessing to all the patients who were lucky enough to have her taking care of them.

April always had such an infectious laugh, and she always had a way of making others feel accepted and comfortable just being themselves. She was also very artistic and enjoyed the simple things like coloring, in fact she always had a box of markers in her bag. April and Lucy would enjoy coloring and doing crafts together; they always had so much fun. Dane, Lucy and April loved to go swimming and fishing in the

summer. April also loved to watch scary movies, especially with Zoey.

April is survived by her husband, Christopher Pecchia; children, Dane Pecchia and Zoey Funk; parents, Gunner (Jilleen) Kesler and Mary (Jeff) Peterson; brothers, Scott, (JR) Cody and Josh Kesler; sisters, Jude Carrico and Meagan Kesler; and numerous extended family members and friends.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, Sandra Lynn Kesler, Harold Jacobs and Becky Foreman.

William G. and Marjorie D. Hallin

William “Bill” George Hallin, 85, formerly of Britt, originally of Cook, entered the gates of heaven on Dec. 9, 2021. Marjorie “Marge” Dennis Carlson Hallin, 84, formerly of Britt, originally of Virginia, entered the gates of heaven on March 22, 2023. A visitation and funeral will be held on Wednesday, May 10 at Bauman Funeral Home in Virginia. Visitation will begin at 11 a.m. The funeral service will be at noon, followed by a luncheon at the Mt. Iron Community Center at 1 p.m. Family services are provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia

Marge and Bill are survived by their four children, Jane (Larry) Mattson, Sue (Richard) Ostman, Sara (Nathan) Thompson and Andy (Casey) Hallin; grandchildren, Noelle (Joe) Kuechenmeister, Willy Mattson, Helen (Cyril Kulteshev) Ostman, Hannah (Eric Snow) Ostman, Richard Ostman, Katie (Christian) Dane, Amy (Austin) Dane, Marjorie (Kyle) Robey, Sawyer Hallin and Owen Hallin; five great-grandchildren; sisters- and brothers-in-law, Beth (John) Nigro, Ginny (Tom) Smith and Mary (Tom) Lundsten; special nephew, Kevin Jalonon; and numerous other nieces and nephews and their families.

Glen L. Chilcote

Glen L. Chilcote, 70, of Angora, left this Earth on Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023, watching the birds on a glorious sunny day from the beauty and comfort of his own home. A celebration of life will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 6 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service. Fellowship will follow in the church social hall where people can share their stories and memories of Glen. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

He is survived by his wife, Laurel “Laurie” Prue; son, Adam Chilcote; brothers, Gary (Rene) Chilcote and Dennis (Sedna Cedarstone) Chilcote; sister, Maureen (Edward) Gregorich; stepsons, Andrew (Jamie) Lemieux and Adam (Brittanie) Lemieux; grandchildren, Braden, Jorey, Cederic, Athena and Xavier; nephews, Paul (Kari) Gregorich, Christopher Gregorich and Craig (Kerri) Chilcote; niece, Natalie (Scott) Qualey; and many cousins.

Robin M. Salo

Robin Matilda Lepala Salo, 62, of Virginia, formerly of Embarrass, passed away at her home on Friday, April 14, 2023. A celebration of life will be held from 12 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 27 at Pike Sandy Town Hall, and later at 4 p.m. at Ryders Bar in Virginia. A private interment will be held at the West Pike Cemetery. Arrangements are with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by her sons, Ryan D. Salo and Neil B. Salo; daughter, Kylie L. Salo; mother, Nannette V. Beckman; sisters, RaeAnn (Gary) Pratt and Jolene (Devin) Davidson; nephews and niece, Eric (Rachel) Pratt, Hale Davidson and Elora Davidson; and the father of her children.

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Northwoods Kids Fishing Derby



DATE: Saturday, June 10, 2023
SCHEDULE: 9:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.
LOCATION: Veterans on the Lake Resort
AGES: 6-11 years old
ACTIVITIES: Fishing, water safety, skills, invasive species, ecology & art
REGISTRATION FEE: \$10.00/youth
Pre-registration is recommended. Registration form available at Ely.org/fishingderby or at the Chamber office.



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Outdoors

Our lives in the Northwoods

FISHERIES

Another late start at the Pike River Hatchery

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

PIKE RIVER— It’s been another late start for operations at the Pike River Hatchery, as late April snows and continued chilly weather have slowed the spring walleye run. Despite the conditions, the local Department of Natural Resources fisheries staff began laying out its cribs

and docks on Monday, in anticipation that they could drop nets as early as the weekend. If so, that would be about two weeks behind the average startup date of April 16, but it would be nearly a week ahead of last year’s May 5 startup, the latest on record for the hatchery. When walleye might begin showing up this year remains to be seen. Hatchery

manager Brent Flatten said the water was 37 degrees as of this week, well below the 40-45-degree temperatures that start to coax walleye into the river and prompt eggs in the female fish to ripen. With daytime highs stuck in the low 40s and overnight lows well below freezing, Flatten said it’s going to take some time for the water temperature to rise. “It will probably take

Right: On Monday, DNR fisheries workers were busy installing the netting and sorting platform at the hatchery this week in preparation for the upcoming egg harvest.
photo by M. Helmberger
several days for the fish to ripen,” said Flatten.
See HATCHERY...pg. 5B



RESEARCH

Study finds link between deer, spread of earthworms

REGIONAL— A newly-published study from the University of Minnesota has found a link between invasive earthworm populations, white-tailed deer and tree harvesting in northern forests. The findings, recently published with free access in the journal *Ecology*, show invasive earthworm populations increase with the presence of deer and decrease with tree harvesting. Invasive earthworms, which are not native to Minnesota, are known to harm soil and regenerating trees. “Invasive earthworms are ecosystem engineers which negatively impact fundamental ecosystem properties such as nutrient retention and the diversity of native plant species,” said Lee Frelich an adjunct professor in the Department of Forest Resources and Director of the Center for Forest Ecology. “Deer exacerbate these negative impacts by increasing earthworm populations.” The team of U of M researchers, in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and others, sampled earthworms in two long-term experiments in northern Wisconsin. Both experiment sites were established in the mid-2000s and were fenced to exclude deer. Tree cover was also removed in some cases, to simulate logging which typically leaves large gaps in the forest canopy. Nearly 13 years after each experiment started, the team tested how the absence of deer and the tree canopy gaps impacted earthworm populations. The researchers also used earthworm data collected prior to the experiment’s establishment to test how earthworm populations changed over 13 years. Earthworms were sampled by pouring a slurry of mustard powder and water on the

See STUDY...pg. 5B



THE AURORA BOREALIS

NIGHT DANCERS



Above: A rolling river of green and pink auroras flowed above Lost Lake earlier this week. photo by P. Wattering
Left: An awe-inspiring angel just below the Big Dipper. photo by J. Ranua
Below: An abstract merging of purples and greens at the apex of the sky above Lost Lake. photo by P. Wattering



NUISANCE NEIGHBORS

Keeping deer from wreaking havoc in the garden

Ely plant enthusiast has tips for protecting your flowers and more

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— It’s that quintessential sign of spring, after a long winter. Those tulips that you carefully planted and fertilized last fall are finally up and ready to open in their pink, red, or purple splendor. By tomorrow it will be a much-earned blaze of color. And then, a thief in the dark of night comes through and chews them up right down to the ground. It’s those #@%\$%^ deer again!

They’re the bane of many a gardener here in the North Country, routinely demolishing their most prized accomplishments, from that spectacular tea rose in the backyard to those crisp heads of buttercrunch lettuce in the raised beds just days away from filling a salad bowl. Fortunately, there are solutions to this perennial problem, according to Kathy Cyriack, who operates Gracie’s Plant Works in Ely. Cyriack was in Soudan last week to offer her experience and advice to members of the Tower-Soudan Civic Club, about how to discourage

deer from frustrating our gardening plans. It turns out, there are many strategies— it’s more a question of what approach best suits your needs. Cyriack had one rule, however, that every gardener should follow: don’t feed the deer during the winter. Deer are creatures of habit, who establish regular routes and trails through the woods and backyards, and even main streets, of our small towns. If you get them coming to your house in the winter, they’ll keep coming once the snow melts. Only it

See DEER...pg. 5B



Deer can cause plenty of damage to our ornamental flowers and vegetable gardens. But you can fight back.
Courtesy Minn. Extension Service

LINGERING WINTER



After the summer-like heat of mid-April, winter made a cameo over the past ten days, allowing area winter lovers a chance for one last ski or dogsled run. A crew led by Tim Wilbur from Wintergreen made their latest ever dogsled run on White Iron Lake on Monday morning, April 24. The ice was snow-covered and plentiful. Now the question is will it be gone in time for fishing opener, just over two weeks away?

Outdoors briefly

FS open house

ELY—The Superior National Forest is hosting an upcoming interagency open house for interested partners and the public on May 10 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Kawishiwi District Office, located at 1393 Hwy. 169, in Ely. Forest Supervisor Tom Hall, Kawishiwi District Ranger Aaron Kania, and other staff will offer information about ongoing projects in the area. Invited partners and agencies include the MNDNR, the 1854 Treaty Authority, northern Minnesota Ojibwe bands, Firewise, and more. For questions, please contact the Kawishiwi Ranger District’s office at 218-365-7600 or SM.FS.kawishiwi@usda.gov.


Apply now for bear permits

REGIONAL—Prospective bear hunters have until Friday, May 5, to apply for a bear hunting license from the Department of Natural Resources. Applications for the 2023 season can be submitted online, at any license agent or by telephone at 888-665-4236. A total of 4,035 licenses are available in 14 permit areas for the 2023 season, which opens Friday, Sept. 1, and closes Sunday, Oct. 15. Lottery winners will be notified by Thursday, June 1. The deadline to purchase bear hunting licenses awarded by lottery is Tuesday, Aug. 1. Any remaining unpurchased licenses will be available over the counter starting at noon Friday, Aug. 4. An unlimited number of bear licenses also will be sold over the counter for the no-quota area that includes east-central and far northwestern Minnesota. No-quota licenses are valid only in the no-quota area.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST


from NOAA weather

Friday




48 29

Saturday




46 29

Sunday




44 27

Monday



44 26

Tuesday



50 29

| Ely | Hi | Lo | Prec. | Sn. | Emb. | Hi | Lo | Prec. | Sn. | Cook | Hi | Lo | Prec. | Sn. | Orr | Hi | Lo | Prec. | Sn. | Tower | Hi | Lo | Prec. | Sn. |
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| 04/17 | 25 | 23 | 0.78 | 5.0" | 04/17 | 40 | 24 | 0.36 | | 04/17 | 26 | 23 | 0.15 | 3.0" | 04/17 | 37 | 27 | 0.00 | | 04/17 | 36 | 24 | 0.52 | 5.4" |
| 04/18 | 32 | 20 | 0.07 | 0.4" | 04/18 | 34 | 19 | 0.00 | | 04/18 | 35 | 21 | 0.00 | | 04/18 | 48 | 19 | 0.00 | | 04/18 | 34 | 13 | 0.00 | |
| 04/19 | 47 | 26 | 0.00 | | 04/19 | 48 | 21 | 0.00 | | 04/19 | 45 | 21 | 0.00 | | 04/19 | 41 | 30 | 0.00 | | 04/19 | 47 | 15 | 0.00 | |
| 04/20 | 41 | 29 | 0.24 | 2.3" | 04/20 | 39 | 31 | 0.20 | 1.5" | 04/20 | 41 | 29 | 0.02 | 0.4" | 04/20 | 36 | 27 | 0.10 | 1.0" | 04/20 | 39 | 31 | 0.00 | |
| 04/21 | 32 | 27 | 0.62 | 6.2" | 04/21 | 35 | 27 | 0.72 | 5.6" | 04/21 | 32 | 25 | 0.40 | 4.5" | 04/21 | 34 | 27 | 0.75 | 8.0" | 04/21 | 33 | 26 | 0.76 | 5.4" |
| 04/22 | 36 | 22 | 0.07 | 0.4" | 04/22 | 33 | 23 | 0.09 | 0.4" | 04/22 | 34 | 23 | 0.09 | 1.2" | 04/22 | 36 | 23 | 0.02 | | 04/22 | 33 | 23 | 0.06 | 0.3" |
| 04/23 | 30 | 16 | 0.00 | | 04/23 | 31 | 7 | 0.00 | | 04/23 | 31 | 10 | 0.00 | | 04/23 | 39 | 12 | 0.00 | | 04/23 | 31 | 6 | 0.00 | |
| YTD Total | | | 6.94 | 97.8" | YTD Total | | | 5.98 | 83.3" | YTD Total | | | 4.08 | 86.7" | YTD Total | | | NA | NA | YTD Total | | | 5.35 | 80.9" |

DEER...Continued from page 4B

won’t be corn they’ll be looking for.

Keeping deer out

One sure-fire way to keep deer away from your favorite plants is with physical barriers. “Deer won’t jump into a small, fenced area,” said Cyriack. An effective fence must be at least six feet tall, however, which can be expensive and time-consuming to erect. An electric fence is easier and can be very effective with deer, notes Cyriack, but it’s not always a good choice if you have pets, children, or especially regular visitors with children. No one likes to get zapped, and it can be especially traumatic for kids. Cyriack said you can also spread chicken wire or other metal fencing on the ground around plants you want to protect, since deer doing like walking on it (they can get their hooves tangled). But that can be labor intensive and less than desirable aesthetically. Cyriack said smart plant selection can also be very effective. Deer love certain plants, like hostas, arbor vitae, tulips, and roses, but other plants will keep them away. “Deer will avoid plants with a strong scent,” said Cyriack, because that scent will rub off on them and make them easier for predators to stalk them in the woods. Plants of the mint family are good examples of strong-smelling plants that deer will avoid, so you can take advantage of that by interplanting mints with one of your favored plants. Cyriack said you can plant mint along your garden paths so the scent is regularly released as you walk on them. Many mints are quite tough and can spread quickly, so don’t worry about walking on them. It might actually help keep them from spreading too rapidly. In general, deer like plants with broad, smooth leaves. They’ll gobble up impatiens, cabbage, lettuce, dahlias and pansies. Yet, they’ll typically avoid plants with fuzzy or bristly leaves, strong scents, or milky sap, which generally tastes bitter. “They hate peonies, daffodils, lily of the valley, zinnias, sweet alyssum, asters, and bleeding hearts,” said Cyriack. Most native plants are fine as well. Wild ginger, which makes a nice ground cover, is too bristly for deer. “They don’t care for lilacs, either, because of the strong scent.” For your patio pots, geraniums, which have fuzzy leaves, are generally left alone by deer, as are most ferns. By contrast, a pot full of impatiens is like putting out candy and they’ll often nibble your begonias as well. Some deer repellent sprays are available, and they can be effective, but Cyriack said they typically have to be reapplied each time it rains. Some home remedies, like spreading rotten eggs might also be effective, but who really wants to have to deal with rotten eggs? While smart planting can make a major difference with deer, Cyriack said she’s found another deterrent that has proven to be remarkably effective— motion-detecting sprinklers. Deer are highly attuned to motion and sudden surprises, so having a sprinkler come on with noise and sprays of water, will usually send them packing.

Plants that repel deer

Peonies

Bee Balm

Sweet Alyssum

Snapdragons

Daffodils

Bleeding Heart

Zinnias

B-eyed Susans

Lily of Valley

Joe Pye Weed

Calendula

Milkweed

Shrubs

Wild Ginger

Potentilla

Coneflowers

Barberry

Pulmanaria

Viburnum

Alliums

Junipers

Asters

Mugo Pine

STUDY...Continued from page 4B

ground, which causes earthworms to come shooting to the surface — a method anyone can use at home. The researchers found: ➤In both experiments, invasive earthworms were lowest in areas where there were no deer and with a canopy gap overhead. ➤In addition, earthworms increased the most in areas outside of deer fencing and far away from the center of canopy gaps. ➤The largest and most influential invasive earthworm species were increased by deer and decreased by canopy gaps. The research team has several theories as to how these disturbances might be linked. First, deer could be changing the soil in a way that is favorable for earthworms, through their droppings and urines. Another theory is that since deer voraciously consume and kill flora, plants could be reallocating nutrients below ground to their root systems to avoid being eaten, which could indirectly favor earthworms. When it comes to tree harvesting and canopy gaps, researchers theorize canopy gaps could decrease earthworm populations because there is less moist, high-nutrient leaf litter underneath a canopy gap, which earthworms use for food and shelter. Future research is needed to focus on the mechanisms behind how deer and tree harvesting might change invasive earthworm populations. In addition, disturbance ecology as a whole should be broadly testing how disturbances might be influencing one another and how ecosystems respond to multiple, overlapping disturbances.

HATCHERY...Continued from page 4B

Hatchery quota

The Pike River Hatchery provides walleye fry for all of the lakes within the Rainy River and Lake Superior watersheds that are regularly stocked by the DNR. This year, the hatchery plans to harvest 500 quarts of fertilized walleye eggs for release in lakes in the region. That number is based on the stocking plans for the few dozen lakes in the region scheduled to receive walleye fry this year. This year’s quota is lower than some past years, but Flatten said the DNR is currently reviewing the effectiveness of stocking in the various lakes and that has somewhat reduced the need for fry. No sucker sale

The traditional sucker sale, sponsored by the Vermilion Lake Association (formerly the Sportsmen’s Club) hasn’t been held since the COVID pandemic and it won’t be offered this year, either. No reason was provided for the decision.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

FIELD TOWNSHIP MEETING NOTICE

The May meeting of the Field Town Board will begin on May 9, 2023, 5:30 p.m. at the Field Township Cemetery for inspection followed by road review. The meeting will reconvene at the Field Town Hall.

Pat Chapman/Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, April 28, 2023

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Answers

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FT (1.0) Check & Connect Mentor
ISD 2142 Employee placed full time at Vermilion Country School in Tower

We are in search of a dedicated Check & Connect Mentor to provide individualized attendance, academic, and behavior support to a defined caseload of students. This position will work exclusively at Vermilion Country School in Tower.

The Check & Connect Mentor will implement 1:1 or small group interventions designed to promote academic achievement, increase attendance, reduce inappropriate behaviors, and decrease school suspensions.

In addition, Check & Connect Mentors are responsible for frequently collecting, documenting, and analyzing data for their caseload students. Under general supervision, Check & Connect Mentors work directly and collaboratively with individual students and their families, school staff, and community service providers to implement strategies that address school success and school completion.

Apply at www.isd2142.net.

Questions: Contact Lisa Perkovich at (218) 404-5188 or lperkovich@isd2142.k12.mn.us

TOWN OF EMBARRASS
7503 Levander Road
Embarrass, MN 55732

Embarrass Township is looking for a temporary maintenance employee

Some of the maintenance responsibilities are:

- Carry out responsibilities set by the township board of supervisors, maintenance supervisor and clerk.
- Coordinate and resolve work-related problems.
- Mowing, raking, trimming and clearing away brush of township properties.
- Painting and repairing masonry or wood-work features of buildings.
- Abide by all local, state and federal safety and health laws.
- Clean Town Hall, rest rooms, and other work and public areas.
- Transport garbage and waste to disposal area.
- Replenish bathroom supplies, light bulbs and other supplies.
- Transport equipment and tools to work sites.
- Maintain equipment when needed.
- Set up and take down tables & chairs at Town Hall.

Job Descriptions are subject to change with different activities that the township is engaged in.

Call or email the Embarrass Clerk's Office at (218)-984-2084 or embarrasstownship@frontiernet.net

Applications must be received by June 1

Jennifer Boese, Embarrass Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, April 28, 2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

LEIDING TOWNSHIP ANNUAL ROAD INSPECTION

The Leiding Town Board will hold their annual road inspection on Tuesday, May 2 at 4 p.m. They will meet at the town hall, and then proceed to inspect the township roads.

Marie Milan, Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, April 28, 2023

TOWN OF EMBARRASS LOCAL BOARD OF APPEAL AND EQUALIZATION
Important Information Regarding Property Assessments

The Board of Appeal and Equalization for Embarrass Township will meet on May 2, 2023, from 6 p.m. - 7 p.m., at Embarrass Town Hall, 7503 Levander Road. The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor.

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

Jennifer Boese, Embarrass Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, April 28, 2023



OPEN POSITIONS

Care Center
FT & PT Nursing Assistant (Wage starting at \$17.79/hr., \$1,500 sign-on bonus)
PT Registered Nurse (Wage starting at \$36.22/hr. \$4,000 sign-on bonus)

Hospital/ER
PT Registered Nurse (Wage starting at \$36.22/hr., \$4,000 sign-on bonus)

Environmental Services
FT (Environmental Tech I) Housekeeping and Laundry Aide (Wage starting at \$15.03/hr, \$1,500 sign-on bonus)
Casual Laundry Aide (Wage starting at \$15.03/hr)

Laboratory
FT Medical Lab Tech (Wage starting at \$24.08/hr., \$4,000 sign-on bonus)

Radiology
FT Radiologic Technologist (\$4,000 sign-on bonus)
Casual Ultrasound Tech (Independent Contractor)
Casual Radiologic Tech (Independent Contractor, weekend only)

Dietary
PT Dietary Aide/Cook (Wage starting at \$14.53/hr.)

10 Fifth Street SE Cook, MN 55723

TO APPLY:
www.cookhospital.org/join-our-team/
More Info? Contact Human Resources
218-666-6220
humanresources@cookhospital.org

The Cook Hospital is an equal opportunity provider and employer

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King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Chanteuse Edith
5 Links org.
8 Too
12 Kotb of "Today"
13 Filch
14 500 sheets
15 Rat- —
16 Eternally
18 Large gong
20 Try to hear better, maybe
21 Author Bagnold
23 Nabokov novel
24 Symbol of stability
28 La Scala solo
31 — tai (cock-tail)
32 Van Gogh venue
34 Mafia boss
35 Hostels
37 Vespers
39 Secret agent
41 Ms. Brockovich
42 Ceremony
45 Slanted type
49 The whole crowd
51 Actress Fisher
52 Lure
53 Some coll. degrees

DOWN

1 Excellent, in slang
2 Speck
3 Leading man?
4 Plump up
5 Opening night
6 State VIP
7 Genesis shepherd
8 Fleet
9 "Mona Lisa" painter
10 Rani's wrap
11 Portent
17 Stephen of "Still Crazy"
19 "Puppy Love" singer
22 Look (into)
24 Brit. record label
25 Moving vehicle
26 Genius
27 Most skeptical
29 Charged bit director Lee
30 "Life of Pi"
33 Tizzy
36 Gushes forth
38 Slowpokes
40 "Rah!"
42 Ms. McEntire
43 Infamous tsar
44 High tennis shots
46 Aspiring atty.'s exam
47 "Would — to you?"
48 Shopper's aid
50 Scot's refusal

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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Considerations of personal privacy, time and resources prevent the newspaper from investigating ads placed in the classified section. If you respond to an ad, we urge you to use the same care and prudence that you would use when conducting business in any other situation.

AUTOMOTIVE

Langevin Auto & Truck Repair
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218-749-0751

HAIR CARE

DREAMWEAVER SALON & DAY SPA- Open Monday-Friday 8:30 – 6:30. 218-666-5594. tfn

HOSPICE

VIRGIE HEGG HOSPICE PARTNERS can provide help for patients and their families in ways such as: comfort care, massages, last wishes and more. For more information, contact Program Director Becca Bundy at 218-780-5423 or vhhpdirector@gmail.com. This ad is paid for by Virgie Hegg Hospice Partners.

PET CREMATION

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— King Crossword —
Answers
Solution time: 22 mins.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | I | A | F | P | G | A | A | L | S | O |
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| A | T | A | T | E | V | E | R | M | O | R |
| T | A | M | T | A | M | L | E | A | N | I |
| | | | | E | N | I | D | A | | |
| E | V | E | N | K | E | E | L | A | R | I |
| M | A | I | A | R | L | E | S | D | O | N |
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| | | S | P | E | R | I | N | | | |
| R | I | T | I | A | L | I | T | A | L | I |
| E | V | E | R | O | N | E | | | | |
| B | A | I | T | B | A | S | L | A | I | R |
| A | N | N | S | S | E | T | S | T | E | T |

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WANTED

SELIGA CANOES WANTED: We'll buy old Seligas in Good Shape. Turn your classic canoe into cash. Call Steve at 365-6745. tfn

HELP WANTED

Program Manager Wanted: Well Being Development is looking to fill a part-time program manager position. Join us in supporting those challenged with mental health and substance use. This position is for 20-32 hours per week. See our website for more information, <http://wellbeingdevelopment.org/employment-opportunities/>. 5/5

Try out the Timberjay classifieds

Line classifieds cost 30¢/word, \$6.00 minimum.

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www.handbergs.com

GARAGE SALES

Ely Citywide Rummage and Crazy Day Saturday, May 20, from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. \$10.00 registration fee. Receive signage, map location, and advertising. Stop at the Ely Chamber of Commerce, 1600 E Sheridan St, or visit Ely.org/citywide for a registration form and details. 4/28

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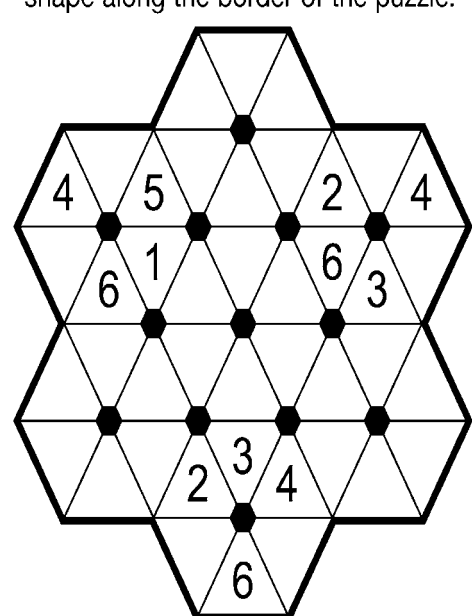
Total Coverage

Call Today 218-753-2950
Online at timberjay.com

SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

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



DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦♦

♦ Easy ♦♦ Medium ♦♦♦♦ Difficult

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Weekly SUDOKU
Answer

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

Super Crossword

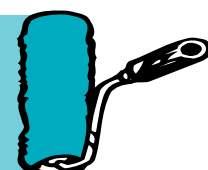
ACROSS
1 "— Sharkey" ("70s sitcom)
4 Winter bug
7 Corn, to Brits
12 SoCal daily paper
19 Mammal with a black mask
21 Cook's wear
22 Ant-Man's partner in a 2018 superhero film
23 Oakland basebatter's footwear?
25 Boarded, as a train
26 Langston Hughes poem
27 Stuff hitting an umbrella
28 Fa-la linkup
29 Coop female
30 Calamari prepared by a San Francisco basebatter?
34 Atlanta basebatter's collection of Kia cars?
38 Son of Isaac
39 Watch slyly
41 — Park (home of Edison)
42 Attys.' gp.
45 "Scorpio" co-star Delon
48 Chicago basebatter moonlighting as a journalist?
51 Detroit basebatter's Easter flowers?
54 Vaping item
55 Designer von Fürstenberg
56 Like many tiny headphones
57 Put the — (try to coerce)
59 Oomph
63 Gold lumps
65 Money owed by a Washington basebatter?
68 Tether again
69 Actor Quinn
70 OshKosh — (kids' clothing brand)
71 What a Minnesota basebatter sleeps on?
75 Enormous
78 Latin "to be"
79 Litigious sorts
80 Taunt
82 Article in Ulm
84 Pioneer Boone, briefly
85 Cincinnati basebatter's chewy candy?
87 Something a St. Louis basebatter confesses?
93 "Oh My My" singer Ringo
94 Ending with cash
95 Kitchen range brand
96 Warhol and Roddick
98 Pixar's lost swimmer
100 Kansas City basebatter's toast topper?
103 Pennant won by a Pittsburgh basebatter?
109 President pro —
110 Right-angled pipe joint
111 Sleek, in brief
112 1993 Nobelist Morrison
113 Some wind players
116 Florida basebatter's rod-and-reel activity?
121 Web page for aficionados
122 Figure skating leaps
123 Sideways
124 Felt hats
125 Dog strap
126 Single bill
127 "Nuts" actor Wallach
DOWN
1 Jenny with a diet plan
2 Singer LaBelle
3 Women's golf star Lorena
4 Enemy
5 Filming locale
6 Bi- minus one
7 Member of a Kenyan tribe
8 Plant pests
9 "Fe" element
10 Saldana of "Guess Who"
11 Type widths
12 No. 2 in a statehouse
13 Burn — in one's pocket
14 Vietnamese New Year
15 — Jima
16 Search to find a criminal
17 Actress Getty
18 Subsidize
20 Exact copy
24 Grand — (wine type)
28 Riviera resort
31 Old autocrat
32 — Mae (loan offerer)
33 Charmingl old-fashioned
34 Sch. in Provo
35 Pilfer from
36 Smelly city air
37 Atop, in odes
40 Old IBM products
42 Noshed on
43 The top story
44 Rabbitlike rodents
46 Lands in eau
47 Actress Vardalos
49 MBA subj.
50 — colada
52 Motor
53 Some Muppet dolls
57 Just one little bite
58 — Tin Tin
59 More antsy
60 10th-century pope
61 Lack
62 Final degree
64 Sparkly rock
66 Spots on TV
67 16-oz. units
68 Numbered rd.
69 Pt. of ETA
72 Clumsy — ox
73 Skipjack, e.g.
74 Reveal everything
75 Grain in ale
76 South Korean airline
77 Confidential
81 Koch and Asner
83 Always, in odes
84 Old TV part
85 Letters after Sen. Javits' name
86 "It's either you —!"
87 Haul away
88 One-celled organisms
89 Actor Burr
90 Genetic stuff
91 Skit show since '75
92 Mount — (Charley Weaver's home)
97 Hexes
99 "King — Hill"
101 Volkswagen model
102 Somebody — problem
104 From Erin
105 Actor Ely
106 French river
107 Record of a single year
108 2003 Ben Affleck flop
111 Field of study
114 Propyl lead-in
115 Tristan's title
116 Bad, to Luc
117 Hatchet, e.g.
118 "Alice" spinoff
119 Holm of film
120 Holy Mlle.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
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| 30 | | | | 31 | 32 | 33 | | | | | 34 | 35 | | | | | 36 | 37 | | | |
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| | 63 | | | 64 | | | | | 65 | 66 | | | | | | 67 | | | | | |
| 68 | | | | | | | | 69 | | | | | | | | 70 | | | | | |
| 71 | | | | | | 72 | 73 | 74 | | | | | | 75 | 76 | 77 | | | | | |
| 78 | | | | | | 79 | | | | | | 80 | 81 | | | | | 82 | | 83 | |
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| 95 | | | | | | | | 96 | | | | 97 | | | 98 | | | 99 | | | |
| 100 | | | | | | 101 | 102 | | | | | 103 | 104 | 105 | | | | | 106 | 107 | 108 |
| 109 | | | | | | 110 | | | | | 111 | | | | | | | 112 | | | |
| 113 | | | | 114 | 115 | | | | | 116 | 117 | | | | | 118 | 119 | 120 | | | |
| 121 | | | | | | | | | | 122 | | | | | | 123 | | | | | |
| 124 | | | | | | | | | | 125 | | | | | | 126 | | | | 127 | |

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before



after