



Holiday Deadlines:

Dec. 29 issue: Ads/articles due by 10 a.m. on Dec. 22

The Timberjay office will be closed Dec. 25 - Jan. 5.

No paper will be published on Jan. 5.

Check out all the holiday greeting ads inside, plus more coming in the Dec. 29 paper

the TIMBERJAY



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989

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\$1⁵⁰

MINING

U.S. Steel announces sale to Japan-based Nippon

Companies stress plan to honor labor agreements, continue operations

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — U.S. Steel, which has played a pivotal role in the development of northeastern Minnesota's iron resources for more than a century, is being sold to Japan-based Nippon Steel. It's an all-cash deal valued at \$55 per share of stock, or an estimated \$14.1 billion.

With the assumption of

debt, U.S. Steel says the deal, announced Monday, is worth a total of \$14.9 billion.

U.S. Steel owns and operates the Minntac and Keetac taconite operations in Virginia and Keewatin and is a part-owner of Hibbing Taconite as well. About 1,400 workers are employed at Minntac, with another 400 or so at the Keetac facility. A

company statement indicates that Nippon Steel intends to live up to existing labor agreements and continue its relationship with its union workers going forward.

The U.S. Steel stock price, which closed at the end of last week at just over \$39 a share, jumped sharply on Monday's news and was quickly trading

See...U.S. STEEL pg. 9

Right: U.S. Steel's giant Minntac taconite plant looms high over the city of Virginia on a frosty winter day.

file photo



FIELD HEARING

Legislators hear similar message on EMS funding

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

MT IRON — Members of the Legislature's Emergency Medical Services Task Force heard a consistent message during a packed Dec. 13 field hearing here, called to take input from ambulance operators, EMTs, and city officials in northeastern Minnesota. Speaker after speaker told lawmakers that rural ambulance services are facing unprecedented financial and staffing strains from a funding system that no longer covers the cost of providing 24/7 ambulance capacity to rural communities, and that the situation has reached crisis levels.

The Dec. 13 meeting was the first in a series of legislative field hearings being held by the task force throughout the state to hear concerns about the status of EMS, particularly in rural parts of Minnesota. The task force was formed earlier this year to respond to a laundry list of issues raised in a 2022 report from the legislative auditor. The bipartisan task force, which includes some legislators with EMS backgrounds, came to northeastern Minnesota at the urging of two of its members, District 3 Sen. Grant Hauschild and District 7B Rep. Dave Lislegard.

Dozens of ambulance person-

See...HEARING pg. 10



Signs of the Season



Above: T-S Kindergarteners perform during the school's winter concert last week.

Above right: Ice candles at the Embarrass Cemetery.

Left: Chloe Schallert tells her mom her hopes for Christmas, ignoring Santa.

Right: Elizabeth Trip and Joselyn Pascuzzi sing at the North Woods Elementary winter concert.

photos by Timberjay staff



ENVIRONMENTAL LITIGATION

NewRange Copper nets a legal win over air permit

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — After a string of legal defeats, NewRange Copper, formerly PolyMet Mining, and the state's Pollution Control Agency, chalked up a win in a challenge to its air emissions permit.

In a ruling Monday, the Minnesota Court of Appeals determined that NewRange's air pollution permit could stand, rejecting a challenge by a coalition of environmental plaintiffs that had argued that the copper-nickel mining company had not been honest about the size of the operation it was seeking

to build.

NewRange is a joint venture between the Swiss commodities conglomerate Glencore (which owns the former PolyMet) and Teck Resources, a Canadian company with control over another non-ferrous deposit located near Glencore's NorthMet deposit.

The ruling comes after years of back and forth in a case that had gone to the state's Supreme Court, which remanded it back to the Court of Appeals.

The case ultimately hinged on whether NewRange was fully transparent about the scale of its plan to mine sulfide ore for the copper, nickel, and other metals it

contained. The company's permit called for a production rate of 32,000 tons per day, a rate that allowed the company to obtain an air permit as a minor discharger.

But within days of the MPCA's approval of that permit, the former PolyMet released

See...NEWRANGE pg. 9



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Community notices

Mystery dinner theater on Dec. 29, 30

VIRGINIA - Singer, actor, director, Pete Pellinen who has been bringing mystery dinner theater to area audiences for more than 20 years, announces this year's production, "Mystery at Upton House," by Robert J. LeBlanc under special arrangement with Sleuths Mystery.

"Mystery at Upton House" will be shown at the Iron Trail Motors Event Center on Dec. 29 and 30 with doors opening at 5:30 p.m. and curtain time at 6:30 p.m. The dinner is catered by Kunnari's of Virginia, and features three entrees from which to select, all deliciously prepared to the high-quality standards held by this locally-owned restaurant. Tickets are available through Dec. 21 at <https://our.show/srp-mystery-dinner-theater> or by calling 218-780-3690 for more information.

"Our theater company has seen a few name changes over the years," says Pellinen. "We started out in 1999 as the Iron Range Regional Repertory Players, better known as the IRRRP, doing a spoof of a well-known area economic development agency. As of 2022, we changed our mission a bit and rebranded to Stages of the Range Players."

The mystery dinner theater genre may be presented in a number of ways, but most include the murder of one of the characters. Pellinen directs productions that have meal course service between acts with dessert combined with an interval for audience members to submit their theories of who the culprit is and why they did it.

In "Mystery at Upton House" the esteemed Lady Headly Steadly-Proud, Countess of Crawley, is hosting a gathering to raise money for the orphans of the war. As the Battle of Britain rages above London, Upton House provides a country respite away from the nightly bombings. Mystery abounds after the events of the night turn sinister. Was it Rowley the Butler, Mrs. Baxter the Maid, Edgar the disowned son, Maggie the mysterious woman, or Chief Superintendent Kitchen? We'll all find out in the Act 4.

The cast includes Tavia Melhus as the Countess, Karel Winkelaar as Edgar, Chelsea Trucano as Maggie, Jamie Patterson as Mrs. Baxter, Sam Papin as CS Kitchen and Pete Pellinen as Rowley the Butler. These seasoned actors enjoy the chance to have audience interaction through the mystery dinner theater productions.

Alpine ski put on pause for Mesabi East Nordic Invitational

GIANTS RIDGE - For more than three decades, Giants Ridge has proudly hosted the Mesabi East Nordic Invitational ski race, the largest High School Nordic Ski race in the nation. Each year, the event draws over 1,000 participants along with numerous enthusiastic fans and spectators.

With the limited natural snowfall this year, Giants Ridge has made the difficult decision to suspend alpine operations on Saturday, Jan. 6, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This temporary suspension is essential to allow the race to utilize the machine-made snow across the alpine area, ensuring an environment conducive for the competition. Giants Ridge intends to resume normal alpine operations at 4 p.m. that evening, including the scheduled night skiing. Please note the Burnt Onion, food court, and all other resort operations will continue to function as usual. While this situation is unusual, the staff extends their gratitude for your understanding and support.

SUPPORT THE ARTS

Lyric Center fundraising to maintain staffing into 2024

Financial contributions received will fill hole left by changes in state arts funding

VIRGINIA - The Laurentian Arts and Culture Alliance (Lyric Center for the Arts) is currently seeking financial contributions to make up for a loss of funds they received in 2022 and 2023.

"Over the past two years, our largest funder has been the taxpayers of Minnesota via dollars distributed by the Minnesota State Arts Board (MSAB), courtesy of the Minnesota Constitutional Legacy Amendment's Arts & Culture Heritage Fund. MSAB is reverting back to their pre-COVID funding structure in 2024. As a result, the Lyric no longer qualifies for designated Operating Support grants that are made available to "established" organizations because we do not meet the annual expenditure threshold of \$174,000. At the end of Fiscal Year 2022, our total expenditures were \$142,000," said Lyric Executive Director Paul M. Gregersen. "There is no proportionate or sliding scale in place for Operating Support grants for organizations like ours who are close to the threshold."

During the COVID pandemic, the Lyric qualified for operating support through modifications made by the MSAB to their funding structure as Creative Support grants that are no longer available.

"The funds we received, \$50,000 over 2022 and 2023, were used solely to compensate our professional staff. Now that funding has run out, compiled with the fact that we will receive limited funds specifically for operations from the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council (ARAC) due to high demands placed on them at no fault of their own, our organization is at a crossroads," Gregersen said.

Without generating an additional \$25,000 for fiscal year 2024, Gregersen says the Lyric will eliminate part of its paid, professional staff and limit its hours considerably.

"Our important mission of providing arts and education opportunities to people of all ages across the Iron Range will be severely limited. Valuable programming such as free, all ages Open Art sessions, our popular Youth Arts Theatre Education Program, Lyric Community Theatre productions, the Lyric Art Gallery, Lyric Art Colony, concerts, classes, workshops and special events will be impacted. Without professional staff, we simply cannot facilitate these offerings," Gregersen said. "Our facility will not be able



Sharon Rowbottom and Dan Boyer perform a concert at the Lyric Center for the Arts. The Lyric is currently accepting financial contributions specifically dedicated to operating costs. Without raising \$25,000, the organization will limit hours, decrease programming, and eliminate staff positions.

to serve several marginalized communities such as low-income families, individuals with developmental challenges, LGBTQ+ individuals and groups, those impacted by mental health issues, and BIPOC people. Being an inclusive, safe space for all is one of our top priorities and something the Iron Range needs."

According to Gregersen, the Lyric is often compared to other nonprofit arts organizations on the Range and is required to compete for the same dollars.

"Comparing the Lyric to other area arts organizations is like comparing apples to oranges. We are one of the very few nonprofit arts organizations outside of Grand Rapids and Ely that has major business overhead costs. Primarily, our physical brick and mortar facility that is importantly located in Downtown Virginia and requires regular investments in maintenance; and a paid professional staff," Gregersen said. "It is my belief that these two important factors allow us to stand out by providing year-round, regularly scheduled, quality, diverse programming that benefits a broader range of people served."

The goals of Lyric staff along with its board are to continue fostering collaboration, engaging Range communities, and empowering access to the arts in order to enrich the cultural landscape of the area, improve the quality of life, and stimulate economic growth.

Since Gregersen began his role as Executive Director in November of 2021, the Lyric has not executed a formal capital campaign because it was his priority to let the organization's actions, programming, and community outreach do the talking - demonstrating results before asking community members to invest in the organization financially.

"I believe our collective efforts are being recognized across the Range and we are achieving our goals together. We have big plans in the making, but cannot accomplish them without the financial support of those across the Range who value arts and culture programming," Gregersen said.

Donations can be made at lyriccenteronline.org/donate, or by mailing a payment to the Lyric Center for the Arts at 510 Chestnut Street, Virginia, Minn. 55792.

"We especially ask those whose families have been impacted positively by the Lyric to reach out to their extended family and friends, who may live outside of the Range, to join in contributing," Gregersen said.

The Laurentian Arts and Culture Alliance (Lyric Center for the Arts) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide arts and education opportunities for people of all ages across the Iron Range.

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from BARB'S CUTTING EDGE



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from Cook Building Center



Winning Artist • Bristol Glass
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from Vermilion Park Inn



Winning Artist • Nitanis Strong
Grade 3

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ELY CITY COUNCIL

Volleyball team gets the key to the city

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The final Ely City Council meeting of 2023 began with some special recognition for Ely's high school girls volleyball team.

Mayor Heidi Omerza read a proclamation from herself and the city council summarizing the team's threefold efforts in making it to the state tournament two years in a row, winning the section championship, and coming home with this year's Minnesota Class A Consolation Championship.

"I am so proud of you for working hard, digging deep, and making it—so the city would like to recognize you," said Omerza, who presented the team with the key to the city

along with individual certificates for each member of the team.

It proved a high point of an otherwise short and uneventful meeting.

In other business, the council:

► Heard from Ely Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski who reported that the city's skating rink was still closed, remarking, "We're trying to get the rink open if winter ever arrives." He commented the weather has not cooperated in producing good ice yet, adding the outlook was "not encouraging" given that rain is forecast for Christmas Day.

Langowski said that when the rink opens, it will be posted to the city's Facebook page and at ely.mn.us/reccenter.



Mayor Heidi Omerza (far right) read a proclamation to the Ely Memorial High School girls volleyball team at the Dec. 19 city council meeting, awarding the team the key to the city for their achievements over the last two years. photo by C. Clark

► Voted to allow the Heritage Preservation Committee to contract with Moving Tree Media LLC to provide video and oral history services as part of the Ely Memorial High School centennial

anniversary celebration. The cost of the contract will not exceed \$8,500. The motion that passed also directed the City Attorney to assist in drafting the contract. The funding for the services of Mov-

ing Tree Media will come from the \$10,000 state Legacy Grant.

► Approved a recommendation from Airport Commission to change its meeting time to 5 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the

month.

► Heard from Police Chief Chad Houde who reported that the city's new police recruitment and retention plan

See ELY...pg. 5

PUBLIC SAFETY

Cook hires ambulance co-directors

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Ort Editor

COOK- In a move intended to strengthen the overall operation of the Cook Ambulance Service, current crew members Amy Luecken and Will Fischer will take on leadership of the service by sharing its directorship beginning in January.

News of the move was contained in the Cook City Council agenda sent to the *Timberjay* on Tuesday and was to be discussed at the council's regular December meeting on Thursday.

Current ambulance director Roland Shoen, who has been on board since July 2022, explained the rationale for the change in his monthly ambulance report to the council.

"We have been working on getting a full-time EMT/Director for the service. This is needed to provide a stronger sense of leadership from a director who can be on the roster and running with the crew," Shoen wrote.

"We knew this but, (it was) further reiterated by the crew in the EMSRB (Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board) survey from September this year."

"I, Director Shoen, when brought into the service agreed to help direct the crew until we could get such a person into the role," Shoen continued. "Living in Chisholm we knew it was not possible for me to take calls, or be on call/able to cover call time, but hopefully could bring some continuity to the overall operation of the service.

"Now, after 18 months with many improvements, and staff morale being high (according to the same survey), Amy Luecken and Will Fischer are going to work in tandem to fill the position of director and I will be resigning the position on Jan. 1st, 2024," he concluded.

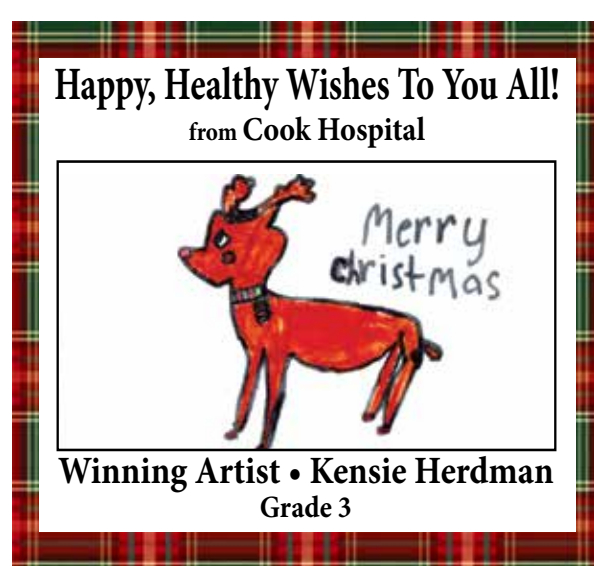
"I wish them success in this role and hope Cook Area Ambulance Service continues to provide great service and continues to

get better in the future. Thank you to the crew, council, mayor and administration for the faith and trust you have put in me this past year and a half."

Including Luecken and Fischer, the service currently has eight EMTs and five EMRs on staff, with two members out on medical leave, according to the report.

Prior to the release of the agenda, the *Timberjay* contacted Shoen for an interview about the ambulance service, but he de-

ferred an interview until after Thursday's council meeting. The *Timberjay* will report on any additional information from the meeting in next week's edition.



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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year To You!

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OPINION

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

Editorial

The ambulance crisis

Lawmakers appear to have gotten the message that the EMS funding model is broken

It appears that state lawmakers are hearing the message about the need to fix the broken funding system for the state's ambulance services, particularly those serving rural areas. The message could not have been clearer during last week's legislative field hearing in Mt. Iron, during which dozens of EMS workers and city officials repeatedly told lawmakers who make up a new emergency services task force that ambulance services can no longer be financed solely on a fee for service basis as long as the state law limits funding options and federal reimbursements cover only a small fraction of the cost of maintaining round-the-clock emergency services.

Local mayors and other city officials made it clear, as well, that they can no longer afford to allow their city taxpayers to subsidize the cost of providing ambulance services to large, outlying service areas without operational funding from either counties or local townships that they serve. All agreed that EMS must be reclassified as an essential service, with mechanisms put in place to allow for a more equitable assessment of the costs of providing the service.

When a city levies its citizens to pay for the cost of a police or fire department, that service isn't provided outside the city limits, except through a mutual aid agreement or a contract for service.

In the past, ambulance service largely paid for itself through the payments made by patients or their insurers for the care they received during medical emergencies. Those days are over for several reasons, including the fact that most services can no longer rely on volunteers for staffing. The wage costs of many area ambulance services have skyrocketed as it has become more difficult to attract volunteers and as the state has imposed more rigid rules for staffing.

At the same time, the cost of an ambulance and the equipment that goes with it has jumped sharply over the past several years, further adding to the financial strains.

Action at the federal level, to increase reimbursements for patients on Medicare and Medicaid, could make an enormous difference to rural services, which serve a patient load that is overwhelmingly dependent on these public insurers. But federal changes could take years to implement and many ambulance services won't last that long.

The Legislature could make significant progress in the upcoming session by making it easier to create new taxing authority for those public entities

operating ambulance services. They could also change the rules that apply to the service territories, allowing services to require paid contracts from any outlying communities they serve. As it stands today, ambulance services must cover their entire service area whether or not area taxpayers contribute a penny. That's unreasonable, particularly in our area, where average incomes of residents in many cities that operate ambulances are far lower than the outlying communities they serve.

Ambulance services also need more flexibility when it comes to staffing. As several speakers at last week's hearing noted, requiring two on-call personnel 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is incredibly burdensome for many services and raises their costs of operation considerably, since those individuals now need to be paid.

While some have suggested a restructuring to regionalize ambulance service is part of the solution, it's not at all clear that will be a solution. The closest thing to a regional service in our area is in Virginia, and as Virginia Mayor Larry Cuffe noted at last week's hearing, the city is facing annual ambulance deficits of \$500,000-\$750,000. If Virginia can't operate a service profitably, with 4,500 runs annually, how would a regionalized service function with ambulances and personnel spread all across northern St. Louis County? There is no reality in which that is plausible today.

Comparisons to school consolidation are misplaced when it comes to ambulance service. School consolidation typically involves shuttering schools and busing students longer distances to larger schools. That's the opposite of what we want when a medical emergency arises. We want an ambulance as close as possible. Besides, the savings from school consolidation are usually vastly oversold and the experience would likely be no different for ambulance services.

The crisis in EMS reflects the need for a new funding mechanism and greater flexibility in how services are staffed. Those changes are needed whether we realign coverage areas or not.

The good news is that it seems lawmakers have finally gotten the message, and we can thank Sen. Grant Hauschild and Rep. Dave Lislegard for helping to sound the alarm. They've said addressing the ambulance funding crisis will be top of the Legislature's agenda in the coming months. We certainly hope they're right.



Letters from Readers

Be sure to protect your septic from freezing

For people who live in the country and have sewage treatment mounds, please be aware of the danger of having your septic mound or field freezing. Normally snow would provide insulation. However, without snow, treatment mounds may be in danger of freezing. We have insulated ours with old hay. There is information available on the St. Louis County website. According to their website, some steps to follow include:

- ▶ Use an outside heat source in the septic tank (appropriate tank heater).
- ▶ Cover tanks, lines, and field with straw or insulated blanket by Thanksgiving, if there is no snow on the ground.
- ▶ Maintain normal water use throughout the year (plan on having a house sitter use sufficient hot water when gone on vacation during the winter).

Lisa Pekuri
Morse Township

Never cry wolf

No doubt the new advocacy group Hunters4Hunters includes some decent, intelligent people among its membership, but the zealots seem to have spent a little too long alone in the woods. "...they want our guns and we're all under assault." "They don't want us up here. They want this for their own... elite playground." Several members seem to think that the DNR is trying to phase out deer hunting as a recreational opportunity, an absurd proposition since the DNR: 1) derives 52-percent of its funding from hunting and fishing licenses, and 2) states on its website: "Min-

nesota is a hunting paradise thanks to millions of acres of public hunting land." The basic issue under discussion is that deer are becoming scarcer and to the members of Hunters4Hunters, the obvious reason is that there are wolves in the Arrowhead. As the reasoning goes, wolves eat deer so if you kill the wolves you'll have more deer. In the world of deer and wolves, things aren't quite that simple; multiple studies over the past hundred years prove it.

By the mid-20th century, Minnesota was the only state in the lower 48 that hadn't eradicated its wolves, a fact which should make us all extremely proud to be Minnesotans. Apparently, Minnesota has "always" had grey wolves just as it has "always" had whitetailed deer.

So, why are hunters shooting fewer deer than previously? It doesn't boil down to one simple reason. Nationwide, hunting is declining in popularity as baby boomers hang up their rifles and youth seek gentler recreation. Nevertheless, Minnesota still issues around 400,000 deer tags annually.

In 2022, Minnesota hunters registered 172,265 successful deer hunts. Hundreds, possibly thousands more deer were poached and not tagged. State Farm reported 42,874 deer killed on Minnesota's roads that same year. According to my deer-hunting neighbors, deer find it difficult to forage and often starve during severe winters such as those of the past two years. Recently, when a friend noticed me admiring the array of trophy heads mounted on his living room wall, he said, "You don't see bucks like that up here anymore. There's too many hunters." And yes, grey wolves eat deer among

many other wild foods, but unlike humans who selectively go after big bucks and thereby diminish the gene pool, wolves actually improve the quality of our deer herd by favoring weaker prey: the young and inexperienced, the old and decrepit, and those that have previously been injured by impatient and/or inexperienced hunters.

Good hunters are by definition good conservationists. They understand that it takes a healthy ecosystem to produce healthy deer and a healthy ecosystem is one that contains apex predators such as wolves. As Aldo Leopold said, "To keep every cog and wheel is the first rule of intelligent tinkering." We've tinkered with our environment to the extent that it's nothing short of miraculous that we still have any deer, let alone wolves. Long may they howl in the wilds of Minnesota under the protection of the Endangered Species Act and the informed management of the DNR.

David Stanton
Cook

We welcome your letters

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

We ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

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

COMMENTARY

Savor the light and the dark

Here in the midst of the holidays at the darkest time of the year, it feels right to explore the layers of light and dark that we experience in many ways in our lives. Author Susan Caine, through her book, "Bittersweet," has helped me process and articulate some of my perceptions and life experiences. She had long appreciated and even felt love listening to music that others considered sad or funeral; she felt awed by the artists'



BETTY FIRTH

abilities to transform pain into something beautiful. Her history and research brought her to the realization that she was experiencing melancholy, which she calls "bittersweet: a tendency to states of longing, poignancy, and sorrow; an acute awareness of passing time; and a curiously piercing joy at the beauty of the world."

She points out it is also about the recognition that light and dark, birth and death, bitter and sweet, are forever paired, as articulated in an Arabic proverb, "Days of honey, days

of onion." A parallel Buddhist saying is "No mud, no lotus." I have long recognized that while my roller coaster, intense moods were sometimes troubling and exhausting, they could also be exhilarating, and that if I didn't experience the lows—the darker moods, empathetically feeling the pains and sorrows of the world around me and within me—I wouldn't be able to feel the intense awe and joy that pierce my being when encountering beautiful music, art, sunsets, thunderstorms, the love of a friend. Thanks to Caine, now I have names for that mixture of feelings.

Philosophers and artists

have long been inspired by the painful beauty in awe-filled experiences and often wondered about this "paradox of tragedy." Aristotle wondered 2,000 years ago why the great poets, philosophers, artists, and politicians often have melancholic personalities. Ordinary people experience the sharpened focus and appreciation of things that are fleeting or that they are losing, such as a beautiful symphony or a friend moving away. People who are dying often report the peace they feel, savoring the time left to them, relieved of other pressing concerns.

Neuroscientists have shown that people respond more deep-

ly to sad or melancholic music in minor keys than to happy tunes in major keys, associating them with "profound beauty, deep connection, transcendence, nostalgia, and common humanity—the so-called sublime emotions." A kind of catharsis and homeostasis can happen as we listen to yearning music, a balancing of our emotions and physiology. Lullabies around the world are often mournful or bittersweet, and studies have shown that babies in intensive care listening to such music have stronger breathing, feeding

See **LIGHT**...pg. 5

Letters from Readers

Stop the mass killing in Gaza

Dear Sens. Smith and Klobuchar,
 More than 20,000 dead mostly Palestinian women and children and the whole land of Gaza is being made uninhabitable because of my tax money and Washington's support of Israel. America should feel nothing but shame, but it seems some in Washington are incapable of that.
 Shame on the Senate, the House, and the White House. That pretty much covers it,

doesn't it?
 As a Senator you are participating in the genocide of the Palestinian people. That is what America is good at.
 I don't expect a reply believing that your minds are already attuned to murder. If there is any decency in Washington, then you MUST stop arming Israel and genocide NOW!!

Steve Johnson
Ely
VFW should follow flag etiquette
 On Dec. 8, 2023, Governor

Tim Walz ordered United States and State of Minnesota flags to fly at half-staff until sunset on Friday, Dec. 15 in remembrance of and to honor the Minnesota Air Force Major who was recently killed during a training mission in Japan. While this order only included state buildings, individuals, businesses, and other organizations were encouraged to join in lowering their flags. On a drive around Cook this evening, Dec. 14, my husband and I happened to go by the VFW and noticed the post's United States flag was flying at full staff. For an organization

whose vision is to "Ensure that veterans are respected for their service, always receive their earned entitlements, and are recognized for the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made on behalf of this great country," I was so very disappointed to see that our local post was not flying their flag at half-staff.
 Not everyone who flies a United States flag may be aware of the etiquette and orders, but I feel the VFW should be the one organization that makes a conscious effort to honor our fallen soldiers by flying the flag at half-staff! Both the governor's

office and American Legion websites offer a sign up and you can be sent an email when a half-staff order is issued, so one doesn't even need to search for the information. My father, Dave Stanton, was a very active member of our local post until his passing, and both my husband and aunt are veterans, so flag etiquette is a cause near and dear to my heart.

Melissa Weske
Cook

LIGHT...Continued from page 4

patterns and heart rates than babies hearing other kinds of music.

As Caine continued to ponder and research life's persistent questions, she realized something more elemental and profound about sadness: it triggers compassion, and compassion is what brings us together, allowing us to empathize. The literal meaning of the word "compassion" is "to suffer together."

Furthermore, Caine learned from Dacher Keltner's research that human beings are wired to respond with care to each other's troubles, which he called "the compassionate instinct." Keltner, psychologist and founder of the University of California Berkeley Social Interaction Lab and Greater Good Science Center, is one of the world's foremost emotion scientists with over 200 scientific articles and six books to his name. He explains that "sadness generates

compassion, a pro-social emotion, an agent of connection and love."

He discovered that our nervous systems make little differentiation between our own pain and that of others. Testing of the vagus nerve shows one of the several ways our nervous system demonstrates compassionate responses. The vagus nerve is the largest bundle of nerves in our bodies. It connects the brain stem to the neck and torso affecting multiple, critical functions of digestion, breathing, sex, heart rate, skin sensations, taste, mood, and immune system. Keltner discovered that while the vagus nerve reacts to our personal pain, it also fires when we witness others suffering, even in a photo, such as a person cringing in pain or a child crying. Just think of the fundraising appeals with images of emaciated, large-eyed children pleading for your help. Have you felt the pain and sorrow in your

own body when you see war-torn cities and people? Perhaps you are even moved to tears.

C.S. Lewis wrote of the "insoluble longing for we know not what." Many interpret this as longing for a soul mate, believing that would make their lives complete. But the longing goes beyond that, searching for belonging and meaning in our lives. The Sufis express it as the longing for the Beloved, God, or "the One." Artists and writers often strive to express that ephemeral something, just out of reach. Mary Oliver's poem "Wild Geese" speaks eloquently of our longing: "Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine...wherever you are, no matter how lonely...the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting, over and over announcing your place in the family of things." Listening to the geese honking overhead

in their lovely, organized flight pattern as they migrate south can elicit that sense of beauty and loss: Wait, don't leave! It's too soon!"

America has a culture of positivity (some would say toxic positivity) and so tends to fear the emotions of sorrow and longing. Indeed, the American Psychiatric Association see melancholia only as a subtype of major depressive disorder. We are encouraged to look on the bright side, put on a happy face... things are bound to get better, and for goodness sake, don't talk about difficult things in your life or show who you really are in your workplace or other gathering places. The cost to our well-being is considerable, and studies have shown the benefits of increasing authenticity in the places we inhabit, but that's fodder for another column. How that relates to this season is that I think the Christmas season allows

us to freely express more, smiling, laughing, loving, and crying; to give good wishes and gifts even to peripheral people in our lives. Freedom to exult in and complain about all the hubbub: gifts to be purchased, travel plans, challenging weather to overcome; to reveal the values and importance of their faiths; to sing together; to celebrate together; to miss family and friends far away; to face the dark together and yearn for the light. Even the grinch-ies and curmudgeons can find like-minded others to commiserate with.

I think this season of Christmas, Hanukkah, the Solstice, and Kwanzaa, with the new year about to begin, brings a communal longing for better lives, a better world. We ask our-

selves, "Why can't we carry the Christmas spirit throughout the rest of the year?" "Why can't we do better?" The fighting and oppression in other countries comes into sharp contrast with our freedom and relative peacefulness. The bigotry, racism, polarization, and greed in our country are heartbreaking. Why is it so hard for us to recognize our common humanity, when at the heart of it, we all want the same things for ourselves and our loved ones? This is indeed a bittersweet season when joy and sorrow abound. As of Friday, we will have one more second of daylight. May peace be with you.

ELY...Continued from page 3

received national attention, including being picked up by the Associated Press. The notable feature of the plan was the gifting of a canoe to each full-time member of the department.

► Mayor Omerza reported that several city committee seats were expiring in January 2024. Interested citizens wishing to serve on any of the city's committees should consult the city's website for which have open seats and how to apply.

► Approved the payment of city and Ely Utilities Commission

claims for Dec. 19. For \$1,116,715.

► Approved the payment of \$7,590 to Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. for work on the Prospector ATV Trail.

► Directed the City Attorney to draft an ordinance to establish a Local Housing Trust Fund. This action will allow the city's Housing and Redevelopment Authority to pursue more opportunities for grants and funding of city housing projects.

► Approved providing in-kind services for the WolfTrack Classic sled dog race to be held

on Feb. 25, 2024.

► Approved an off-sale cannabinoid dealer license and a tobacco license for The Green Mining Company at 43 E. Camp S., pending proper paperwork, background check, insurance and fees.


► Approved the retirement notice from city employee Mike Popesh. Popesh's last day with the City of Ely will be on Jan. 12. He has worked for the city for 43 years.

► Approved the services of Walker, Giroux & Hahne that they will provide to city through Dec. 31.

► Approved the city budget and levy for the 2024 fiscal year, which were presented at the Truth in Taxation meeting held on Dec. 5.

► Approved a residential rehabilitation loan for James and Britney Thorstenson at 122 E. Harvey St. for up to \$10,000 for a new energy efficient propane furnace, pending proper paperwork, fees, and directed Attorney Klun to work with the applicant on the loan application.

Have A Bright & Merry Christmas!
 from **ARONSON BOATWORKS**



Winning Artist • Arthur Gapinski
GRADE 6

the
TIMBERJAY

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Have A Holly Jolly Christmas!
 from **Breitung Township**



Artist • Harper Olson
GRADE 1

MERRY CHRISTMAS!
 from **Frandsen Bank-Tower**



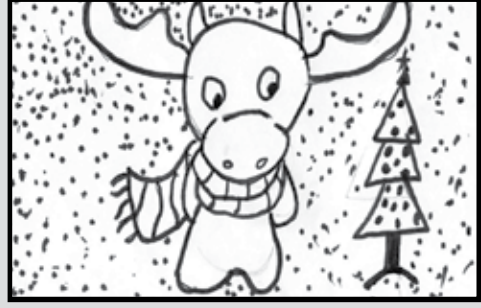
Winning Artist • Mateo Medicine-Perez
GRADE 2

GOD JUL!
 • Norwegian for...Merry Christmas •
 from **Nordic Home North**



Winning Artist • Clementine O'Brien
GRADE 5

Celebrate Christmas With Friends
 from **Northern Lights Salon**



Artist • Shelby Troop
GRADE 3

Week of Dec. 25

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 Jan. 16.

Greenwood Fire Dept.- Training 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.



TSHS weekly winner
TOWER- The Charlemagne's 52 Club Week 21 winner of a \$100 cash prize is Mary Shedd of Isabella.

History Tidbit: In the 1920's the Everett Bay golf course on beautiful Lake Vermilion was a sporty nine-hole golf course (grass greens) with a wonderful view of the lake and its many islands from every fairway. Club house facilities included a pleasant dining room, guest rooms and golf shop (electric lighted). Cottages, boats and launch services were also available.

Free community meal on Dec. 27
TOWER- Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tower will host their monthly free community meal on Wednesday, Dec. 27 from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., or until the food is gone. The meal this month is "Breakfast for Dinner." Come and join in, all are welcome.

YOUNG ARTISTS



Tower-Soudan Elementary Christmas Card contest winners

TOWER- The *Timberjay* would like to thank all the students at Tower-Soudan Elementary who participated in this year's Christmas Card contest.

Students designed holiday greetings, and the top artists in each grade received cash prizes. Watch for drawings from these winners, plus many other Tower-Soudan Elementary students in the Dec. 22 and Dec. 29 issues of the paper.

- First Grade**
 1. Ella Trancheff
 2. Amelie Zak
 3. Ari Banks
- Second Grade**
 1. Mateo Medicine-Perez
 2. Payton Edwards
 3. Boone Broten
- Third Grade**
 1. (tie) Emmett Flood
 1. (tie) Ayva Anderson
 2. Lily Russell
 3. Nitanis Strong
- Fourth Grade**
 1. Nash Lenci
 2. Ray Boshey
 3. Silas Snyder

- Kindergarten**
 1. Edwin Swanson
 2. Dante Littlewolf
 3. Theo Flood



Preschool students also participated in the contest, and each student received a small cash prize. photos by J. Summit

- Fifth Grade**
 1. Clementine O'Brien
 2. Harley Banks
 3. Dylan Crego
- Sixth Grade**
 1. Nolan Lenci
 2. Arthur Gapinski
 3. Kayla Drift

CHRISTMAS CHURCH SCHEDULES



St. Martin's fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas schedule

Sunday Obligation
Saturday, Dec. 23: 4 p.m. at St. Martin's
Saturday, Dec. 23: 7 p.m. at Holy Cross
Sunday, Dec. 24: 9 a.m. at St. Mary's

Christmas Obligation
Sunday, Dec. 24: 4 p.m. at St. Martin's
Sunday, Dec. 24: 7 p.m. at Holy Cross
Monday, Dec. 25: 9 a.m. at St. Mary's

Evangelical Free Church Christmas Eve Service
EMBARRASS- The Evangelical Free Church of Embarrass will host a Christmas Eve service, featuring a Christmas Choir Cantata on Sunday, Dec. 24 at 5 p.m. The title of the cantata is "Hope Awakes in Bethlehem."
The church is located at 5606 E Taylor Road, in Embarrass. For further information, call 218-984-3402.

St. Paul's Christmas Eve Service
SOUDAN- St. Paul's Lutheran Church is holding their Christ-

mas Eve candlelight service on Sunday, Dec. 24 at 3 p.m. There will be special music by Rob Mattson.
There will not be a regular Sunday morning service on Dec. 24.

Immanuel Lutheran Christmas Eve services
TOWER- Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tower will have a morning Worship Service on Sunday, Dec. 24 at 10 a.m. with the Service of Lessons and Carols. Christmas Eve Worship with communion will be at 4 p.m.

TOWER-SOUDAN ELEMENTARY



Tower-Soudan Elementary held its Winter Concert on Dec. 14, with performances from the elementary band (with TS and NER students), plus performances by grades one and two (far left), Kindergarten (see front page), and grades three through six (left and below). More photos in next week's paper. photos by J. Summit



DISNEY'S FROZEN—THE BROADWAY MUSICAL IN ELY

In Brief

Tuesday Group schedule

ELY – The Tuesday Group community educational lunch gathering meets every Tuesday at noon at the Grand Ely Lodge. Participants have an opportunity to order lunch. For those interested in being a host, or who have a speaker suggestion, contact Lacey Squier by email at ElyTuesdayGroup@gmail.com or call her at 218-216-9141. Tuesday Group is now on winter holiday hiatus. Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:
 ▶Jan. 2: Through Hiking the Appalachian Trail with Cory Kolodji
 ▶Jan. 9: Capturing the Aurora Borealis with Alex Falconer

“Frozen” tickets now on sale

ELY- Online ticket sales are now open for Ely Memorial High School's production of "Disney's Frozen, the Broadway Musical." The show will have four performances: Friday, Jan. 19 at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 20 at both 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Jan. 21 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$6, with \$5 going to the high school and \$1 going to the nonprofit Mesabi Symphony Orchestra (MSO) to cover payment and handling fees. The website for purchasing tickets is frozeninely.org and uses MSO's Paypal portal for payments. Purchasers who do not have a Paypal account can choose the "pay with a card" and "use Paypal as a guest" options to buy tickets.

MSO generously provided its Paypal portal for use by the musical. Payment system integration was achieved with the help of MSO's Karen McMannus. The ticket portal and seating chart application for Washington Auditorium was programmed by volunteers Catherine Helm-Clark and Sean Clark using Tickera and Wordpress software. "I believe this is the first time that an Ely Public School Event has sold tickets online," commented "Frozen" production volunteer Billie Rouse.

Anyone with ticketing problems should email admin@frozeninely.org. The ticketing team should respond to emails within 24 hours. Please do not contact the high school or MSO with ticketing problems since they do not have access to the ticket website and cannot help purchasers.

Getting "Frozen" In Ely

SNEAK PEAKS OF RECENT "FROZEN" REHEARSALS



Upper left: Madden Reed of Ely's Mayhem Sewing and Repair (right) measures Ruby Milton's hands (left). Madden is crafting the full-length gloves for Milton, who plays Queen Elsa in the high school's production of "Disney's Frozen, the Broadway Musical." The gloves play an important part in the plot during the coronation and ball scenes when Queen Elsa's magical powers are revealed. Upper right: The robotic Olaf (right) arrives for the first time at rehearsal last Sunday, to be greeted by Sophomore Alison Poppler, (left) who is Olaf's voice in the show. Olaf was built by the award-winning robotics team at Northeast Range School in Babbitt. Below: The ensemble rehearses a chorus line for the musical version of the sauna scene. photos by C. Clark



Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2023



ho ho ho christmas
tis the season for good cheer
refrain from all news

From Anne Oelke, Ely Public School District Superintendent

Dear Members of the Ely Community,
 I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to provide you with an update on the ongoing facility improvement projects that have taken place at the Ely Public School District. As the superintendent overseeing the closure of the current project and starting a new project to complete the original voter-approved referendum project, I understand the importance of keeping the community informed about its progress and plans moving forward.

21st Century Facility Project
 The 21st Century Facility Project began as a response to the growing needs of our aging school buildings and the desire to create a safe and secure entrance for our students. The initial planning phase involved an assessment of the existing facilities, community input, and collaboration with architects and contractors to develop

a comprehensive plan for the upgrades. The voters approved a referendum in August 2020. Then the design phase began and continued into Spring 2021. The district went out for bids at that time and was faced with a huge challenge with extreme increases for construction materials due to COVID-19. Due to the increase in costs, the original construction project needed to be scaled back, and many key elements were eliminated including interior doors, window replacements, bathroom renovations, and classroom renovations.

Project Completion
 The construction phase for the 21st Century Facility Project officially commenced in May 2021. The facility team worked to ensure the project stayed on schedule and met the highest standards of quality. The district faced many challenges along the way, but the commitment from our facility team to deliver an improved and mod-

ernized facility remained steadfast. The district opened the 2022-23 school year with the completed project. The project is currently in its post-construction phase with final punch list items to complete. Key milestones achieved throughout this project included a safe and secure entrance for the campus, a new HVAC system for the Washington Building, a new kitchen and cafeteria, a modern media center, a new gymnasium for additional learning spaces, new and modernized industrial tech classroom with woodshop, small engines, and welding booths, new intercom systems throughout the campus, a new band space and a new choir classroom. The transformation of our facility is already evident, and we are excited about the positive impact it will have on the community.

Looking Ahead
 While we celebrate the progress made in the

21st Century Facility Project, it's essential to look forward to the next steps. We are now beginning another construction project to finish the original project that was voter-approved by the taxpayers. This new project, the Phase II-Completion Project is already underway. During Spring 2023, we worked with the Costin Group to secure additional funding through the legislature and the incredible support we have received from the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board. This next phase will focus on completing the original voter-approved project. This project will include the completion of new windows for the entire campus, new interior classroom doors, renovation of the chemistry lab, renovation of the art classroom, renovation of all campus bathrooms, adding additional individual bathrooms in the Memorial and Washington Buildings, and new flooring and paint for

classrooms. We are committed to maintaining open communication with the community throughout this next phase of construction. the Phase II-Completion Project is scheduled to begin in May 2024.

Community Involvement
 The community's support and commitment to our school is invaluable to us. We thank you for the original voter-approved referendum that propelled our district into the transformation of our historical buildings to modern learning spaces for our community's learners. Our goal is to create a facility that truly serves the needs and desires of our diverse learning community. Thank you for your continued support and patience as we work to enhance our school facilities. We look forward to sharing the completed project with you and creating a space that we can all be proud of.

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-2 pm

Support groups

AA - Alcoholics Anonymous
OPEN AA - 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Saturdays, in-person, First Lutheran Church, 915 E. Camp St., Ely.
AA FRIDAYS - 7 p.m. Fridays, First Presbyterian Church, 262 E. Harvey St., Ely.
ELY WOMEN'S OPEN AA - Monday at noon at Ledgerrock Church, 1515 E. Camp St., Ely.
BABBITT AA - 7 p.m. Thursdays, Woodland Presbyterian Church.
AL-ANON - Sundays 8-9 p.m. at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely.
BABBITT AL-ANON - Thursdays, 7 p.m., at Woodland Presbyterian.
CO-DEPENDENTS' 12-step support group, 4:00 p.m. Tuesdays, Wellbeing Development, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 712 S. Central Ave., 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.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

Ely Public Library
 ELY- The library will be closed on Dec. 25-26 and Jan. 1-2 during the winter holidays. The library board will meet on Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. The first Kahoot trivia game of 2024 will be on three books by Mark Twain: "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," "The Adventures of Huck Finn," and "The Prince and the Pauper." The Kahoot will begin on Thursday, Jan. 4, at 3 p.m. and run until Tuesday, Jan. 9, at 8 a.m. Pre-register in advance to provide an email address. The library will email the link to the game when it starts. The library will host a new group called the Curiosity Cohort to explore quirky new crafts and skills. The first meeting will be on Friday, Jan. 5, from 1-2:30 p.m. to explore sewable circuits. The session is for adults and will investigate using conductive thread to make a bookmark that will light up. A second project will be introduced if time permits. Preregister for this event so the library can order enough supplies for participants.

The Friends of the Library Book Club will meet on Monday, Jan. 8, from 3-4 p.m. The book under discussion will be "Horse" by Geraldine Brooks. The monthly Friends of the Library board meeting will be on Tuesday, Jan. 9, from 1-2 p.m. The library will hold a jigsaw puzzle swap on Wednesday, Jan. 10, from 4-6 p.m. Bring gently used puzzles to swap. Please, no puzzles with missing pieces. The Get Crafty group will make do-it-yourself heating pads on Thursday, Jan. 11, from 1-2 p.m. Make heating pads using fleece, rice, and thread. Preregister for this event so the library can order enough supplies for participants. The library will hold a Kahoot on books six through 15 of the "Owl Diaries" series of books by Rebecca Elliot. The Kahoot will begin on Friday, Jan. 12, at 3 p.m. and run until Wednesday, Jan. 17 at 8 a.m. Pre-register in advance to provide an email address. The library will email the link to the game when it starts. Preregister for this event so the library can order enough supplies for participants.

10:30-11 a.m. All library events are at the Ely Public Library at 224 E. Chapman St., unless otherwise noted.
Babbitt Public Library
 BABBITT- Starting on Jan. 2, the library will have new hours: Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Friday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. The library will host free bingo on Monday, Jan. 8 at 1 p.m. The prizes will be books. Preschool Storytime is held every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. All library events are at the Babbitt Public Library at 71 South Drive unless otherwise noted.
Ely Ice Rink
 ELY- The rec center ice rink will open as soon as the weather cooperates. Check the city's Facebook page or ely.mn.us/reccenter for the opening announcement and hours.
Ely Ice Arena
 ELY- The Ely Ice Arena on the Ely School District campus is open for skating on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thurs-

day, from 1:30-2:30 p.m. through March 4, except when school is closed for holidays. There will be no skating Dec. 22 through Jan. 1. To see an entire schedule and to register for this no-cost activity, go to ely.k12.mn.us/communityed.
NLAA Art Show
 ELY- The Northern Lakes Arts Association art show for December is "Emotions" by Rita Fortunato Sterling. The show runs from Dec. 18 through Dec. 31, in the lobby of Ely's Historic State Theater, 238 E. Sheridan St., whenever the theater is open.
Polka!
 BABBITT- The Friends of Babbitt Recreation will host the Solkela Polkela Band in a fundraiser on Sunday, Dec. 31, from noon-3 p.m., at the Municipal Gym, 71 South Drive. Advance tickets are \$35 at Z'Up North Realty, 33 Central Blvd., Suite 300, or by texting 218-742-4322. Tickets at the door will be \$45. Desserts and refreshments are included.

Woodworking Class
 ELY- Ely Community Education will offer a woodworking class on Wednesday evenings, from 6-8:30 p.m., from on Jan. 3 through March 6. The class will be in the new woodshop on the school district campus, 600 E. Harvey. The cost is \$85, not including materials. Go to ely.k12.mn.us/communityed and click on the red bar for more details and to register.
Makers' Market
 ELY- The January Makers' Market and Mixer will be at the Ely Folk School, 209 E. Sheridan St., on Saturday, Jan. 6, from 3-5 p.m.
Auditions
 ELY- Youth auditions for the March NLAA production of "Fiddler on the Roof" will be on Saturday, Jan. 6, from 6-8 p.m. General auditions will be on Monday, Jan. 15, from 6-8 p.m. All auditions will be at the Vermilion Fine Arts Theater, 1900 E. Camp St. The performance dates for the musical are March 14-17 and 21-23.

Orr council delays decision on 2024 budget, tax levy

Former clerk will work on bank reconciliation, other budget issues

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- On Truth in Taxation Day for the Orr City Council on Dec. 11, the truth was that no one had accurate, verified numbers for where the city's budget is, and lacking that information the council decided to defer decisions about the budget and a final tax levy to its next meeting.

End-of-the-year fund transfers to balance the budget are commonplace, but without firm numbers the council could not make informed decisions about how to proceed.

As has been discussed and reported from prior meetings, attempts to track down and reconcile numerous past transactions has been an ongoing

challenge since May when the city auditor discovered some discrepancies. One example noted by ambulance director Donna Hoffer at the November council meeting was that revenue growth for the ambulance service hadn't been fully reconciled. An invoice had also inadvertently been paid for twice, and the situation with the vendor needed to be resolved and reflected in the budget, Hoffer said.

The issue is not isolated to the ambulance department, and is nebulous enough that current city clerk Angela Lindgren recommended that former clerk Cheri Carter be given a contract to come in and straighten things out. Lindgren noted that Carter's experience and familiarity with the city's

departments would give her the ability to find solutions more quickly than she could.

However, as the December meeting was the earliest the council could act on a contract, Carter had not come in to do any of the work that could possibly have provided some budget clarity at the meeting.

That contract was approved on Dec. 11 and stipulates that Carter will be paid \$35 an hour for up to 60 hours to focus on bank reconciliations, payroll postings, and receipting of liquor store deposits and charges dating between May 1 and Dec. 1.

As a city of under 500 residents, Orr is not required to have an official Truth-in-Taxation meet-

ing, according to state Department of Revenue guidelines. Action on the levy and budget can be taken at a regular or special meeting.

In other business, the council:

➤Held a lengthy discussion around possible changes to the city's sick leave policy to provide the required accommodations for part-time or seasonal workers and fire and ambulance department employees. Council members agreed to provide 80 hours of Earned Sick and Safe Leave at the first of the year and specified that hours unused at the end of the year would not be paid out.

➤Approved 2024 property, general liability, and auto insurance coverages from the League

of Minnesota Cities for \$37,023, and to decline the excess liability option of \$1,000,000.

➤Approved the annual weed inspection report.

➤Approved a \$13,516 pay request for the King Road Lift Station project, and approved a change order lowering the cost of the project by \$1,085 to \$270,335.

➤With council member Bruce Black voting in opposition, the council approved a revision to the agreement with the Minnesota Dept. of Transportation regarding the replacement of the fuel system at the airport. The state will pay for 70 percent of the cost, while the city will cover the remaining 30 percent. The revision increased the project cost, with Orr being

obligated to pay \$13,881 instead of \$12,840. The state will pay for \$32,390 of the project.

➤Tabled a discussion of snow plowing bids submitted by Scott Wright and Steven Udovich.

➤Approved a proposal by Fire Chief Jeremy Wright to have Udovich Electric replace existing light fixtures with eight LED High Bay fixtures for \$3,500 after verifying there was sufficient money in the department's account.

➤Approved a short-term rental renewal for Dennis and Ericka Cote.

➤Approved on-sale and Sunday liquor licenses for Oveson's Pelican Lake Resort and Inn.

MUSICAL MERRIMENT



North Woods Kindergarten through sixth grade students sing a farewell song to a packed gymnasium at the school's Elementary Winter Concert last Friday, conducted by choral music teacher Lorenda Daugherty photo by D. Colburn

Catholics to observe Christmas services

REGIONAL- The Catholic Parishes of Lake Vermilion and Pelican Lake have set service times for the fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas.

Sunday Obligations will be on Saturday, Dec. 23 at 4 p.m. at St. Martin's in Tower and 7 p.m. at Holy Cross in Orr, and on Sunday, Dec. 24 at 9 a.m. at St. Mary's in Cook.

Christmas Obligation will be observed on Sunday, Dec. 24 at 4 p.m. at St. Martin's and 7 p.m. at Holy Cross, and on Monday, Dec. 25 at 9 a.m. at St. Mary's.

WINNING ARTISTS



Winners of the Timberjay Christmas Card coloring contest at North Woods School included, from top left clockwise: First grade - 3. Brooklyn Gabrielson, 2. Meika Klander, and not pictured, 1. Ainsley Judnick; Second - 1. Bristol Glass, 2. Tesheem Othman (not pictured) 3. (tie) Vivian Villebrun and Rune Hodge (not pictured); Third - 1. Kallen Williams, 2. Joe Schrecengost, 3. (tie) Kensie Herdman and Bentley Frazer; Fourth - 1. (tie) Shainah Christiansen and Kia Gagnon (not pictured), 2. Sherrie Peters, 3. Samantha Amundson; Fifth - 1. Leah Las, 2. Stella Pliiml, 3. Elizabeth Trip. Kindergarten winners not pictured include 1. David Wardas, 2. Kiki Clark, 3. Beau Maroste. photos by D. Colburn



We Wish You Peace & Joy!
from KGM Contractors

Artist • Esme Brodeen
Grade 4

We Wish You Peace & Joy!
from Frank's Marine

Winning Artist • David Wardas
Kindergarten

Merry Christmas To You All!
from Dreamweaver Salon

Winning Artist • Kiki Clark
Kindergarten

Enjoy A Winter Wonderland
from BIC Realty

Winning Artist • Kia Gagnon
GRADE 4

Wishes For A Magical Christmas
from The Vermilion Club

Winning Artist • Nolan Lenci
GRADE 6

Cozy Christmas Wishes To You!
from Lakes Gas

Winning Artist • Elizabeth Trip
Grade 5

PUBLIC HEALTH

New COVID strain fueling major rise in cases

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- The entire northeast Arrowhead region of Minnesota has been upgraded from low to medium COVID activity status by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control this week, based on increased numbers of hospitalizations.

The CDC-designated health service area of St. Louis, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and Pine counties in Minnesota and Douglas County in Wisconsin now has a reported COVID hospitalization rate of 11.5 per 100,000 population, triggering the increased warning. Forty-four cases were admitted to the service area's hospitals last week, a 25.7 percent increase over the week before.

Statewide, the Minnesota Department of Health reported a second consecutive week of over 400 hospitalizations last week, among the highest of any week this year and on par with admissions throughout much of 2022.

The increased spread of the COVID-19 virus is also evident in the U of M's waste-

water sampling. Here in northeast Minnesota the COVID viral load in wastewater jumped by 51 percent last week, and has gone up a whopping 133.9 percent since Thanksgiving, the third-highest rate of any region in the state. Increased socialization and indoor activity have been associated with COVID case increases throughout the pandemic.

Case data for Minnesota from MDH for the week following the Thanksgiving holiday went up for all age groups. The lag in reporting hospitalization rates doesn't allow for direct comparison, but in the week immediately prior to Thanksgiving the rates continued climbing, reaching their highest level since last February. MDH reported 20 hospitalizations in St. Louis County for that week.

New COVID variant

The Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota recently reported that a new sub-variant of the Omicron variant, JN.1, could "supercharge" a rise in COVID-19 activity with its increasing share of the viral pool, jumping from 8 percent to 21 percent in only two weeks. JN.1

is now the second-most detected variant and a CDC update suggests that the new variant is either more transmissible than older ones or better at evading the immune system, although it doesn't appear to carry any higher health risks.

Lab data suggest that the updated COVID booster is effective in protecting against JN.1.

Telehealth service

With COVID-19 continuing its upward surge, the Minnesota Department of Health has raised its level of disseminating information about vaccines, treatments, a COVID telehealth option, and updated resources.

A press release from MDH emphasized the importance of getting an updated booster, particularly for those who are at increased risk from COVID due to underlying health conditions.

MDH noted that there are several authorized antiviral medications to treat mild to moderate COVID in people who are more likely to get sick, but that treatment needs to be started within a few days of the onset of COVID symptoms to be effective.

MDH also touted its partner-

ship with Cue Health for a free telehealth test-to-treat program for Minnesotans. The service is accessible by downloading the Cue Health app to your smartphone, using the Cue Health website, or calling 1-844-609-2415. You will be connected with a licensed clinician who can do an evaluation to determine if treatment is a good option. If so, a prescription can be sent directly to the patient's local pharmacy.

The Cue Health test-to-treat program:

- Is free and available from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. seven days a week.
- Does not require health insurance to receive treatment
- Is available to all Minnesotans regardless of residency or citizenship status.
- Works with all COVID-19 test results, including rapid at-home tests.

Research notes

In research reported by CIDRAP, a study of children 18 and under in Toronto found that 40 percent of those infected with COVID remained capable of transmitting the virus a day after their symptoms had disappeared. Researchers suggested

their findings support consideration of infection prevention and control procedure for up to 10 days following the onset of symptoms, which could have implications for parents making decisions about when a child is ready to return to school or group care after COVID.

Research has also found that Long COVID has a negative impact on the finances of households, according to a study by the University of South Carolina and Montana State University. Households headed by an adult with long COVID were two to four times more likely to report financial hardships. In 17 percent of such cases, an individual had been laid off of work, 23 percent have lost earnings, and 16.8 percent reported general financial difficulties. Families who had lower income before the pandemic were more vulnerable to job losses and earnings losses, researchers said. They recommended consideration of expanded paid sick leave, improved workplace accommodations, and wider access to disability insurance as policies to mitigate household financial impacts.

NEWRANGE...Continued from page 1

a technical report which suggested the plant could be far more profitable if it was operated at a higher capacity. Environmental plaintiffs had argued that the company really intended to operate at that higher capacity and should have been required to apply for a major permit and that their permit application, as written, was a sham. But courts have consistently found insufficient evidence to support that claim.

The Court of Appeals did require that the MPCA include some documenta-

tion, including the PolyMet technical report, in the administrative record. But it allowed the permit to stand as approved.

"We of course are pleased with the court's decision," said Bruce Richardson, a spokesperson for NewRange. "The Court summarized it well when it said in its order that it found the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency made 'reflective and undisputed findings that show it carefully considered the salient problems...' concluding that the company

'will comply with the permit.'"

Despite the legal victory, the path to actual opening of the proposed mine remains full of hurdles. The company's permit to mine has been suspended and a recent decision by an administrative law judge recommended against reinstating the permit without significant changes. Earlier this year, the Army Corps of Engineers withdrew its Section 404 wetlands permit over water quality concerns. In August, the court remanded the com-

pany's water discharge, or NPDES, permit back to the agency for further consideration and reversed on the issue of groundwater contamination.

"Although the appellate court has allowed this permit to stand, the approved permit relates to a proposal that can't be built due to other negative court and agency decisions affecting project permits," said Jay Eidsness, staff attorney for the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, the lead plaintiff in the case. "In addition, the

recent creation of a joint venture with Canadian mining company Teck, and Glencore's purchase of all remaining shares of PolyMet stock, means that PolyMet's proposed mine is substantially different with regard to its management and scope," said Eidsness.

Richardson said the recent joint venture strengthens and brings additional resources to bear to advance the NorthMet proposal. "Getting NorthMet to the finish line has been and continues to be a primary

objective of the partners and NewRange leadership. That commitment remains rock solid in spite of the outcomes of regulatory and legal decisions earlier this year, which have only toughened our resolve. We look forward to the year ahead to continue to work through the outstanding regulatory and legal issues and to further our efforts in community and tribal engagement," he said.

U.S. STEEL...Continued from page 1

at over \$50 per share. The transaction is expected to close in the second or third quarter of calendar year 2024, subject to approval by U.S. Steel's shareholders, receipt of customary regulatory approvals and other customary closing conditions.

Spokesmen for both companies say the acquisition will create significant advantages for the expanded company. "We are excited that this transaction

brings together two companies with world-leading technologies and manufacturing capabilities, demonstrating our mission to serve customers worldwide, as well as our commitment to building a more environmentally friendly society through the decarbonization of steel," said Eiji Hashimoto, Nippon's president.

"For our U. S. Steel employees, who I continue to be thankful for,

the transaction combines like-minded steel companies with an unwavering focus on safety, shared goals, values, and strategies underpinned by rich histories," said David B. Burritt, U.S. Steel President and CEO. "For customers, U. S. Steel and NSC create a truly global steel company with combined capabilities and innovation capable of meeting our customers' evolving needs."

The announced acqui-

sition comes four months after the U.S. Steel board of directors rejected a tender offer by Cleveland-Cliffs that would have netted shareholders about \$35 per share, or a total value of about \$7.3 billion.

The offer from Cleveland-Cliffs had the support of the United Steelworkers, the union representing nearly 850,000 industrial workers nationwide, including the roughly 11,000 U.S. Steel workers

around the country. But the union slammed the deal announced this week. "To say we're disappointed in the announced deal between U.S. Steel and Nippon is an understatement, said USW International President David McCall. "It demonstrates the same greedy, shortsighted attitude that has guided U.S. Steel for far too long. We remained open throughout this process to working with U.S. Steel to keep this iconic American company domestically owned and operated, but instead it chose to push aside the concerns of its dedicated workforce and sell to a foreign-owned company."

McCall said the announcement was a violation of the union's partnership agreement with U.S. Steel, which requires the company to notify the union of a change in corporate control or major business conditions. "Our union intends to exercise

the full measure of our agreements to ensure that whatever happens next with U.S. Steel, we protect the good, family-sustaining jobs we bargained. We also will strongly urge government regulators to carefully scrutinize this acquisition and determine if the proposed transaction serves the national security interests of the United States and benefits workers.

The union does maintain the right under its contract to provide U.S. Steel with a counter-offer, and a union statement suggests that could be a possibility. "No union has actively engaged in more acquisitions in its core industries than the USW, and rest assured, our union will hold management at U.S. Steel accountable to every letter of our collective bargaining and other existing agreements," said McCall.



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HEARING...Continued from page 1

nel and city officials from across northeastern Minnesota spoke to the assembled task force members, and they were remarkably consistent in their take on the challenges they face. While public services like police and fire have long been supported primarily from local tax dollars, ambulance services have relied for years on the fees they collect for their service, which are paid primarily from health care insurers.

That model worked for decades when small ambulance services could rely mostly on volunteers to staff their ambulances, but speaker after speaker said it's no longer financially viable today.

"Our labor costs are no longer free like they were 30 years ago," said Hibbing Fire Chief Erik Jankila. "Fee for service does not come anywhere close to covering the cost of providing ambulance service anymore," he added. "There's no choice but for the state to step in and provide solutions."

Other speakers echoed Jankila's sentiment and



Left: Sen. Grant Hauschild, a member of the task force talks about the challenges to rural ambulance service; Above: A large crowd of area officials and ambulance workers turned out to express their concerns. photos by M. Helmberger

noted how the pay structure for most of their emergency calls falls far short of the cost. Speakers described a Medicare and Medicaid pay scale that provides only about a third of the cost of responding to emergency calls, and said those low reimbursements force the taxpayers in their communities to make up the difference.

"We're left to subsidize Medicare and Medicaid," said Tower Mayor Dave Setterberg. Glenn Anderson, a member of the Babbitt City Council, said his city has had to write off over a million dollars in billings to Medicare

and Medicaid over the last eight years.

Tower Clerk-Treasurer Michael Schultz estimated his city would spend \$40,000 or ten percent of its local levy to backfill cash losses to the ambulance service this year. He noted that the city has tried to be proactive on the issue, developing a business plan and meeting with area townships about a possible taxing district overseen by a joint powers board. "But it only works if we increase revenue," he said.

Members of the task force noted that they are currently working to address the low Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements, which average about \$440 per run. "We recognized right away that we have to work with our federal partners," said Rep. Jon Huot, co-chair of the task force.

"If you have volume, you do better, but we can't use the same blueprint in rural areas as we do in the metro."

Adding to the problem in rural Minnesota is the fact that about 90 percent of 911 calls are coming from patients on Medicare or Medicaid. While private insurance companies typi-

cally pay more, they make up only a small fraction of the patient base in many rural areas.

Officials from several small cities noted that they often get little financial help from surrounding townships that are located within their primary service areas but don't contribute financially to the service, except through fees for ambulance runs, which no longer cover the full cost.

Hibbing Mayor Pete Hyduke noted that his city is forced to fund a service that covers hundreds of square miles outside the city limits, while only city residents pay the taxes to support the service, a situation that is commonplace for cities in rural areas. "We need to be allocating resources for the communities that are serving these outlying areas," Hyduke said.

Virginia Mayor Larry Cuffe echoed that sentiment, noting that his city's ambulance service is currently losing \$500,000-\$750,000 annually out of an ambulance operating budget of \$3.8 million. "No other neighboring community pays for that service," he said. "The only entity that helps in any way is St. Louis County, which pays \$24 per run outside the city."

Despite the high cost, Cuffe said his city remains committed to continuing to provide its advanced life support ambulance service. "But give us the chance to break even," he said.

Several speakers noted that changes in the staffing requirements for ambulance services have exacerbated their financial woes. State law now requires that all ambulance services maintain at least two responders on call at all

times, a mandate that has sent labor costs soaring for many services.

"The requirement of having two people on call 24 hours a day, is something that needs to be looked at," said Babbitt's Anderson. "Unless you're willing to finance it."

Other impacts

City and ambulance services aren't the only ones impacted by the crisis. Ely-Bloomenson Hospital CEO Patti Banks told the task force that the lack of resources in EMS is impacting her hospital as well. With the increasing consolidation in the health care sector, smaller hospitals are left to handle mostly primary care, as doctors and patients are increasingly concentrated in larger regional centers, like Duluth. Banks said her hospital now relies heavily on local ambulances to transfer higher-need patients to Duluth but noted that those inter-hospital transfers can be delayed, sometimes for days, due to the lack of ambulance personnel.

She noted that current state rules prioritize response to emergency calls over transfers of stable patients and said already overstretched ambulance crews often leave many transfer calls unanswered since there are no repercussions for doing so.

While ambulance services generally can profit from many of those transfers, they can take needed personnel away from their service area for several hours at a time, posing risks to a service's ability to respond to emergencies.

Staffing challenges

Ambulance directors who spoke related a chronic

problem attracting and keeping ambulance personnel. Karin Schultz, who serves on both the Cook and Tower ambulance services, said the Cook ambulance is down to just one or two people handling virtually all of their calls and that the service must routinely rely on the Tower and Orr ambulances to cover calls when they don't have the personnel available. "We get dinged by the EMSRB [Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board] all the time for not having people to respond," said Schultz. "The EMSRB should definitely take a look at who they're penalizing."

"Would more money help?" asked Rep. Huot, in response to Schultz's comments.

"Honestly no," said Schultz. "Nobody wants to work, and volunteerism is gone."

Tower ambulance director Dena Suihkonen said her service is facing a similar challenge and notes that she ends up going on nearly every one of nearly 500 calls the service receives a year.

Dewey Johnson, who oversees emergency dispatch for St. Louis County said the signs of overstretched ambulance services are evident all the time to his dispatchers. "We're noticing that while we once paged only once [to get a response], we're now paging twice, paging three times, then having to look for mutual aid. Eventually we're going to page a service and there will be no one there at all to respond."

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GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

Pickleball moving ahead without township funding

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP— Planning and fundraising for a set of dedicated pickleball courts at Greenwood Town Hall will move forward as a result of town board action on Dec. 12. The board approved siting the three new courts adjacent to the pavilion and bocce ball courts, in a 100' by 100' area that won't require much site preparation.

But the decision was not without some disagreement, specifically over township funding for the project, and whether or not the board should wait until the annual meeting in March to allow any fundraising on the project to begin.

The Greenwood Pickleball Committee met on Nov. 16, and agreed on a plan to build three courts, with no changes needed for the parking lot or helipad area. The newly-formed Lake Vermilion Pickleball Association (LVPA) will work with the Greenwood Recreation Board, and the township. The recreation board, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, would act as the fiduciary on the project.

The pickleball committee agreed on a funding

approach which included soliciting donations and grant dollars, as well as asking the township for matching funds.

Ballpark estimates for construction of three courts is \$75,000. The IRRR has a grant program that would provide up to \$30,000 in one-to-one matching funds.

While the pickleball association had not formally requested any township funding, the idea was floated during the committee meeting, and the committee decided to request a donation, and amounts were discussed.

Committee member Lee Peterson, who was the lone vote against the idea of a three-court complex (wanting only two courts) said the committee was expecting the township pay 50-percent of the cost. But LVPA leader Paul Thompson said that idea was only floated as part of a discussion.

"It shouldn't be taken negatively," Thompson said. "Chairman John Bassing asked for a number, we went with 50-percent, it was a discussion." Minutes from that meeting show the group asking for a contribution of between one-third and one-half the court cost. The LVPA has said they are willing to raise the funds

on their own, without a township contribution.

Bassing noted that a \$25,000 contribution from the township would cost about \$16 per person.

About 30 people attended the township meeting, and most were pickleball enthusiasts.

In general, the board was in favor of the courts.

"Waiting until March [to make a decision] is wrong," said Supervisor Paul Skubic. "They can raise more than we think, there is a lot of support."

Supervisor Barb Lofquist, who initially seconded a motion by Supervisor Rick Stoehr to table any action until after the annual meeting, withdrew her second, and expressed her support for the project. She noted that the township had not made any promises to financially support the project and that the courts would belong to all township property owners, not just year-round residents, who are allowed to vote at the annual meeting.

Supervisor Sue Drobac then seconded the motion and discussion continued.

"I had no intention of bursting anyone's bubble," said Stoehr, who said he was happy to see the helipad landing area would not be disrupted by the location of the courts.

Thompson said the committee has already raised \$1,000, and they were waiting for township approval before sending out requests for donations to the LVPA members, and was also planning a

township-wide mailing and funding requests to businesses. He added that the group has never "made a demand or expectation for township funding."

The application for the IRRR grant is due in January, and the grant window is only available once a year. The committee would like to get the funding in place so construction could begin this summer, possibly in conjunction with a planned resurfacing of the town hall parking lot, which would reduce blacktop costs since the equipment would already be in place.

The motion to table any action on the pickleball courts until after the annual meeting failed on a 3-2 vote, with Stoehr and Sue Drobac voting in favor, and Bassing, Skubic, and Barb Lofquist voting against. A subsequent vote to allow the courts to be built, with no commitment at this time on any funding, passed 5-0.

The decision came after a lengthy and somewhat heated discussion on whether or not the town board should approve adding recreational facilities at the town hall. A survey done in 2015, as part of the township's comprehensive plan, did not show support for adding recreational facilities, with 26-percent indicating they were in support, 41-percent opposed, and 33-percent with no opinion.

Since then, the town board did support the construction of a privately-funded pavilion and playground.

"When we asked permission to build the pavilion," said Jarri Ankrum, one of the project organizers, "there was just as much negative support as positive support."

The pavilion project has been quite a success, she noted and is widely used for private events, family gatherings, and simply a place to hang out, especially when the weather is not amenable to being out on the lake, she said.

"It's amazing," she said, "and it's positive for Greenwood as a whole."

Ankrum said the project did not need support at the annual meeting to proceed.

The pavilion will get even more use with adjacent pickleball courts, as players will have a shaded place to wait for their turns on the courts. LVPA started counting the numbers using the tennis court for pickleball in August and showed an average of 17 players per day and two hours of play per person.

"Waiting times were an issue," said Thompson, "some days there were 20 people waiting for their turn."

Once the pickleball courts are built, the tennis courts would be mostly reserved for tennis players, resolving the conflicts that sometimes arose this past summer. If the LVPA sponsored any tournaments, the tennis court would be available for two additional pickleball courts (pickleball is played on a court half the size of a tennis court).

Peterson also said he

was not in favor of tournaments at the town hall.

"I don't want 400 people here," he said.

Other business

In other business, the board:

► Will have Drobac contact the township attorney about the issue of assessing costs for the Twp. 4136 upgrades.

► Heard that two new trained firefighters have joined the department, contingent on background checks. Both are also trained EMRs.

► Heard that Bassing and Lee Peterson met with the firm doing the Ely-Bloomenson Hospital sponsored study on area ambulance issues.

► Election filings open on Jan. 2. Seats held by Lofquist, Drobac, and Clerk JoAnn Bassing will be on the ballot at the March 12 township election.

► Passed a resolution to appoint election judges.

► Heard from Lofquist that while arsenic levels are much lower than before the filtration system was put in, they are still a bit higher than EPA standards. Stoehr wondered if the township should put up a sign noting the results. Lofquist said the state said the water was safe to drink and they didn't need to post a sign.

► Passed a motion to raise firefighter and EMR pay to \$25 per hour, from \$20.

► Will donate \$100 to Care Partners and the Vermilion Lake Association.

EMS FUNDING WOES

Ely Ambulance needs bailout to make payroll

by CATIE CLARK Ely Editor

ELY- The financial woes of the Ely Area Ambulance Service, or EAAS, prompted a special city council meeting here last Wednesday evening to approve another emergency funding allotment to allow the ambulance to meet its Dec. 14 payroll. With little alternative, the council approved a payment of \$32,090 to fill the service's funding gap.

City officials called the special meeting in the wake of last week's meeting of the Ely Area Ambulance Joint Powers Board, where ambulance service personnel informed JPB members, including the cities of Ely and Winton along with Morse and Fall Lake townships, of the service's latest funding crisis.

Unlike previous financial discussions between the EAAS and the joint powers board, the looming payroll, without the funds to cover the checks, put the situation in crisis mode. EAAS board member Chuck Novak put much of the blame on a lag in its revenues and he noted that if the nonprofit service fails the Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital will be on the hook to operate the service unless other arrangements can be made.

Billing problems

The EAAS replaced its billing service earlier this year due to lengthy delays in payments and it still hasn't received all of the funds it expects to be paid from the old service, according to Bob Berrini, who sits on the boards of both the EAAS and the joint powers board.

Novak said that revenues can take up to six months to arrive after the EAAS issues an invoice. "It will take a crystal ball to deter-

mine when exactly that money is actually coming," Novak reported, sketching out how the EAAS accounts receivable are at the mercy of the medical payments systems, including Medicare, Medical Assistance, and private insurance.

The shortfall between the tardy payments and EAAS's expenses is what left the service \$28,000 short on its recent payroll.

No costs cut

"What adjustments have been made to try to balance things out so you can survive?" asked Al Forsman, the joint powers representative from the Ely City Council.

Novak, in response, said the EAAS no longer has building expenses, now that the joint powers board owns the ambulance facility in Ely, a reply that seemed to largely avoid Forsman's question.

Novak did mention that going to a paid on-call model instead of 24/7 staffed service would be a possible savings, but argued that the service would lose a lot of its trained staff if the service opted for that model. He predicted Ely ambulance personnel, especially those who don't live nearby, would look for work elsewhere. "Those people aren't going to drive up here for four hours pay, then drive home and maybe be here once or twice a week. They're going to get other employment. I would. You would. Everybody would. You need stable income these days."

Novak also argued that an on-call system would be a degradation in the standard of care for the area served by the EAAS, which includes a portion of the Boundary Waters.

Criticism

JPB chair Marlene Zorman asked Novak and EAAS board member Scott Kellerman for an estimate of what it would take to keep the EAAS running until a more permanent solution to the financial situation could be devised.

Kellerman stated he didn't have an exact figure, but Novak had a number in mind.

"If you don't want to meet here every month" Novak said, "to talk nickels and dimes. But (with) \$120,000, (in addition to) what we got in the bank, that should take us to January."

Zorman questioned it. "The last budget I saw predicted (operating expenses) like \$330,000," noting that this didn't match with a figure of \$120,000 through just January.

Berrini said the EAAS expenses "aren't going to cost you \$120,000 if you do the math."

Kellerman responded. "I would say \$100,000 would carry (the EAAS) through February."

Morse Township Supervisor Terry Soderberg, who was attending remotely by phone, had harsh words for the management of the EAAS.

"How did we get to this point where we're coming to a meeting and you're thinking you can't make payroll three days from now? What kind of management is that?" Soderberg asked.

Zorman remarked, "It was Dusty (Moravitz, executive director of the EAAS), and he said he will talk to you later, but that he brought it up in a meeting last week."

Soderberg responded, "Even ten days ago, what kind of management does it take (to address not meeting payroll) just 10 days before? I know there's no

response to that. It's just my soapbox."

Meeting payroll

Zorman, who wasn't shy to use the gavel, steered the meeting back to the immediate operation of the EAAS, noting the appropriate short-term response to the current problem was meeting payroll on Thursday.

The city of Ely acts as the financial agent for the JPB and Ely Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski calculated the current monthly shortfall for the EAAS, based on the revenue and expense figures provided by Kellerman for Monday's meeting.

"From (Kellerman's) spreadsheet, the average monthly loss is \$26,000," Langowski calculated.

The JPB voted for Langowski to invoice the four JPB members, Ely, Winton, Morse, and Fall Lake on a per capita basis immediately for \$52,000 to cover two months of operating losses. The four members noted that payment of the amount was contingent on the approval of each municipality's local government and was not certain.

The JPB chose funding the operating shortfall for two months based on the projected delivery of the hospital's ongoing EMS feasibility study. The focus and subject of the study was covered in the Sept. 1 edition of the Timberjay.

On a per capita basis, Ely was invoiced \$32,090, Winton \$1,670, Morse \$11,750, and Fall Lake \$6,400. The invoice would also include the budgeted and already agreed-upon 2024 expenses for the ambulance building which the JPB owns.

"I'm going to have to hold a special meeting in Winton," noted Zorman, who is also Winton's

mayor. "I don't know if it's going to be till next week. I don't know if I can get that. I don't think any of us are going to be able to get you enough money by Thursday."

Berrini, the JPB representative for Morse, commented he would have it added to the agenda for the Morse meeting on Tuesday night. Ely, knowing that an action might be needed before the JPB met, had already scheduled a special meeting for Wednesday, Dec. 13.

Aftermath

At the time that this article was filed on Tuesday evening, the Timberjay attended the Morse Township meeting. The Morse Commissioners voted 2-1 to support the invoice from the JPB issued earlier in the day.

Soderberg was the dissenting vote, based on his stance that Ely was not pulling its weight based on its lower per capita funding of ambulance expenses back in September. "Once again, we're paying for services for Ely," he remarked, noting that it was unfair for the least populated joint powers members to be subsidizing the most populated. Morse, Fall Lake and Winton funded the EAAS subsidy at a per capita rate of \$15.15 for 2023 while Ely funded at a rate of \$10.60. These amounts are according to the figures reported in the agenda packet for the Dec. 11 JPB meeting.

Berrini, who attended a meeting regarding the Fall Lake invoice earlier on Tuesday, reported that Lake Co. had approved that invoice. Lake Co. is the agency which funds EMS expenses for Fall Lake.

ELY SCHOOL BOARD

Fall Lake annexation back up for board discussion

by CATIE CLARK Ely Editor

ELY- The long-discussed subject of the possible annexation of Fall Lake Township to the Ely School District was back on the ISD 696 board agenda on Monday. It's long been a sore point as the township's considerable tax value goes to fund schools on the North Shore even though the township's students attend school in Ely.

The issue has come up for discussion in other venues in the Ely area in recent weeks and the discussion prompted area resident Ozzie Reif to begin circulating a petition to advance the potential annexation of the township into the school district.

School board chair Ray Marsnik provided background on the issue, stating that at one time in the past, the school district had a tuition agreement with the Lake Superior School District. That agreement was terminated on the recommendation of a previous Ely superintendent "who felt we would be better off if we open enrolled" the Fall Lake students instead.

Marsnik mentioned that the Fall Lake students were discussed with the district's Costin Group

consultant two years ago, and that it was "one of those subjects that comes up every year ... because (Fall Lake residents) are sending their kids here to our schools, so they should have an opportunity to serve on the school board ... and have their taxes from their properties going towards our referendums or towards our building projects."

"Those people (Fall Lake residents) want to know what they can do, to be with us (ISD 696), but it will be a pretty tough sell," said Marsnik. "According to the last numbers I heard, some 18 percent of their tax base for that (Lake Superior School) District comes from Fall Lake Township, so we're looking at some real dollars there, and I'm sure they're not going to give that up easily."

Marsnik said he would add the topic of Fall Lake on the agenda for the school board's study session next week on Dec. 18, when a representative of the district's lobbying firm, the Costin Group, will be in attendance.

Truth in Taxation

The district held its Truth in Taxation meeting as part of Monday evening's school board meeting. The

video presentation by district business manager Spencer Aune was pre-recorded and played during the meeting.

Aune reported that the levy revenue for 2023-24 was \$2,224,762, which is 22.4 percent of the district's total 2023-24 projected revenue of \$9,950,197. The largest revenue source was the state, which contributes 63.4 percent of the district's income.

The 2024-25 levy will be \$2,268,864, which is an increase of \$44,102 or 1.98 percent.

Most of the district's expenses go for payroll, with \$4,673,375 (46.9 percent) going to salaries and wages, \$2,081,219 (20.9 percent) for benefits, and \$1,067,743 (10.7 percent) for hired services such as substitute teachers and consulting services. The district currently spends \$920,000 (9.2 percent) on debt service, mostly servicing the bonds that paid for the recent construction of the new addition. Total expenses for the district for 2023-24

are projected at \$9,959,197.

In other business, the school board:

► Approved the November 2023 financial report, receipts for \$575,654 and disbursements of \$408,277.

► Approved the use of the maximum U.S. General Services Administration Domestic 2024 per diem rates for meal reimbursement and maximum lodging rates for all district employee travel.

► Adopted a resolution establishing combined polling places for multiple precincts and designating hours during which those will be open for school district elections not held on the day of a statewide election.

► Hired James Tesdahl for the bus driver position effective Dec. 1.

► Certified the 2023 Payable 2024 Levy in the amount of \$2,268,864.

► Approved the Costin Group Consultant Agreement in the amount of \$2,000 per month for 2024.

► Approved the World's Best Workforce

Report and Summary as presented, as required by the Minnesota Department of Education.

► Approved an anonymous \$1,625 donation for special education, a \$3,000 donation from the Ely

Education Foundation for a sign language interpreter for the upcoming Frozen musical in January, and \$500 from the Ely chapter of Kiwanis for the senior class trip to Washington D.C.

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BOYS BASKETBALL

Grizz win a pair heading into break

North Woods' Burnett state's leading scorer after Monday's action

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

CARLTON- The North Woods boys knocked the Carlton-Wrenshall Raptors from the ranks of the unbeaten on Monday with a second-half haymaker and an 81-66 road win.

The Raptors led most of the first half, but the Grizzlies hung right on their heels. Trailing 25-21 with five minutes left in

the first half, the Grizzlies got a four-point trip to tie when Luke Will was fouled on a score, and Jonah Burnett got a putback on Will's errant free throw. North Woods trailed again at 31-26, but five points from Burnett on two trips down the floor kept the Raptors in reach at 33-31.

C/W was up 35-31 when Louie Panichi stepped to the line for the Grizzlies with 12 seconds left for a pair. Panichi dropped in the first but missed

the second, and the ball wound up in the hands of Keenan Whitney, who drained a triple as time ran out for the 35-35 halftime tie.

"Keenan had his first game back in a few years, and these were his first varsity minutes ever," Grizzlies Head Coach Andrew Jugovich said. "We threw him into the fire and we're glad to have him. His defensive intensity and speed was a complete game changer."

Right: North Woods' Jonah Burnett, seen here shooting a baseline jumper against Moose Lake, was the state's leading scorer after Monday night's action.

photo by D. Colburn

After Panichi opened the second half with a scoring drive and Aidan Hartway dropped in a free throw, the Raptors tied

See GRIZZ...pg. 2B



GIRLS BASKETBALL

Grizzlies post OT win at Moose Lake

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

MOOSE LAKE- The North Woods girls scored a big overtime win on the road against 7AA Moose Lake/Willow River last Thursday, making the winning push with two of their senior leaders out of the game.

The Grizzlies came out strong, racking up a 16-8 lead over the Rebels, but a ML/WR rally brought the score even at 20-20. But a basket down low by senior Talise Goodsky and a jumper by junior Brynn Chosa gave North Woods the points they needed to carry a 24-23 lead into halftime.

The Grizzlies got the jump on the Rebels again early in the second half, going up 36-30, but ML/WR came back to tie and then take the lead 40-38 with 7:50 to play. North Woods was down three, 51-48, when junior Tatum Barto drove the baseline for a score with 1:36 left. The Grizzlies forced a turnover and senior River Cheney was fouled, stepping to the line with a chance to give North Woods the lead. Her first shot to tie the game was good, but the second kicked off the back of the rim, leaving the score 51-51. Neither team scored in the final 1:25, sending the game to overtime.

North Woods jumped out on top in the extra period when Chosa scored after recovering a loose ball, and Cheney and senior Helen Koch each hit a free throw to

See GRIZZLY GIRLS...pg. 2B



GIRLS BASKETBALL

Ely dumps 'Streaks

Fall short against tough Cromwell squad

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

ELY— Solid defense and a big second half by senior Grace LaTourell made the difference for the Timberwolves here on Monday as they easily handled the Bluestreaks 64-36. "We played really great defense all night," said Ely Head Coach Max Gantt. "We made their post player, Baumguard, really work for

Above: Senior Grace LaTourell concentrates as she brings the ball up court. LaTourell scored 28 points in Monday's contest.

Right: Ely's Sarah Visser looks for a way around a Chisholm defender.

photo by J. Greeney



See WOLVES...pg. 2B

HOCKEY

Wolves melt Blizzard, improve to 7-2

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

ELY— The Timberwolves dominated the ice here last Friday as they improved to 7-2 on the season with an 8-2 victory over the Burnett, Wis. Blizzard.

Ely senior forward Deegan Richards notched a

hat trick with three straight goals, the first at the four-minute mark of the second period. He lit the light four and a half minutes later and completed the trick at the 4:54 mark of the third period to put Ely up 4-2 at that point.

Ely's freshman forward Owen Marolt put Ely on the board first, at the 5:28 mark

in the first period, but the Blizzard closed out the period with two late goals to lead 2-1 heading into the second.

That's when Richards began his scoring, and the Blizzard had no answer the rest of the way. Senior forward Drew Marolt got in on the

See HOCKEY...pg. 2B

Right: Senior forward Deegan Richards skates up the ice with the puck during last Friday's game with the Burnett Blizzard. Richards notched a hat trick in the game.

photo by J. Greeney



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BOYS BASKETBALL

Wolves edge Cook County 56-53



Ely freshman Wyatt Tedrick eyes the bucket as he goes in for a jumper. photo by J. Greeney

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor
COOK COUNTY — The long bus ride to Grand Marais didn't discourage the Timberwolves Tuesday night as they edged the Vikings 56-53 in a hard-fought game that came down to the wire.
'I think it was our best overall game of the year,' said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald. 'They have a nice team and we defended them well throughout the game.'
To win, the Wolves were

going to need to contain Cook County's top shooter down the stretch, and McDonald credited freshman guard Wyatt Tedrick with getting the job done. 'I think that made the difference as he did not get many good looks at the basket after hitting four threes in the first half,' said McDonald.
Sophomore Jack Davies led the way for Ely offensively, pouring in 19 points while junior Cade Chittum notched 14 points and eight rebounds. Junior Wyatt Mattson added 12 points for Ely, while sophomore

Drew Johnson posted six boards and six assists.
Playing at home last Friday, inconsistency proved the Wolves' undoing as Mesabi East held on for a 63-54 win.
'At times we played really well,' said McDonald, reflecting on the game. But a 29 percent shooting percentage from the floor just wasn't enough against a team as good as the Giants, he said. 'Poor shooting was the difference in the game.'
The Wolves fell behind in the early going, but rallied from

a 20-point deficit in the second half, cutting the Giants' lead to six at one point. 'Some costly turnovers stopped us from coming all the way back,' said McDonald.
Caid Chittum had a big night, pouring in a team-leading 23 points, grabbing six rebounds and five steals.
Johnson notched a double-double, with 11 boards, ten assists, and eight points while Davies added 11 points on the night.

NORDIC SKIING

Wolves notch competitive times in opening meets

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor
GRAND RAPIDS — Skiing a short track on manmade snow, the Ely Nordic ski team notched some competitive times in their first two meets of the season even as Duluth East appears set to run

away with the section this year.
Skiing at Mt. Itasca on Tuesday, junior Dylan Durkin proved Ely's top finisher, coming in 11th place in a field of 53 skiers with a time of 16:42. Classmate Eli Olson wasn't far behind, finishing 16th in a time of 16:58. Freshmen Aksel Skustad and

Oliver Hohenstein finished 21st and 22nd respectively, with times of 17:31 and 17:39.
For the girls, seniors Ava Skustad and Claire Blauch finished 18th and 19th for Ely with times of 19:42 and 19:59 respectively. Junior Anna Dunn finished 23rd in a time of 21:03.

Ely's Olson notched the Wolves' top finish last week at the Dec. 12 Proctor Invitational with a sixth place showing in a time of 12:32 as the Wolves finished three racers in the top ten. Durkin took ninth in a field of 41 skiers, with a time of 12:44, while junior Silas Solum finished tenth. Hohenstein

wasn't far behind, in 12th place in a time of 12:55.
For the girls, Blauch, Skustad, and Dunn all finished in the top 20. Blauch finished in 15th place with a time of 15:00, while Skustad was right behind in 16th in a time of 15:09. Dunn took 19th with a time of 15:30.

GRIZZ..Continued from page 1B

the score at 38-38 with a three ball, and it looked as if the first-half slugfest was picking up where it left off.
But over the next eight minutes the Grizzlies completely rewrote the script, locking down on defense and reeling off a 17-0 blitz with scores from Burnett, Panichi, and Talen Jarshaw to take a dominating 55-38 lead. The Raptors got back to within 11 at 71-60, but North Woods never relinquished control, picking up the 81-66 win.
'At halftime I said, 'Hey, it's zero-zero,''' Jugovich said. 'We don't win too many second halves so we have to kick it into gear. And right off the start in the second half we got

the lead and we never gave it up.'
Panichi topped the Grizzlies in points with 30. Burnett was right on his heels with 27, a total that puts the Grizzlies' leading scorer at the top of all scorers in all classes in the state with 229 points, eight ahead of Justin Courneya of 8A Win-E-Mac High School in Erskine.
'He's our guy and we feed off him,' Jugovich said of Burnett. 'The ball is going to go through him and things are going to happen. We've just got to make sure he keeps going to his strong points, staying out of foul trouble, playing good defense and grabbing boards, and his points are

going to come. We knew coming in that Louie was probably going to be our second leading scorer and he's been taking over that role.'
Northland
Burnett had a monster game on Friday at Northland, hitting for 50 points on 23-of-43 shooting and grabbing 20 rebounds as the Grizzlies crushed the Eagles 107-88.
Burnett found the mark from all over the court, feasting in the paint on slashing drives, short jumpers and putbacks, and canning jumpers from the free throw line and beyond the arc as the Grizzlies relentlessly pulled away

from the Eagles in the first half, leading 63-45 at the break. The game evened out in the second half, but the Eagles couldn't make any headway as the Grizzlies crossed the century mark for the first time this season.
'Jonah had 31 at half-time, and his effective field goal percentage was 56 percent,' Jugovich said. 'He took a lot of shots, but he shot well.'
Panichi also had a hot hand for the Grizzlies, pouring in 25 points, and Kalvyn Benner dropped in 11. As a team, the Grizzlies shot 47.5 percent, scoring 70 points in the paint.

Moose Lake/Willow River
Thursday's home matchup against Moose Lake/Willow River was a battle that presented the Grizzlies with their toughest physical matchup yet. The Rebels had the height, muscle and speed to turn this into a thoroughbred race, and ML/WR was the one who broke from the gate the fastest.
Panichi opened the scoring with a triple, but with the speedy Rebels closing down fast break opportunities the Grizzlies were challenged to score in their half-court sets. ML/WR effectively worked the ball inside and sprinted out

to an 18-7 lead. A North Woods timeout brought no solution, as the Rebels extended the lead to 15, 29-14. By the half, the Grizzlies had whittled the deficit to 35-25.
The Grizzlies did their best to fight back in the second half, but with teams so evenly matched North Woods could do little more than keep pace with the Rebels. The Grizzlies were down 17 with just over five minutes left in the game but trimmed the deficit to nine, 83-74, with 2:20 left. Two three-balls by Burnett and another by Jarshaw in the final 1:20 got North Woods to within seven at 89-82, but that's as close as they would get in the 92-85 loss.

HOCKEY..Continued from page 1B

action with back-to-back goals midway through the third and junior forward Brady Eaton added back-to-back insurance goals

at the 12 and 15-minute marks. Drew Marolt and sophomore Alex Merriman notched two assists on the night, while Richards,

junior Jace Huntbatch, and senior Wes Sandy each posted one assist.
The Wolves smoked the Blizzard's net all

evening, with 42 shots on goal to Burnett's 18.
Ely goalie Ben Leeson went the distance, notching 16 saves while allowing

two goals.
The Wolves were set to travel to Greenway Thursday, Dec. 21. They'll start a three-day home stand

beginning Wednesday, Dec. 27, facing Kittson County, St. Paul Johnson and Moose Lake respectively.

GRIZZLY GIRLS..Continued from page 1B

make the score 55-51. With 2:55 remaining, Cheney, the game's leading scorer with 23, picked up her fifth foul and headed to the bench, replaced by Corra Brodeen. Thirty seconds later, Koch was whistled for her fifth foul. ML/WR hit a pair of free throws to pull within one, 55-54, as

Dakota Schwarzenberger came in for Koch.
Barto hit the back end of a pair of charities to give North Woods a 56-54 edge, and then Brodeen rebounded her own miss and got the putback for a 58-54 lead. Barto upped the lead to five with another free throw, but the Rebels weren't

finished, scoring a basket and a pair of charities to pull within one, 59-58. A North Woods turnover gave the Rebels a shot at the lead, but they missed, and Barto was fouled on the rebound with 16 seconds remaining. Barto drained the first free throw, missed the second, and then got called for a

blocking foul. The Rebels' Madison Wasche had a chance to send the game to a second overtime with a pair of free throws, but she missed both, and North Woods ran out the clock for the 60-58 win.
It was a big night for Barto, who scored 15 to go with Cheney's 23

for the Grizzlies. North Woods knocked down 35 percent of their shots from two-point range while connecting on only one three-pointer all night. The Grizzlies went to the charity stripe 39 times, connecting on 19. Their five-point edge in free throws was enough to pull out the win.

The win sends the Grizzlies into the winter break with a 4-2 record. They'll play in a tournament at Aitkin on Dec. 27-28, and start the new year with a rivalry game at Ely on Thursday, Jan. 4.

WOLVES..Continued from page 1B

every touch and every basket. Zoe Mackenzie and Amelia Penke did great jobs guarding Baumgard.'
Both sides struggled to put points on the board in the first half. The Wolves went to the break, up 25-18 in a contest that was still anyone's game, particularly against the Bluestreaks who came into Monday's contest at 5-1.
But LaTourell came out on fire in the second half, pouring in 20 points in the stanza for a game-high 28 points on the night. Senior Sarah Visser added 17 points for the game, ten of them in the second half as the Wolves outpaced Chisholm 39-18 down the stretch. Senior Hannah Penke also made it to double digits with 11 points in the game. 'It was that big second half that propelled us to a big win,' said Gantt.
The Wolves shot over 50 percent from two-point range and notched 20 steals. 'We turned it over a little too much at times but, overall, it was a great home win against

a tough team,' said Gantt.
Monday's win came on the heels of a disappointing 61-51 loss to 6-2 Cromwell last Friday. 'We just had too many turnovers in the first half,' said Gantt. It showed on the board as the Wolves headed into the break down by 17. While the Wolves whittled down the gap in the second half, a full comeback remained elusive. 'We played pretty decent defense all night, and the second half was much better offensively,' said Gantt. 'We stopped turning it over and took care of the ball. Overall, it was a game we can look back on and say, 'We can compete and even beat the best teams when we take care of the ball and play defense.'
Visser and LaTourell both scored 14 points on the night.
The Wolves were set to host St. Augustine Preparatory on Thursday. They'll host their annual holiday tournament Dec. 27-29.

Advertisement for 'Memories of the Early Days' book. Includes a gold seal 'Back By Popular Demand!', a photograph of a boat on Lake Vermilion, and a 'BOOK ORDER FORM' with fields for name, address, city, state, zip code, tel. #, credit card info, and billing address. Total price is \$39.95.

Obituaries and Death Notices



Robert C. Wilson
 Robert "Bob" Clinton Wilson, 89, of Lake Vermilion, loving husband, father and grandfather, passed away peacefully in his sleep on Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023. Funeral services were held on Wednesday, Dec. 20 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tower. Pastor Richard Blood officiated. Interment will take place in Forest Hill Cemetery in Duluth at a later date. Memorials are preferred and may be directed to Vermilion Lake Association, PO Box 236, Cook, MN 55723. Family services provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower.
 Bob was born on Oct. 25, 1934, in Minneapolis, the only child of Clinton "Ross" and Beda Aronson Wilson. He graduated from Robbinsdale High School where he played basketball and trumpet. He went on to earn an electronics degree from the Dunwoody Institute of Technology. Bob married Joan Johnson on June 20, 1959, and together they had two boys, Scott and Mark. After graduating from Dunwoody, Bob started his career with AT&T in electronics and progressed to sales, marketing and management. His career with AT&T took him and his family from Minneapolis to

Kansas City, the Bay area of California, and finally New Jersey, where he stayed with AT&T until his retirement in 1989.

No matter where Bob lived, his heart was always at Lake Vermilion. He had family on the lake, and during his childhood, he vacationed with his parents at their cabin. He carried on this tradition with his own boys. After retiring at age 55, he finally built his dream home on the lake in 1991, where he lived until he died. He enjoyed woodworking, built four wood boats, and completed most of the woodwork on his dream home. After Bob retired, he gave much of his time to the Vermilion Lake Association by serving as treasurer, pioneering the invasive species program, working on the shore lunch sites and more.

Bob also volunteered at St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower as treasurer and board member. Bob enjoyed singing, and sang with a barber shop chorus, the church choir, and the Chorales of Virginia. He also enjoyed driving and working on his 1968 Volvo P1800S and attending car events throughout the country.

Bob is survived by his wife of 64 years, Joan; son, Scott (Laura); daughter-in-law, Jill; and granddaughter, Leah Peterson. He will be greatly missed by all.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and son, Mark.

Dane C. Francis

Dane Clark Francis, 62, of Cook, passed away on Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023. A private interment will be held at a later date. Arrangements are with

Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.



Joyce L. Rude

Joyce L. Rude, 90, of Virginia, formerly of Silverdale, passed away on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023, at Waterview Pines Nursing Home in Virginia. A graveside service will be held in the spring at Celine Cemetery. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

Joyce was born on Aug. 21, 1933, in Alango Township, to William and Elvi Maki Laine and graduated from Alango High School in 1951. On Nov. 14, 1953, she married Nels Rude in Cook and they made their home in Silverdale. Joyce was Secretary of the Silverdale Farmers Club for 26 years, former President and member of the Cook VFW Auxiliary, and a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Virginia where she served on the church council. Joyce and Nels also ran Rude Lumber and Feed in Cook for 13 years.

Joyce is survived by her children, JoNell (Daniel) O'Neil of St. Paul and Chris Rude of Virginia; sister, Susan Donnell of Prescott, Ariz.; numerous nieces, nephews and cousins; and sister-in-law, Beverly Laine of Mesa, Ariz.

She was preceded in death by her parents, William and Elvi Laine; husband, Nels in 1999; brother, William Laine in 2013; and brother-in-law, Phillip Donnell.

Leonard R. Raati IV

Leonard Raymond Raati IV, 52, longtime resident of Ely, and member of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, died on Friday, Dec. 15, 2023, in his home. A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 22 at the Legacy Church in Virginia. Pastor Gene Sherrod will be the officiant. Inurnment will be at a later date in the Field Township Cemetery. Family services are provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

Leonard is survived by his parents, Leonard and Donna Raati of Angora; children, Leonard Raati V of Ely, Mercedes Tibbetts of Virginia and Kyle (Lindsey) Russ of Ely; siblings, Amanda Skot, Carla (Craig) Fiedor, Edward (Ashley) Raati, Alberta (Paul) Warwas, Veronica Johnson and Ana (Josh) Black; six grandchildren; former wife, Denise Slaughter of Ely; maternal grandmother, Joan Luhta of Ely; and numerous nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends.

Donna L. Morrison

Donna L. Kallio Morrison, 72, of Hibbing, originally of Angora, died on Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023, at Heritage Manor in Chisholm. A gathering of family and friends was held on Tuesday, Dec. 19 at Dougherty Funeral Home of Hibbing. Spring interment will be in Hill-

side Cemetery in Angora.

She is survived by her children, Charlene (Joe) Johnson and Craig Morrison, both of Hibbing; siblings, Donald (Peggy) Kallio of Washington, Douglas Kallio of Mt. Iron and Delores Kallio of Buhl; granddaughter, Rachael Johnson; and many nieces and nephews.

Dennis E. Imberg

Dennis Eugene Imberg, 77, of Tower, passed away on Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023, at Essentia Health in Virginia after a courageous eight-year battle with cancer. Visitation will be held at 10 a.m. followed by an 11 a.m. celebration of life on Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024, at Range Funeral Home in Virginia. Private inurnment will follow at Lakeside Cemetery in Biwabik. Arrangements are with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Bonnie; daughters, Heather Imberg and Tani (Jim) Reilly; grandchildren, Jared, Austin, Kiera and Teagan; sister, Patricia (Joe) Kovich; nephews, Jay and Troy; and numerous family members and friends.

Wesley Weisinger

Wesley Weisinger, 46, of Winton, passed away at his residence on Friday, Dec. 15, 2023, surrounded by his loving family after a courageous battle with cancer. A celebration of life will be held from 1-4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 30 at Veterans on the Lake in Ely. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

The family would like to thank Jake Mather for always being there

for Wesley; the staff at Fresenius Dialysis Unit in Eveleth; Dr. Smith of Essentia in Virginia; Dr. Erik Wendland, Nephrologist; all the other many doctors and nurses who helped Wesley in the last 37 years; Essentia East Range Hospice; Dr. Keith Peterson and Jo who made things so much easier during the last nine weeks of his life.

He is survived by his father, Neil (Sheila); mother, Barbara; siblings, Jennifer (Jason), Stacy (Allan) and Darrin (Denton); nieces, Reagan, Addison, Eden, Avary and Amiah; brothers-in-law, Jeremiah and Aaron; step-sister, Jessica (Cody) and their kids Jeffery, Dominic and Elliana; stepbrothers, John (Alyssa) and their kids Hailey, Ryder and Johnny, Austin and his son James, and Ashton; and many aunts, uncles and cousins.

Anna F. Crockett

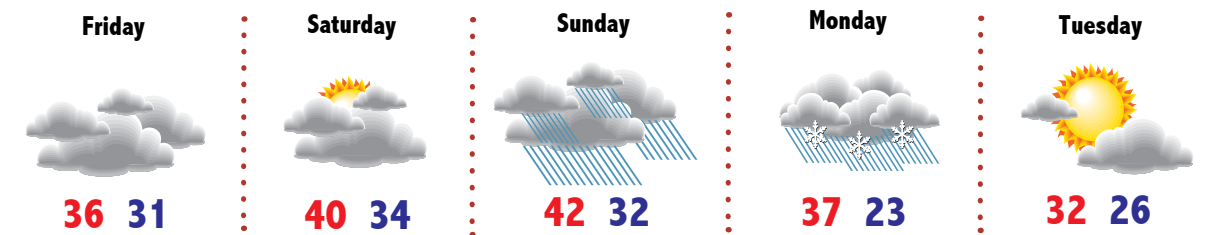
Anna Faye Crockett, 84, of Ely, passed away at her home on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

Nathan E. Plunkett

Nathan E. Plunkett, 52, of Alango, passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2023, at Essentia Health Virginia Hospital. Funeral arrangements are pending with Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather



Location	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.
Ely	21	14	0.00	
Emb.	22	16	0.05	
Cook	21	16	0.00	
Orr	25	16	0.00	
Tower	21	15	0.00	

Have A Sparkly Happy Holiday!
 from NELSON'S RESORT



Winning Artist • Stella Pliml
 GRADE 5

Extending Holiday Good Cheer
 from Northwoods True Value



Winning Artist • Brooklyn Gabrielson
 GRADE 1

Cozy Holiday Wishes To You!
 from Park State Bank



Winning Artist • Meika Klander
 Grade 1

Let All The Earth Enjoy The New Year!
 from Vermilion Classic Boatworks



Artist • Raven Rettke
 GRADE 1

Christmas Is A Wonderous Time!
 from Waschke Family Chevrolet-Cook



Winning Artist • Ainsley Judnick
 GRADE 1

Health & Prosperity In The New Year!
 from Your Boat Club



Artist • Rosealie Drift
 GRADE 2

God Bless You All This Christmas
 from Vermilion Mini Storage



Winning Artist • Dylan Crego
 GRADE 5



Minnesota North College

Wishing You Holiday Joy!

1900 E. Camp St, Ely
1-888-223-8068

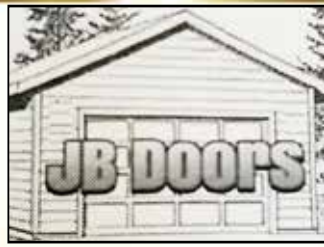
HAPPY HOLIDAYS

FOREST CONCRETE



Extending Season's Greetings!

1715 E Sheridan St, Ely
218-365-4030



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

218-235-0372 • Babbitt, MN
• Serving Northern Minnesota •

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*from these fine
local businesses*



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

105 N. Central Ave., Ely
218-365-6745 • 800-223-6565



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

218-365-4000 • 240 W Sheridan St, Ely



Lossing's Power Sports
Lossing Building Center

www.lossings.com
Babbitt, MN

Wishing your family a
Merry Christmas!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year
from Us to You!



Stores in: Cook, Tower, Ely,
Babbitt and Silver Bay



Merry Christmas
from us to YOU!

11 N Central Ave, Ely
218-365-2333

MERRY CHRISTMAS
FROM ALL OF US!

ELY AUTO
SERVICES



1614 E. Harvey St, Ely • 218-365-5994

Joe's Marine &
Repair

Merry Christmas
To You!

25 W. Chapman St., Ely
218-365-6264

MERRY CHRISTMAS
& HAPPY NEW YEAR!

FROM ALL OF
THE MERRY MUKLUK MAKERS!!

FITTINGS & SALES AT THE FACTORY
CALL 218-365-6634 FOR APPT!

OPEN 9-5 • CLOSED CHRISTMAS & NEW YEARS
MUKLUKS.COM

Wintergreen
Dogsled Lodge

Season's Greetings!

1101 Ring Rock Road, Ely, MN 55731
218-349-6128



BAIT & GEAR
GUIDED TRIPS
ICE HOUSE RENTAL

ArrowheadOutdoorsElyMN.com

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

D & D
ACCOUNTING

747 E SHERIDAN, ELY
218-365-4853

HAPPY HOLIDAYS



February 1-11, 2024



Season's Greetings
from the crew at Gracies!

22 W Sheridan St., Ely • 218-365-7644

Season's Greetings from...



JERRY FINK

218-343-1318 • 1296 Hematite Blvd, Ely

EST. 1951
ELY SURPLUS
and Outdoor

We Wish You A
Merry Christmas and
A Happy New Year!

129 N Central, Ely MN • 218-365-4653

MEALEY'S



Gift & Sauna Shop
124 N. Central Ave., Ely • 218-365-3639
Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

On the
Snowmobile
Trail System!

Vermilion
Park Inn

Season's Greetings from Us to You!

West of Ely at 30 Center St, Soudan • 218-753-2333
WINTER RATES • SPECIAL EVENTS

WISHING YOU
Abundant Health & Happiness
Now & In The Coming Year



145 W Camp St, Ely • 218-365-6555



110 N 2nd Ave. W, Ely MN
218-235-6106

Mike & Kathy Brandau
& the Crew from
Brandau Plumbing & Heating
....wish all our customers, old & new,
a "Very Blessed Christmas."

1111 Hwy. 169
Ely, MN
218-365-3985



RANGE COOPERATIVES, INC



Ely • 365-6765
Babbitt • 827-3618
Virginia • 741-7393

Merry Christmas
from all of us!



WISHING YOU
Safe & Healthy
Holidays!

Boundary Waters
Care Center

200 W Conan St, Ely • 218-365-8045

Wintergreen
NORTHERN WEAR

Happy Holidays
from all of us.

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wintergreennorthernwear.com
218-365-6602



SEASON'S GREETINGS!

705 Main Street • Tower, MN
vermilionculturalcenter.org

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

*from these fine
local businesses*



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Ely, MN
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Open Tu-Fri 11-5; Sat 11-4;
Closed Sun, Mon

TIM'S AUTO
SEASON'S GREETINGS!

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218-365-3291

Ely Winton Historical Society

MERRY CHRISTMAS!
1900 E CAMP ST, ELY MN
218-365-3226

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Lossing's Power Sports
Lossing Building Center
www.lossings.com
Babbitt, MN
Wishing your family a Merry Christmas!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from Us to You!
ZUP'S
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Voltz TECHNOLOGIES
Merry Christmas from all of us!
410 E Sheridan St, Ely
218-365-7783

Joe's Marine & Repair
Merry Christmas To You!
25 W. Chapman St., Ely
218-365-6264

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!
FROM ALL OF THE MERRY MUKLUK MAKERS!!
FITTINGS & SALES AT THE FACTORY
CALL 218-365-6634 FOR APPT!
OPEN 9-5 • CLOSED CHRISTMAS & NEW YEARS
MUKLUKS.COM

INSULA
Season's Greetings from Us to You!
218.365.4855
145 E. SHERIDAN ST, ELY MN

MIKE'S LIQUOR

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401 E. SHERIDAN ST., ELY • 218-365-5087

D & D ACCOUNTING
747 E SHERIDAN, ELY
218-365-4853
HAPPY HOLIDAYS

February 1-11, 2024

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102 E Sheridan St, Ely • 218-365-6121

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Women's Wilderness Discovery
Great info on our website!
429 E Sheridan St., Ely • 218-235-1994

ELY SURPLUS and Outdoor
EST. 1951
We Wish You A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!
129 N Central, Ely MN • 218-365-4653

MEALEY'S

Gift & Sauna Shop
124 N. Central Ave., Ely • 218-365-3639
Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

EBCH
Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital
Wishing you safe & healthy holidays
218-365-3271
24 HR. EMERGENCY ROOM

MERRY CHRISTMAS from The Cabin!

Hrs: Tue-Sat 7 AM-2 PM
Closed Dec. 24-25 for the Holiday
1340 E Sheridan, Ely • 218-235-4034

CANOEONNN
110 N 2nd Ave. W, Ely MN
218-235-6106

Mike & Kathy Brandau & the Crew from Brandau Plumbing & Heating
....wish all our customers, old & new, a "Very Blessed Christmas."
1111 Hwy. 169 Ely, MN
218-365-3985

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Marina • Boat Rentals
Evergreen Restaurant • Antlers Lounge on Shagawa Lake
GRAND ELY LODGE
RESORT & EVENT CENTER
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Dining 218-365-6875

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545 E. Sheridan St., Ely 218-365-5256

Wintergreen NORTHERN WEAR
Happy Holidays from all of us.
205 E Sheridan St, Ely
wintergreennorthernwear.com
218-365-6602

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vermillionculturalcenter.org

Blue Loon
GALLERY & BOUTIQUE
Let's Have A Blue Christmas!
6 E. Sheridan St., Ely
218-235-6184

ACE
Happy Holidays!
Merhar's Ace Hardware
48 E. Chapman St. Ely
218-365-3129
Happy Holidays!

EMPLOYMENT

OPENINGS



Vermilion Country School (VCS) is seeking applicants for the following positions:

Vermilion Country is a project based learning school seeking to expand our staffing. We are adding new positions! Currently open for interview on a rolling basis - call 218-248-2485 or email info@vermilioncountry.org for more information:

Licensed Teaching positions grades 7-12(B.A. or teaching license required): Literature/Language Arts &/or Social Studies (Licensed) 40K-54K DOE Science &/or Math Teacher (Licensed) 40K-54K DOE

Student Support and Community positions (no education license required) Benefits Eligible: Special Education Assistant /para(Special Education) (Hourly \$17.50 - 24.50/HR +) Student Success Counselor (salary) (\$40K annual salary) Student Success Program Specialist (hourly \$24-30/hr+ DOE)

Part Time: American Indian Programs Liaison & Community Organizer (Hourly \$24-30/hr+ DOE) Part time 4-8 hours per week Transportation Driver (Van) 5-20 hours per week. Hourly rate DOE Transportation Driver (Class C School Bus) 5-20 hours per week. Hourly rate DOE

For inquiries, contact info@vermilioncountry.org and/or 218-248-2485



COME JOIN OUR TEAM! Waschke Family Chevrolet is currently seeking an Auto Body Technician and an Automotive Detailer. Stop in and apply in person at 126 N Hwy. 53, Cook, or inquire by phone at 218-666-5901, or send resume to Dgrecinger@waschke.com.

WANTED!

Waschke Family Chevrolet is currently seeking an A/B technician. Prefer GM Certified but will train. Base pay plus incentives! Stop in and apply in person at 126 N Hwy. 53, Cook, or inquire by phone at 218-666-5901, or send resume to Dgrecinger@waschke.com.

Listening Point Foundation: Hiring Operations Manager

The Listening Point Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization located in Ely, Minnesota on the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), where author Sigurd F. Olson lived and worked.

The Foundation is dedicated to preserving the properties that inspired Olson and advancing his wilderness philosophy in order to foster people's connection to wild places and inspire them to find their own listening point. The Foundation's work focuses on providing opportunities to experience the wonder of Listening Point and carry forward the wilderness experiences exemplified by the life and works of Olson and preserving the natural and historic integrity of Listening Point, Olson's Writing Shack, and Gusty Island on Burntside Lake in Ely, MN.

The Listening Point Foundation is seeking an Operations Manager to help guide the organization through an exciting time of growth, transition, and opportunity for our organization, and to advance our mission to connect people with wild places and the work of Olson. We seek an energetic and organized individual who will work closely and collaboratively with our Executive Director to maintain efficient operations of the Foundation.

Location: Ely, MN Hours: 20 hours/week Wage: \$17.00/hour with opportunity to raise rate commensurate with experience

Application/Timeline Application information can be found on our website: listeningpointfoundation.org.

To apply, submit a cover letter and resume to board@listeningpointfoundation.org. Candidates invited for an interview will be asked to provide three professional references. Review of applications will begin on January 3, 2024, and will be ongoing until the position is filled.

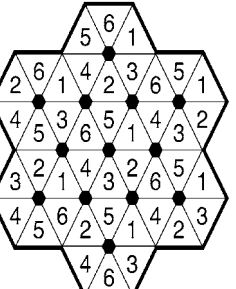
CryptoQuip

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

Clue: I equals S

V L J D Y M W N I G U N O T I V L N D P P N G D G M A N N T I H P I H F P H U H S D P G ? A M S D B I M G L M H Y V N Y T H I B I B D O O J W D Y F H P D O .

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PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF TOWER Sealed Bid - 2004 Volkswagen Passat 1.8L Turbo, A/C and Heat Not Working. Minimum Bid \$2,500 Contact City Hall at 218-753-4070 Bid Closing: 1/4/2024 at 4:00 PM.

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 15 & 22, 2023

CITY OF TOWER JOB POSTING Seasonal Maintenance Worker

\$12-\$15/hr * Mowing, Snow Removal, Etc. Must be able to lift 50 lbs. For full job description and to apply, visit www.cityoftower.com/positions-available.

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 15 & 22, 2023

FILING NOTICE GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

MN 205.16, subd 4. Affidavits of candidacy may be filed with the Town Clerk during regular office hours at the Town Hall from January 02, 2024 to January 16, 2024. These dates are the first day and the last day to file. Office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10 am to 2 pm. Filing fee is \$2.00

This March election will be for: Supervisor Position 3 - 3 year term Supervisor Position 5 - 3 year term Clerk Position - 2 year term

The Greenwood Town Hall office will have extended hours the last filing day - January 16, 2024 from 2 pm to 5 pm.

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 15 & 22, 2023

Vermilion Lake Township Notice of Filings

Filings for the following offices will open on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 and close on Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

Supervisor 3-year term Clerk. . . . 2-year term

Filing fee: \$2.00

Candidates: File Affidavit of Candidacy by appointment only at the CLERK'S OFFICE, 6703 Wahlsten Rd. The clerk's office will be open the last day of filing from 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. Call 218-749-2902 and leave a message.

Election will be held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 Crystal Alaspa, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 22 & 29, 2023

Notice of Election MORCOM TOWNSHIP State of Minnesota, County of St. Louis

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that we will hold a township election on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at the Bear River School.

Offices open for election: 1 Supervisor, 3 year term 1 Clerk, 2 year term

Filing period opens on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, and closes on Tuesday, January 16, 2024. Contact Sasha Lehto, at 218-471-7776 to make an appointment to file. Open office hours will be held from 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 12059 Hwy. 22, Cook, MN 55723 (Bear River Community Center/School) for filing as well.

Sasha Lehto, Town Clerk Morcom Township 218-471-7776

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 22 & 29, 2023

CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

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

SL QPBSIX SJ PIA KPQMD PF PKK, SF'J P KPQMD ML KMUV. P KMUV FNPFXV FJ YPJJVG LDMC XVIVDPFMSI FM XVIVDPFMSI. - DVXSIP QDVFF

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Answers

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

LEIDING TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF FILINGS

Filings for the following offices open on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, through Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 5 p.m. for the offices of:

1 Supervisor: 3-year term 1 Clerk: 2-year term

Filing fee is \$2.

File the Affidavit of Candidacy at Clerk's Office. Please call 218-355-0163 (cell) for the clerk's office hours.

Marie Milan, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 15 & 22, 2023

Notice of Sale

This is legal notice of the sale of a 2020 Ram 1500 with a Possessory Lien, for mechanical work and storage, in the minimum amount of \$8,260.77.

Sale of this vehicle is on January 15, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at Hibbing Chrysler Center, 1321 E. 39th Street, Hibbing, MN. The owners and lienholder have been notified by certified mail.

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 22, 29, 2023 and Jan. 12, 2024

Up For Bids 2015 GMC Sierra 1500 SLT 5.3 V-8 motor 101,109 original miles Crew cab Moonroof Leather Seats Bids will be accepted until Friday, December 29, 2023.

Vehicle can be viewed at Embarrass Vermillion FCU during normal business hours, 600 W 3rd Ave N, Aurora, MN.

We reserve the right to accept or reject any and all bids. Item is being sold "as-is" with no warranty, expressed or implied.

Bids can be submitted to any of our three branches in Aurora, Embarrass, or Tower.

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 15, 22 & 29, 2023

Subscribe to the TIMBERJAY! Call 218-753-2950



King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 TiVo precursor 4 Wide 9 America's uncle 12 Consume 13 Heart line 14 La-la lead-in 15 Gym machine 17 And so on (Abbr.) 18 Nabokov novel 19 Bowling lanes 21 Packs tightly 24 Go yachting 25 Yale grad 26 Author Umberto 28 Aegean island 31 Building wings 33 Farm female 35 Steakhouse order 36 Rice recipe 38 PC key 40 Chaney of horror films 41 First lady of scat 43 Bistro furniture 45 Telepathic 47 Sushi choice 48 Hostel 49 Heavy burden 54 Memo letters 55 Deadly virus

11x11 crossword grid with numbers 1-59.

- 56 Schlep 57 Air safety org. 58 Philly hoopster 59 Director Lee 10 Bohemian 11 Apple computers 16 Small batteries 20 Tale teller 21 Army transport 22 "That's - know" 23 1,000-year spans 27 Have debts 29 Bassoon's kin 30 Taxpayer IDs 32 Pretzel topper 34 Getty of "The Golden Girls" 37 Fireplace flickerers 39 Salad type 42 Suspect's excuse 44 Crunchy sandwich 45 Peeve 46 "May It Be" singer 50 Bagel topper 51 Slangy suffix 52 Sister 53 Silly Putty container

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

9x9 Sudoku grid with some numbers pre-filled.

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.

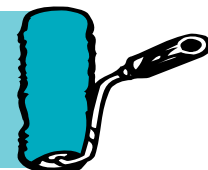
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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HOME IMPROVEMENT GUIDE



Cook Building Center Wishes You...

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

Closed December 25 and January 1



Phone/Fax: 218.666.5344
Hours: Mon-Fri: 7-5, Closed Wknds
info@cookbuildingcenter.com

Merry Christmas
from all of us to all of you!

CLOSED
Christmas: Dec. 23-26
New Years: Dec. 30-Jan. 2

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M-F: 8 AM-5 PM; Sat: 8 AM-Noon

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Heating, Air Conditioning, Refrigeration
Repair & Install

Steve Tekautz
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Soudan, MN 55782
(We accept credit cards)

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- ARCHITECTURAL SHINGLES

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Karl (612) 418-8953

Licensed • Insured BC# 785662
VermillionRoofing.com | VermillionRoofing@gmail.com

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Edwards & Son Maintenance

Let Us Make Your Project Easier!

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morganedwards809@gmail.com

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- Road Building, Land Clearing, Basement, Demolition
- Digging, Dozing, Hauling
- Sand, Gravel, Crushed Rock, Black Dirt

Call for an estimate • 218-365-4220
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jschulze.excavating2@gmail.com

A Christmas Wish for our customers and friends

Closed December 22-25 for Christmas

FLOOR to CEILING
INTERIOR DESIGN SHOWROOM

floortoceiling.com/virginia | Hours: 8-5:30 M-F

EMPLOYMENT

mn
DEPARTMENT OF IRON RANGE RESOURCES & REHABILITATION

**Research Analyst
Research Analysis Specialist
Permanent, Full-Time**

As the Research Analyst for the Community Development Division, the incumbent will have the opportunity to use critical thinking skills to connect small details with the big picture in their daily work and for the public. The incumbent in this position analyzes and interprets data, tracks trends and studies statistical and financial information to inform agency decisions on growing and sustaining communities and developing businesses in the Taconite Assistance Area. Analyses will include a variety of data and information to better understand the relationship between local and macro-economic trends, labor and workforce trends, emerging technologies and industries, transportation, and other key factors. Additionally, the incumbent will perform community, regional, programmatic, industry, economic and demographic research.

This position is located in Eveleth, MN with the eligibility for a mixture of in office and telework.

Learn more and apply online at mn.gov/careers
Job ID: 72076

Application deadline: January 3, 2024

GREAT BENEFITS PACKAGE! Full time positions are eligible for low-cost medical and dental insurance, employer-paid life insurance, short- and long-term disability, pre-tax flexible spending accounts, retirement plan, tax-deferred compensation, sick leave, paid personal days.

AA/EOE, Veteran Friendly

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 15, 22 & 29, 2023

Have A Joyous Holiday Season!
from Anderson Barging, Inc.

Winning Artist • Sherrie Peters
Grade 4

Enjoy Magical Christmas Trees!
from BAUMAN'S FUNERAL HOME

Winning Artist • Dante Littlewolf
Kindergarten

Ho Ho Ho...It's Christmas!
from Lamma Manufacturing

Winning Artist • Ayva Anderson
Grade 3

Happy Holidays To You!
from Cook VFW

Winning Artist • Joe Schrecengost
Grade 3

"Ho..Ho..Ho" from Santa and Us!
Tower's Gathering Gallery and Pike River Products

Artist • Cecelia Majerle
Grade 3