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The **TIMBERJAY**



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ENTREPRENEURS

Ely mitten maker has things in hand

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- Ely's fabled outdoors has spawned yet another entrepreneur and his cold weather apparel has already found a home at McMurdo Station in Antarctica and will be worn in the upcoming Iditarod sled dog race in Alaska, which gets underway a week from Saturday.

Ozzie Reif is a tall,

soft-spoken Elyite who started the Ely Mitten Project two winters ago. Reif made the transition to full-time in December after two years of making prototype mittens and working on his start-up part-time. Reif currently makes all the mittens himself, which he sells through his Etsy website and at Piragis Northwoods Company in Ely. As a small one-man shop, Reif doesn't have a big advertising

budget, relying on word-of-mouth and his social media outreach on Facebook and Instagram.

The mittens

Reif got his start making mittens for scouting. "Two years ago this winter, me and a friend made 300 pairs of mittens for the Boy Scouts," Reif said, referring to the local Northern Tier Boy Scout Camp, which does winter expeditions.

Seeing an opportunity, Reif took advantage of the free business start-up consulting available through the Northland Small Business Development Center in Duluth. "They helped me set up an LLC and made sure I set up a business legally," Reif explained.

Then he went through 19 prototypes before settling on

See...MITTENS pg. 10



HOUSING

TEDA OKs land sale for development on Marjo site

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER— The Tower Economic Development Authority has approved a development agreement that calls for the creation of the largest single residential development in the city's history. The agreement, between TEDA and Marjo RE LLC, was approved by the TEDA board at a special meeting last week. It includes the purchase of 5.02-acres of land along Marina Drive slated for development of quad homes. The property will also provide access to the adjacent 18-acre parcel now owned by Your Boat Club and Marjo RE principals Luke Kujawa and Michael Jellish.

The sale, set to close by May 31, would establish a combined 23-acre site that could eventually contain as many as 55 housing units, a combination of single-family homes, multi-unit

See...AGREEMENT pg. 9

ELECTION

Who's who in the presidential primary zoo?

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- With little fanfare, absentee early voting for Minnesota's March 5 Super Tuesday presidential primary opened on Friday, Jan. 19, with a total of 19 candidates vying for delegates for the state's three major political parties – Republican, Democrat-Farmer-Labor, and Legal Marijuana Now.

As voter registration in Minnesota does not include designation of political party affiliation, the presidential primary offers the opportunity for parties to more clearly identify their membership bases. Each party

See...PRIMARY pg. 9



SELF HELP

DIY fire and rescue

Embarrass Fire Department builds a rescue vehicle from scratch

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

EMBARRASS- Most North Country residents are used to doing things themselves, and that attitude and experience proved essential for the Embarrass Fire Department, which recently built its own fire truck as a do-it-yourself project. The new rig was on

display at the community's winter festival this past weekend, which went on despite this year's lack of winter weather.

The truck, now called Rescue 4, is known as a medium wet rescue vehicle, although it's designed for multiple uses. It includes an 8,000-

See...TRUCK pg. 9

Above: Embarrass Fire Chief Tom Martin and firefighter Eric Garman display photos of the creation of their new fire truck at the recent winter festival at Timber Hall. Right: The new truck on display.

photos by J. Summit



CONSPIRACY THEORIES

"2000 Mules" group admits it has no evidence

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— The group behind a 2022 film viewed by hundreds of North Country residents and used as a campaign kick-off by GOP Rep. Roger Skraba, has admitted to a Georgia judge that it has no evidence to back up its claims of voter fraud.

The group, known as "True the Vote," provided the basis for the now widely debunked film "2000 Mules," which aired multiple times at the Historic State Theater in Ely at the

Right: Roger Skraba (in jersey) talks to a voter during the 2022 showing of "2000 Mules," which falsely claimed to show evidence of systematic voter fraud in the 2020 election. Skraba used the film as a campaign kickoff event in 2022.

file photo

behest of then-candidate Skraba. The film, produced by Dinesh D'Souza, a right-wing provocateur, alleged that thousands of "mules" stuffed drop-off

See...SKRABA pg. 9



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Community notices

Cook Thrift Shop returns to regular hours

COOK - Starting Feb. 29, the thrift shop will resume regular hours. It will be open for shopping every Thursday, Friday, and the second and fourth Saturdays of the month. Shop hours are 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., and donations are welcome during these hours, as well as on Mondays and Wednesdays from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Please, do not leave donations outside if there are no workers there to receive them. For more information and updates, visit Cook Area Healthcare Auxiliary Thrift Shop on Facebook.

Local employers encouraged to sign up for upcoming job fair(s)

ELY- Employer sign-ups are now open for the Northforce Program job fair in Ely on April 16, which will be at the Vermilion Campus of Minnesota North College. This is one of four job fairs that the Northforce Program is holding at different Minnesota North College campuses in April.

Each job fair will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The other campuses hosting job fairs are Hibbing, Itasca, and Rainy River. Interested employers should contact Northspan Consultants' Northforce Program Manager, Ali Bilden Camps, at 218-481-7737 or acamps@northspan.org. Registration for one job fair is \$50. Registration for all four is \$100.

EMPOWER to meet at senior center Feb. 26

ELY - EMPOWER, a progressive women's group, will meet on Monday, Feb. 26 at 6 p.m. at the Ely Senior Center located at 27 S 1st Ave. E. The meeting will feature an "End of Life" panel discussion.

You must be an EMPOWER member to attend the meeting. To become a member mail a \$25 check for annual dues, payable to EMPOWER to PO Box 14, Ely, MN 55731 or contact Janine at pattenj82@gmail.com. EMPOWER welcomes all individuals who self-identify as women.

ERFA to host Healthcare Appreciation Pancake Breakfast Saturday, March 2

EMBARRASS - The Embarrass Region Fair Association invites all to head to Timber Hall located at 4855 Highway 21 on March 2 from 8-11 a.m., for all-you-can-eat pancakes, choice of ham or sausage links, fruit cup, juice, and a bottomless cup of coffee. Cost for breakfast is \$7 for adults, children (6-10 years) \$4, and under 5 years free. In appreciation of healthcare workers, they eat free.

After breakfast, give the gift of life by donating blood at the Memorial Blood Centers bloodmobile. Visit mbc.org/iDonate to pre-register and then wrap up the morning by purchasing Girl Scout Cookies from Hoyt Lakes Girl Scout Troop 1807. This is also your last chance to take home donated books and puzzles.

Spring Gardening Spectacular in Mt. Iron

MT. IRON- St. Louis County Extension will be conducting a gardening seminar in Mt. Iron March 28. This year's Spring Gardening Spectacular will start by featuring a presentation entitled, "Gardening while Embracing Weather Extremes." The rest of the day will consist of a variety of timely topics including "Growing Great Garlic," "Growing Cut Flowers," "Soil Testing and Fertility," "Growing the Minnesota Blueberries," "Exceptional Tomato and Pepper Varieties," "Growing Onions in the Northland," "Selecting Hardy Zone 3 Apples," and "Planting, Pruning, and Protecting Apples." Resource materials developed by University of Minnesota Extension faculty and other horticulture professionals are included in the registration. The cost of the program is \$30, but there is an "early bird" registration of \$20 for those who register by February 25.

The program will be held at the Mt. Iron Community Center, located at 8586 Enterprise Drive S. Registration opens at 9 a.m. and program starts at 9:45 a.m. The day's registration fee covers reference materials, hot lunch, and refreshments. For more information and to register contact z.umn.edu/SLCgarden or call 218-749-7120.

EXPERTS IN SONG

Renowned Concordia Choir touring to Virginia Feb. 24

VIRGINIA— Conductor Michael Culleton will bring The Concordia Choir from Moorhead, Minn., to perform in Virginia, at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 24, at Rock Ridge High School. Tickets are available at ConcordiaTickets.com or at the door.

The concert is part of the choir's 17-day, 2024 national tour of the northwest United States. The tour includes performances in Minneapolis, St. Cloud, and Virginia, Minn.; Bismarck and Grand Forks, N.D.; Billings, Bozeman, and Missoula, Mont.; Seattle, Spokane, and Tacoma, Wash.; Eugene, Medford, and Portland, Ore.; Fresno, Sacramento, and San Francisco, Calif.; concluding with a home concert in Moorhead.

The program will contain a wide variety of choral works ranging from baroque to contemporary and will include works by J.S. Bach, William Dawson, Caroline Shaw, René Clausen, and more and will include a set of works from Craig Hella Johnson's "Considering Matthew Shepard."

The Concordia Choir



Concordia Choir performances offer listeners an experience of choral music at its best.

was recently listed as No. 8 on College Rank's list of Most Impressive College Choirs. Touring nationally and internationally since 1920, the choir has performed in nearly every major hall in the United States including Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Kennedy Center. In May of 2022, the choir toured internationally to Italy and performed in St. Peter's Basilica.

Renowned conductor Tim Seelig says this of The Concordia Choir: "This is why we love cho-

ral singing. The chorus is simply flawless. Do yourself a favor by listening!"

Culleton, a 1998 Concordia College graduate, was named director of choral activities in 2020, appointed conductor of The Concordia Choir, and named the Paul J. and Eleanor Christiansen Chair of Choral Music succeeding Dr. René Clausen who retired after 34 years of service. Culleton is also the artistic director of the Emmy-winning Concordia Christmas Concerts seen by audiences

of 12,000 each year. He teaches vocal music education and church music courses, serves as campus supervisor for student teachers, and advises the student chapter of the American Choral Directors Association.

Concordia College is a four-year liberal arts college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America offering more than 50 majors, including 18 honors majors and 13 pre-professional programs.

POLITICALLY MOTIVATED

St. Louis County 03 DFL announces Feb. 27 precinct caucus locations

REGIONAL - St. Louis County 03 Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) members will gather on Tuesday, Feb. 27 at multiple locations to learn about this year's candidates, debate resolutions for the Party Platform, elect new precinct chairs, and select delegates for the upcoming conventions.

"Our precinct caucuses signal the start of the 2024 elections in Minnesota and offer all Minnesotans the opportunity to get involved," said DFL Chairman Ken Martin. "The DFL Party runs on the dedication of grassroots organizers and community members, and precinct caucuses are where it begins. Across Minnesota, DFLers will gather in community centers and school gymnasiums to shape the future of

the party by discussing the DFL platform, electing local leaders, and beginning the process of candidate endorsement. Caucuses offer Minnesotans a voice in the DFL Party, and I encourage all Minnesotans to attend their precinct caucuses and advocate for the change they want to see in their communities."

St. Louis County 03 DFL Precinct Caucuses will be held Tuesday, Feb. 27, at 7 p.m. with registration at 6:30 p.m. Locations include:

►Babbitt Senior Center, 71 South Dr, Babbitt (Babbitt Precinct and Unorganized Precinct 9)

►Cook Community Center 510 Gopher Dr, Cook (Beatty, Camp 5, Cook, Crane Lake, Field, Leiding, Linden Grove, Orr, Owens, Portage, Willow Valley

Precincts and Unorganized precincts 11,12,13,19,21) *Southeast Koochiching

Precinct, Koochiching County, will also meet at the Cook Community Center.

►Embarrass Town Hall 7503 Lavender Rd, Embarrass (Kugler Precinct, Waasa Precinct, Unorganized Precinct 20)

►Greenwood Township Offices 3000 County Rd 77, Tower (Greenwood Precinct)

►Hoyt Lakes Arena, 102 Kennedy Memorial Drive, Hoyt Lakes (Hoyt Lakes Precinct, Unorganized Precinct 6)

►Kabetogama Town Hall

9707 Gamma Rd, Kabetogama (Kabetogama Precinct)

►MN North College, Vermilion Campus 1900 E Camp St., Ely, (Ely, Morse, Winton Precincts and Unorganized Precincts 22, 24)

*Fall Lake Precinct, Lake County, will also be meeting at the Vermilion Campus.

►Vermilion Country School 1 Enterprise Dr, Tower (Breitung, Eagle's Nest, Tower Precincts)

►Vermilion Lake Town Hall 5937 Wahlsten Rd, Tower (Vermilion Lake Precinct)

Please contact Leah Rogne at slcou3dfl@gmail.com for more information or questions.

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CITY OF ELY

Ely Airport is the February airport of the month

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- "People forget that we have an area airport here in Ely, which has been an economic driver for the city," Mayor Heidi Omerza remarked when announcing the airport of the month designation to the Ely City Council at its Feb. 20 meeting.

The *Minnesota Flyer* Magazine didn't forget Ely's award-winning airport because it named it the airport of the month for February. Ely's airport received the best project award from the Minnesota Council of Airports in April 2023. The airport is also the U.S. Forest Service's air support base for fire suppression.

Meeting cancellations

Omerza noted that no public meetings can be scheduled against an election, which prompted the council to move

its regular March 5 meeting to March 12, at 5:30 p.m., due to a conflict with the upcoming Presidential Primary.

Ely Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski added that the party caucus meetings are next Tuesday, Feb. 27. Because it conflicts with the caucuses, the Ely Economic Development Authority meeting scheduled for that day has been canceled. The caucus meetings for the DFL and Republican Parties will both be at the Vermilion Campus of Minnesota North College, 1900 E. Camp St. Registration is at 6:30 p.m., with the caucuses starting at 7 p.m.

In addition, the Ely Area Ambulance Joint Powers Board meeting, which is also a special meeting of the Ely City Council, has been postponed. It was originally scheduled to meet at 4 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 26, at the Winton Community Center. As of the *Timberjay's* presstime, a new

meeting date had not yet been determined.

In other business, the city council:

➤ Heard from Langowski that the city's skating rink was back open, though he noted, "The rink will look great for the rest of the week, but next week, when it gets into the 50s, it might be a different story."

➤ Approved memorandums of understanding between Ely and the three unions representing its employees regarding the health insurance savings realized from changing the city's insurance provider from Health Partners to Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS). The paperwork included in the agenda packet for the meeting noted, "For the first time in over a decade, another provider (BCBS) proposed a considerably less expensive plan with very similar coverage."

➤ Approved the first read-

ing of City Ordinance 375 2nd Series, which will add to the city code, section 2.66 provision to set up a housing trust fund. Langowski remarked, "This action is following the advice of the Minnesota Housing Partnership, who we have been working with, to set up a trust fund, which under Minnesota law, requires a city ordinance. From the levy, we currently have about \$300,000 in the housing fund (to create a trust fund). It wouldn't be available until this summer, but setting up a trust fund will allow us to maximize the money we can get from the state for housing projects in general."

➤ Approved city and Ely Utilities Commission claims for payment for Feb. 20 for \$411,811.

➤ Approved the payment of Invoice No. 461208 from SEH for work on the Prospector ATV Trail.

➤ Approved the employment agreement between Ely

and the Ely Supervisors of Other than Essential Employees, effective Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, of this year.

➤ Approved a residential rehab loan application for Charlotte Ackerley for up to \$10,000 at 226 E. Conan St. for an upgrade to a propane furnace pending proper paperwork and fees. The city council directed city attorney Kelly Klun to work with the applicant and proceed with the loan application.

➤ Approved Resolution 2024-010, to support the grant application from the Prospector ATV Club to the Dept. of Natural Resources' Federal Recreational Trail Program to purchase trail maintenance equipment to maintain the Prospectors Loop Trail. Langowski explained that Ely's support is necessary for the grant application since Ely is the fiscal agent for the funds used for the trail by the club.

Ely Public School finances back in the black

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The Ely School Board heard a report by Devin Ceglar of the accounting firm of Walker, Giroux and Hahne on the audit of the district's 2022-23 finances, receiving the welcome news at its Feb. 11 meeting that the district's net position increased by approximately \$7.6 million.

ISD 696 ended the 2021-22 school year with a negative net of \$1.1 million but ended the 2022-23 school year with a positive balance of \$6.5 million, according to the net position balance sheet the auditing firm presenting in its 94-page report.

Ceglar reported that most of the change in the district's finances was due to the construction and completion of the new addition, which added \$4.3 million to the district's assets according to the audit report. Other than construction, the year-over-year changes in other fund balances "were not significant."

Ceglar's report noted that the district received just \$943,000 more in revenue than it anticipated, but spent \$1.4

million more than it had budgeted. The largest overruns, at approximately a half million apiece, were in the "regular instruction" and "site, buildings, and equipment" budget lines. Ceglar noted the unanticipated replacement of the gym floor accounted for much of the site cost overrun, though that was defrayed by \$395,099 in "insurance recovery."

New windows

Approved a bid of \$1,684,000 from Lenci Enterprises for window replacement. This work is part of the Phase II completion project managed for the district by general contractor Widseth, Smith, Nolting and Associates out of Hibbing. An "add alternate" bid for \$200,000 was dropped from the agenda, which was for the windows on the south side of the high school building, for the gym and where the pool was once located.

"We decided to do an add alternate bid in case the bids came in higher so we would have some flexibility if the base bid came in higher than what we originally projected,"

said Superintendent Anne Oelke. "We're approving the base bid, because we want to get moving on the finalizing the dimensions on the windows and things like that to get ordered as fast as we can."

Oelke added that the rest of the bids for the Phase II project will be going out on Feb. 29 for approval at the March 11 school board meeting. The add alternate bid, which is good for 30 days, will be paused for now until the rest of the bids for the project are in.

In other business, the school board:

➤ Approved the January fiscal report, the January receipts in the amount of \$851,273 and the January disbursements in the amount of \$493,574.

➤ Accepted the resignation of Eliza Vistica as head girls track coach effective immediately.

➤ Hired Jill Ellerbroek for the head girls track coach position as recommended by Jeff Carey, 6-12 Principal and Tom Coombe, Athletic Director.

➤ Approved a motion for Superintendent Oelke to continue discussions on the North-

land Learning Center building project.

➤ Authorized and directed Superintendent Oelke to initiate discussions with the Lake Superior School District regarding school district boundaries and possible future adjustments to district boundaries. School board chair Ray Marsnik noted, "The people of Fall Lake (in Lake County) initiated this." Fall Lake residents are within the Lake Superior School District but most open enroll their children in the Ely School District because of the distance issues. The Lake Superior schools are all an hour or more away while Ely is next door.

➤ Approved a resolution authorizing the district to apply for and accept revenue bond grant funds from the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board.

➤ Approved the 2024-25 school year calendar.

➤ Accepted a donation of \$1,500 from the Ely Educational Foundation to equip a special education sensory room, and \$385 from the Kiwanis Club for the National Honor Society.

➤ Approved the services of Althing District AIRs, which provides mental health assessment, intervention, and referral services by medical professionals at no cost to the district. The service is funded through the Affordable Care Act. Before the firm starts the assessment process, parents and guardians of students are informed beforehand and can opt out of the service.

➤ Heard the report of Athletic Director Tom Coombe that the Boys Nordic Ski Team and two members of the Girls Nordic Ski Team were heading to the Minnesota Nordic Ski Tournament, noting that this is the 23rd year in a row that Ely has sent someone to compete at the state level. Coombe also reported that the ice hockey team had 14 wins this season, the most since 2001. The team heads to playoffs next week.

➤ Approved a motion to go into executive session to discuss "negotiation strategies" with the local teachers' union for next year's contracts.

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OPINION

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

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

Editorial

The Fairness Doctrine

The free exchange of ideas is essential to a democratic nation

One of the foundational principles of a democratic form of government is the idea that the free exchange of ideas is essential. A democratic nation, in other words, can't long survive with an electorate that is kept in the dark, or has fallen victim to indoctrination rather than information.

That's been one of the most consistent criticisms by conservatives of colleges and universities in the U.S., which they accuse (in some cases legitimately) of emphasizing liberal ideas over conservative ones, a development they fear is turning the country against conservative politicians and policies.

For most college students, of course, their exposure to political debate on campus is limited. For many, depending on their educational focus or the school they attend, it's almost non-existent.

That, of course, is not the case with the public's exposure to major media, which occurs daily for most and throughout their lifetimes. And many of those sources today are far more one-sided than a college campus.

It didn't use to be this way. Back in 1949, then-President Harry Truman signed a bill that, for more than a generation, ensured that Americans were exposed to a wide range of political perspectives. It was known as the Fairness Doctrine, and it required that radio and the new medium of television provided equal time for political content. That meant an hour spent broadcasting conservative opinions had to be balanced with an hour of an alternative viewpoint. More often, it simply meant that a political talk show would include people of varying political perspectives, which gave the viewing public exposure not only to differing ideas but to the notion that intelligent and well-meaning people on varying sides of an issue could discuss and disagree more-or-less amiably. It gave food for thought, not for throwing.

The Fairness Doctrine grew out of the legitimate fear that wealthy corporations that controlled large numbers of radio and television stations could use their powerful megaphones to indoctrinate, rather than inform, the American public to the benefit of powerful interests.

At that time, the world had recently seen the power of propaganda, and how the Nazis used constant repetition of falsehoods to convince otherwise decent people to do monstrous things.

When President Reagan signed the repeal of the Fairness Doctrine in 1987, it greatly expanded the power of money in our politics and laid the groundwork for the political dysfunction we're experiencing today.

According to the libertarian Cato Institute, which supported

the repeal of the Fairness Doctrine, the decision “enabled the rise of conservative-dominated talk radio with vast political consequences.” According to Cato, talk radio not only motivated voters to support far-right Republicans and their policies, it “created a coherent audience that could be targeted by conservative media entrepreneurs like Rupert Murdoch and Roger Ailes,” who brought Fox News to Americans. “For good or ill,” concludes Cato, “the conservative movement would look dramatically different today if the Fairness Doctrine had not been repealed.”

Indeed, America would look much different. The rise of right-wing media was exactly the kind of development that the drafters of the Fairness Doctrine had hoped to avoid, because they feared media used as propaganda.

Its power was on display on Jan. 6, 2021, when thousands of mostly decent Americans, who had been lied to for weeks, stormed the Capitol building in the misguided belief that they were preventing the theft of a presidential election. This was only possible because so many, particularly on the right, have earnestly and intentionally isolated themselves from information or viewpoints that don't conform to their own.

Can restoration of the Fairness Doctrine provide a solution? Probably not. That genie is out of the bottle. While federal regulation of broadcast media was possible because it was a licensing requirement for use of the public airwaves, it likely wouldn't pass constitutional muster on cable, the internet, or social media which is where most people get their “news” today.

It is worth noting, however, that the repeal of the Fairness Doctrine has divided Americans in profound ways. It's split families, ended friendships, and made even our communities coarser places. We can no longer just disagree and go about our day. When the leading right-wing candidate for president refers to the opposing party as “vermin” and promises to “root them out” and speaks openly of executing a political opponent, it is no longer possible to deny the degree to which our nation has been fundamentally damaged. Such language would have been disqualifying for any presidential candidate in the past. Today, it is greeted by cheers from his followers.

This is not making America great again. It's destroying America at its core. It's allowed a major U.S. political party to be hijacked by extremists steeped in conspiracy theories, who have little ability or interest in governing. And it's left America vulnerable to exactly the kind of dissembling demagogue that the founding fathers most feared.



“SURE, IT'S BEEN A MILD WINTER... BUT I'M TELLING YOU THE MINUTE YOU SELL THAT WE'RE GONNA GET CLOBBERED!”

Letters from Readers

It's our patriotic duty to defeat Trump and those like him

For many of us in north-east Minnesota, our state House of Representatives member is Roger Skraba.

Like most of Donald Trump's supporters, he accepts the Big Lie about the 2020 election. It would be nice if that didn't matter at the state legislative level but, unfortunately, it does. Because if you believe that Trump was cheated out of re-election – despite the utter lack of evidence – then by default you call into question the basis of all government. Out the window goes the rule of law, respect for democracy, and the bedrock public trust that's the foundation of the republic. Trump and trust are mutually exclusive, as he amply demonstrated during his presidential term.

During this campaign for re-election Trump's goal is to establish chaos. Case in point: two bipartisan bills that recently passed in the U.S. Senate, effectively dealing with immigration and further aid to Ukraine and other allies, are purposely stalled in the U.S. House by Trump sycophant Speaker Mike Johnson. This obstruction increases turmoil at the southern border and roils up our NATO allies, not to mention deepening frustration with Congress and compromising national security. By creating/worsening problems, Trump, who has admitted his dictatorial aspirations, can then step in to remedy the maladies he engendered – the oldest trick in the tyrant's book. Contrast that with the Biden administration's important bipartisan legislative

achievements and mature governance.

This November at the ballot box, it's our patriotic duty to soundly defeat Trump and anyone in office who supports his lies.

Peter M. Leschak
Side Lake

In response to Roskoski's letter

I am writing this letter to refute the contentions made by Lois Roskoski in her letter to the editor in the Feb. 2 issue of the *Timberjay*. Roskoski takes issue with how the town board handled the voluntary quitting of some members of the fire department, but she fails to address the circumstances that may have contributed to it.

The fire department members understood they were employees of the township yet came to a town board meeting with their township-provided work gear and a letter which was given to one supervisor, instructing said supervisor to inform the board that they would not respond to 911 calls unless the board fired the appointed Fire Chief Jeff Maus, allowed the rank-and-file members to choose who their officers are, and have final approval of any chief selection.

Upon not getting their way, the members quit and left their gear behind.

Can you imagine telling your employer that you will pick your own boss? I can't and I know I wouldn't have lasted too long had I tried.

Other factors included the stalling of the #1 fire engine while on route to a fire, and the fact that this did not lead to the vehicle being “red flagged” or taken out of service. Fire Boat 1, with two 300 hp engines was not tak-

en out of service even when its engines malfunctioned, allowing a top speed of just 9 mph.

In the full year prior to the firefighters leaving (2022), five of them responded to zero 911 calls, two of them responded to two 911 calls, and three of them responded to five 911 calls. The former Fire Chief responded to only two calls and the Assistant Chief responded to five calls. The total responses, in 2022, for the group that left was 115 and for the group that has stayed it was 271. So, what has changed since they left? The township has put more than \$25,000 into repairing and replacing failed fire apparatus and equipment, the fire department has gotten new members and may soon add two more, the fire hall is better organized, and we clearly have people interested in service to the public.

Do we need more? Yes. Do we need firefighters just to increase the roster number if they provide little or no service? No. I am pleased with and proud of our firefighters and EMS personnel.

Secondly, Roskoski takes on the issue of the TAAS. She claims there are eight entities while there are nine. She does not include Embarrass Township which has never made a contribution but receives about 10-20 TAAS responses per year, similar to Kugler and Eagles Nest. Embarrass was last invoiced from TAAS in August 2023. Lois then states our contribution for 2022 and 2023 would have been \$13,500 each year. This is again incorrect. Had we signed the agreement our contribution for 2022 would have been \$15,615 and our 2023 contribution would

See **LETTERS...pg. 5**

COMMENTARY

The mystery of the rhythms of sleep

“Sleeping is the most mysterious thing we do,” according to Bill Bryson, author of “The Body: A Guide for Occupants.” That was a new thought for me. I had thought of sleep as being necessary, inviting, evasive, and sometimes annoy-



BETTY FIRTH

is why so many people have difficulty getting a good night's sleep. In 2008, I broke my ankle, and a circle of friends I called my Ankle Angels helped me out with

various tasks. I learned that every single one of them consistently had sleep issues to the point that it interfered with their daily lives. What are the odds that 100-percent of

this circle of helpers all had problems sleeping?

Bryson describes sleep as a tune-up for the body, tied to many biological processes: “restoring hormonal balance, emptying the brain of accumulated neurotoxins, resetting the immune system, and consolidating memories.” He theorizes that dreams may be the result of the nightly housecleaning, tossing together random memories, anxieties, fantasies, and suppressed emotions, which, if remembered at all, are often a jumble of nonsensical fragments.

I learned that on average we are sleeping less than we did 50 years ago, from eight and one-half hours to under seven, which many experts feel is not enough. Ten to twenty percent of adults in the world suffer from insomnia, which has been linked to diabetes, cancer, hypertension, stroke, heart disease, and depression, and is possibly a contributing factor in Alzheimer's.

If it wasn't already obvious, that makes it evident that getting a good night's sleep is a pretty good idea. Every part of our body needs sleep and

will not function as well if deprived; if deprived long enough, we will die, but specifically why that happens does remain a mystery. Yet people persist in ignoring well-publicized advice for getting good sleep: sleep in a completely dark room; leave the phones and the TVs out of the bedroom; and avoid active use of other screens, especially smartphones and computers, one or more hours before bedtime. The blue light reduces melatonin, which helps the brain track the day length and prepare the body for sleep. With

our access to inexpensive electricity, we are very used to creating our own schedule of light and dark, oblivious to the negative effects that may be having on our minds and bodies.

In 1999, Russell Foster, a researcher at Imperial College in London, proved that our eyes contain a third photoreceptor cell type in addition to rods and cones. These photosensitive retinal ganglion cells only detect brightness and have nothing to do with vision. They

See **SLEEP...pg. 5**

Letters from Readers

Continued from page 4

have been \$31,230. We did not sign that agreement for a good number of reasons.

The Greenwood Town Board and citizens have been working on this ambulance crisis for a few years now, trying to bring shorter response times and a higher level of service to a growing population we have in our township. We feel it's time to bring regionalization to the system to keep patient treatment number one. To have small services every 20 miles is OK but we need to tie into a larger entity which coordinates training, administration, and procurement. In TAAS the administrative costs to have an Ambulance Director and Assistant Director costs \$60,000-plus. That means that every time the ambulance leaves the station it costs over \$100 just to leave the building. The Cloquet Fire/EMS district would be an example to look at for some guidance. We in Greenwood do not see the current system as sustainable and to continue to throw money at a failing system is foolish.

Finally, Roskoski says she will address the budget, levy, and reduction of the reserve fund. I have been working on the levy and reduction of the reserves for over 10 years now and the budget off and on for 10 years. The electors at the Annual Meeting have

taken the levy that was at one time over \$500,000 down to \$150,000 and have done that for 10 years. That means that when you receive your property tax statement you pay about \$25/100K of value to the township or about \$100 for a \$400,000 home compared to about \$333 for that same \$400,000.00 home prior to levy reductions. Multiply these numbers over the nearly 2000 parcels and it has been a savings of nearly \$3.5 million dollars to the homeowners and businesses in Greenwood.

Why should we have unnecessary, inflated township reserves - wouldn't you rather have control of your money? Don't let someone cry "The Sky is Falling" to scare you into getting them elected and voting to raise your own taxes.

Sue Drobac and Barb Lofquist have always been there with the other citizens at the Annual Meeting pushing for low levies. They have been to many township meetings and are experienced. Please vote DROBAC/LOFQUIST on Election Day.

**John Bassing
Greenwood
Township resident**

Could hydrogen be in Ely's future?

Hydrogen, in its pure form, can replace fossil

fuels for combustion engines without flushing "dirty" emissions into our atmosphere that add to the greenhouse umbrella. Pure hydrogen produces no emissions, except for a small amount of water.

Hydrogen is the most abundant element on our planet's surface, but most of hydrogen is combined with other elements such as oxygen that produces water. Water has hydrogen that can be extracted by electrolysis to separate the hydrogen from the oxygen. The separation process that generates the pure hydrogen is not only costly, but often uses polluting fuels such as natural gas to generate the separation. Some hydrogen separation processing is fueled by renewable resources such as solar or wind. Nevertheless, the facilities used to isolate and separate the hydrogen are costly to construct and maintain.

Recently, it has become apparent that there are natural reservoirs of pure hydrogen in the Earth. The "hunt" is now on to find reservoirs of pure hydrogen using technology similar to what is used in the oil and gas industry, i.e., seismic mapping, and satellite imaging.

The search for natural hydrogen has attracted a large number of venture capitalists (including Bill Gates) and also

significant government subsidies. The Biden administration allocated \$9.5 billion plus a generous ten-year subsidy of three dollars per kilogram for natural hydrogen to stimulate its commercial use. According to Geoffrey Ellis of the *U.S. Geological Survey*, "If even a small fraction of the estimated (world) volume of pure hydrogen could be recovered, there would likely be enough hydrogen across all the global deposits to last for hundreds of years."

The U.S. is behind other countries in the development of hydrogen as fuel for transportation, which represents the biggest source of polluting emissions. Trucks, buses, ships, trains, heavy equipment, airplanes, and rockets are all starting to use hydrogen fuel. This suggests a huge expanding market for the use of hydrogen plus a market for stationary needs in commercial buildings, power plants, factories, and homes.

The vulnerable national grid system likely won't be able to provide reliable charging for electric vehicles when the almost 300 million U. S. registered vehicles are expected to change to electric power in the foreseeable future. Moreover, much of the power grid will likely still be dependent to some degree on fossil fuels for years. The

use of hydrogen may be a viable alternative.

Discovering deposits of pure hydrogen is only the first step. There has to be an infrastructure provided to transport the fuel and to distribute it. It is expected that some domestic pipelines and gas service stations can be retrofitted to accommodate the distribution of hydrogen.

It may take a long time to determine whether hydrogen can become a viable alternative to fossil fuels, but there is more than just hope because of the large resources of money and brainpower that are being mobilized to address climate change.

The Midcontinental Rift underneath Ely occurred about 1.1 billion years ago bringing vast quantities of minerals to the upper layers of the Earth's crust including iron-rich minerals that can form hydrogen. The origin of natural, pure hydrogen is created when subterranean water comes in contact with iron-rock, producing iron oxides, leaving behind hydrogen. The gas can then make its way up through permeable rock and soil to be released into the Earth's atmosphere or contained in impermeable underground domes.

Ely is likely to be sitting on top of this phenomenon. There could be reservoirs of hydrogen in the Ely area which could

prove to be a boost to its economy. Unlike copper ore mining, which can be extremely detrimental to the surrounding environment, hydrogen is extracted by drilling, with comparatively minor impacts compared to mining.

**Gerry Snyder
Ely**

Tons of sulfate every day into our waters

Northern Lakes Scientific Advisory Panel conducts water sampling, building a database of what is in northern Minnesota's streams and rivers. Eric Morrison is a chemist for the NLSAP.

When Jeri and I moved from Virginia in 1975 to our family land on Lake Fourteen, it was April and everything was frozen. So, we went down to the lake and cut a hole in the ice for water—clear Lake Fourteen water.

More recently, from May 21 to Aug. 22, samples of water were taken along the Dunka River which revealed 2.9 to 4.5 metric tons of sulfate pass through the Dunka River culverts every day. This is located on Scott Rd., east of Babbitt. I called Eric Morrison before typing this letter to make sure the figures are correct. His comment was that it's best to report to the people what's going on truthfully.

**Skip Dickinson
Britt**

SLEEP...Cont. from page 4

pass this information on to bundles of neurons within the hypothalamus, known as suprachiasmatic nuclei, which control our circadian rhythms. His discovery was scoffed at for a while, because the ophthalmological world was stunned to think it has missed this significant information for so long. Foster is now professor of circadian neuroscience at Oxford University.

It is now known that we have circadian rhythms, or body clocks, in nearly every tissue and organ, not just in our brain. What exactly are they? They are the physical, mental, and behavioral changes an organism experiences over a 24-hour cycle. They dictate when hormones are released and when organs are busiest or most relaxed. They affect sleep patterns, body temperature, appetite, and digestion. Light and dark are the primary influence on circadian rhythms, but they are also affected by food, stress, physical activity, temperature, and social environment.

In the short term, disturbances to the daily rhythms of the body can cause drowsiness, poor coordination and difficulty with focus and learning, which many notice when jet lagged from crossing multiple time zones; the body can't keep up. Many people react badly when an hour shifts for Daylight Savings, an artificial manipulation I personally feel is completely unnecessary. As mentioned above regarding insomnia, long term, continually shifting circadian rhythms are thought to increase the risk for serious diseases. While we blithely stay up until midnight to watch

our favorite show or short ourselves sleep to get an early start to the day, we may be doing more damage than suffering a bit of sleepiness. People who work on night shifts or changing shifts, are at a higher risk for negative effects, and some conditions such as autism, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's can disrupt rhythms.

People of different ages have different rhythms and different needs for sleep. Recently, there has been more awareness that teenagers have a circadian rhythm

that can be two hours different from other people, which is why it is deleterious to their focus, attendance, and test results to have the school day starting very early. Schools with later starting times have also seen fewer car accidents and less depression and self-harm. The kids are not just being lazy.

A normal night has a series of cycles repeated four or five times a night. Each one lasts about 90 minutes and involves four main phases. In the first two phases, sleep is

so light, you may think you're awake: relinquishing consciousness (5-15 minutes) and light slumber (20 minutes). Then comes deeper sleep, lasting about an hour, when it's harder to wake up a sleeper. Lastly, rapid eye movement (REM) phase when the brain is as lively as when awake. The sleeper is mostly paralyzed except for the heart, lung, and eyes, which keeps us from hurting ourselves or others when thrashing about or escaping monsters. Often people doing sleep studies

for sleep apnea think they slept through the night or awakened once or twice, only to find they woke up dozens of times when they quit breathing. The preponderance of people with this serious condition is another alarming phenomenon indicating we are out of sync with Mother Nature and our own natures.

Western scientists and doctors weren't the first to discover the rhythms of

the body. Traditional Chinese Medicine is based on using medical treatment that is in harmony with the natural laws of the body. TCM has used a circadian rhythm of diagnosing and treating illness for thousands of years based on the 24-hour and seasonal flow of chi (life energy) through the twelve major meridians of the body. More on that next month.

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MARCH 17 AT 2 PM
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**READ IT
HERE**

WARMING UP TO WINTER

New traditions at Timber Hall in Embarrass

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

EMBARRASS- There was bingo, children's games, cornhole, and about a dozen booths with information from county agencies and the local fire department. There was skating at the rink, and bonfires with do-it-yourself s'more kits. And of course, a hearty lunch of chicken wild rice soup from the kitchen.

It was chilly but not too cold outside to draw people to Timber Hall for Embarrass's first-ever Winter Festival event on Feb. 17.

Timber Hall used to be known as the home of the Embarrass Region Fair, but a new push by the board that oversees the fair is turning the building into a centerpiece for community events.

The idea for the event came from board member Carissa Smith's son Tristan. One day when Tristan was helping his mother clean out a storage shed at Timber Hall, he came across equipment for making igloos. At the same time the fair association was looking for ideas for more community events at Timber Hall, and the winter festival idea started to come into focus.

The event was truly a community effort. The Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA) helped recruit vendors, sponsored a food giveaway for seniors, and served the lunch. The local ALS fundraising group sponsored the cornhole tournament. Sisu Heritage held a bake sale. The township maintenance crew made sure the skating rink was in decent shape, unfortunately there was not enough snow on the sliding hill. Trapline Liquors/Convenience Store donated the make-your-own s'mores kits. Just Bite Me Bait in Babbitt donated the kids' games. William Ramponi created and donated a custom fire ring for the bonfire. And Gary Herberg donated his time to oversee the bingo game calling.

"It was great seeing the whole community come together," said Smith.

The fair association sponsored a fundraiser during last November's Give to the Max Day. As part of their appeal, they



Top left and right: Bingo was a popular activity at the event, and Gary Herberg was the volunteer caller. Right: Tristan and Emory Smith played a fishing game for prizes. Below: Donovan Charter, from Hoyt Lakes, roasted a marshmallow.

let people vote on their top two choices for new events for the upcoming year, and the winter festival, along with a children's Easter activity, got the most votes. Give to the Max raised enough for the association to fund both of these events, Smith said.



The cornhole tournament was moved indoors, but there was plenty of room inside of Timber Hall. photos by J. Summit

Week of Feb. 26

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 March 19.

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 winner of a \$100 cash prize for week 30 in the Charlemagne's 52 Club is Keith Balke of Angora.

History Tidbit: In the early years there were no roads in the Lake Vermilion area, hence, small steamboats were used to take summer residents to islands where they had built rustic cabins. Over five generations of families continue to occupy family-owned cabins on islands on Lake Vermilion, many on Pine Island.

Bookmobile stops
REGIONAL- The Arrowhead Bookmobile will be in the Tower-Soudan area on Wednesdays: March 6 and 27, Apr 17, May 8 and 29, Jul 10 and 31, Aug 21, Sept. 11, Oct. 2 and 23, Nov. 13, and Dec. 4, 2024.

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

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

100 days: dress-up, pancakes, and treasure hunt



Tower-Soudan Elementary celebrated the 100th day of school on Feb. 14 (with Valentine's parties in the afternoon). Far left: Ayva and Zaija came to school dressed like 100-year olds. Center: Reese and Elius enjoyed pancakes, a 100th day of school tradition, and Hazel helped hunt down one of the 100 eagles hidden throughout the school that day. submitted photos

Free community meal at Immanuel on Feb. 28

TOWER- Immanuel Lutheran Church is hosting a free community meal on Wednesday, Feb. 28 from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., or until the food is gone. The meal will be chicken tetrazzini, salad, and garlic bread. Eat-in or carry-out available. All are welcome.

St. Martin's to hold Souper Bowl of Caring on Feb. 25

TOWER- St. Martin's annual fundraiser for the Tower Area Food Shelf, Souper Bowl of Caring, will be held on Sunday, Feb. 25. The church will be serving a Booyah Dinner from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. (or when we run out of booyah) in the church Social Hall. Those attending will have the option to eat-in or take-out. The cost is a free will offering

with all proceeds being donated to the food shelf.

This event began as a youth project but has now evolved into a parish project; our youth still participate but the adults of the parish have joined in to assist. The work begins on Friday with vegetables, then on Saturday we make the booyah and the desserts; and finally on Sunday we serve the delicious meal.

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

St. Paul's Lutheran Lenten Soup and Movie

SOUDAN- Please join us on Thursdays for a Lenten Soup and Movie/Bible Study at 11:00 a.m. at St Paul's Lutheran Church in Soudan. All are welcome. Any questions, call Susan at 218-780-1560.

St. Martin's Mass Schedule for Lent

TOWER- St. Martin's Lent schedule:

Lent services: Stations of the Cross at St. Martin's on Fridays at 5 p.m. with a fish fry following except on March 22 since they will be working on the social hall floor that day; and on Wednesday's at 5 p.m. at St. Mary's with a soup supper following. Please sign up if you can make a soup, there is a sign-up sheet in the entrance of the church.

"Into the Deep, Finding Peace Through Prayer" is a five-week video and discussion retreat that will be held every Thursday after the 9 a.m. Mass at St. Mary's in the social hall beginning the first Thursday of Lent, Feb. 22. All are welcome.

Lunch Bunch to meet on March 14

TOWER- The Lunch Bunch will not be meeting in February. They plan to meet next on Thursday, March 14, at 12:30 p.m., with the place yet to be determined. RSVP to Kathy at 218-753-2530. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Indoor walking at the Timber Hall

EMBARRASS- This winter the Timber Hall will be open for indoor walking on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5 p.m. until 7:30 p.m.

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NORTHERN LAKES ARTS ASSOCIATION

Board members retire after years of service

ELY- Northern Lakes Arts Association (NLAA) has been a vibrant source of arts activities in Ely, Minn. for over 35 years. The organization has been able to achieve its goals and grow over the years thanks to the hard work, commitment, and leadership of its board members.

Four individuals recently stepped down from the NLAA board on Jan. 31. As NLAA moves forward, it is important to recognize the outstanding contributions of these past board members. They have been instrumental in the growth and development of the organization, and their vision, guidance, and support have been critical to its success.

Sara Skelton, professor of Humanities and Fine Arts at Minnesota North College - Vermilion Campus, joined the NLAA board in 2013. She has been a singer, actor and local performer in concerts, musicals, opera and stage plays, and served as the Artistic Director for the Ely Community Spring Musical for many years. Sara became the secretary in 2020, and served in that



The retiring board of directors members of the Northern Lakes Arts Association. Front left-to-right: Caroline Owens, Sara Skelton, and Andrea Strom. Not shown: Dafne Caruso. submitted photo

role until she resigned in December.

Andrea Strom, manager/owner of Brainstorm Bakery, served on the NLAA board since January 2017. Andrea participated in several of the

musicals, plays, choirs, and dance performances through NLAA. Most recently, Andrea performed in the New Year's Eve concert with Ian Lah. Andrea has stepped down to focus more on promoting music

in the school through her role as chair of the newly reinvigorated Ely Music Booster club.

Caroline Owens is a retired CPA who shared her knowledge and expertise with the board

as the treasurer for the past few years. She originally joined the board in Jan. 2017. Caroline, who serves on several other boards, recently decided to step down from her officer role, and become an ex-officio board member who remains invaluable as the organization experiences record growth.

Dafne Caruso, who joined in 2018 and served as chair from 2019-2023, owns The Art Corner and is a prolific artist in the Ely scene. Dafne teaches art classes to all ages in the community and remains committed to sharing her love of painting and other art forms with others. She stepped down in April 2023 from her position on the board. Her contributions to the NLAA organization helped weather the changes through the pandemic.

NLAA would like to thank all its past board members for their service and commitment to the organization. We wish them all the best in their future endeavors and hope that they will continue to stay connected with NLAA.

Elyite named Minnesota attorney of the year

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- Elyite Hudson Kingston was named a Minnesota Attorney of the Year for his part in a lawsuit brought against Minneapolis by the East Phillips Neighborhood Institute (EPNI). The suit was part of a years-long battle to stop demolition of the Roof Depot warehouse in the East Phillips neighborhood, which the city wanted to tear down so it could expand a city public works facility. Neighborhood advocates wanted to convert the facility into an urban farm.

The award was given in the group category on Feb. 8 to Kingston and the other four members of his legal team for their work on EPNI v. city of Minneapolis. The

honor was given by the weekly *Minnesota Lawyer* magazine, which runs the Attorney of the Year awards.

Kingston is the Legal Director for the rural environmental advocacy group CURE. CURE's legal strategy is "to ensure that rural community interests are given a voice in the places where decisions are made about energy, agriculture, and the environment," according to the group's website.

Kingston is familiar to the Ely community for his complaint after winning the 2023 Ely Marathon. Kingston was unhappy he had not placed second, he told the *Timberjay*. In prior years, he had won first, third, and fourth places, and wanted to win second so he could have a complete set of win places.

Ely woman takes plea bargain in theft case

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- An Ely woman arrested for two felony theft counts has taken a plea bargain that drops the felony charges and provides a "stay of adjudication" for a guilty plea on a misdemeanor of entering or tampering with a motor vehicle without the owner's permission.

A stay of adjudication allows a person to avoid a criminal conviction on their record if they successfully complete a probationary period.

The case against Jennifer Brandau, age 43, stems from a Sept. 14 report that Brandau stole a Polaris Sportsman ATV from a property on Winton Rd. The ATV belonged to her husband with whom she is currently in divorce proceedings.

According to the criminal complaint, a St. Louis County deputy spoke to the owner of the ATV, Jeremiah Brandau, who said he stored the vehicle at his property on Winton Rd. At the time, he confirmed that Jennifer Brandau did not have permission to take or use the vehicle and that she would need to "break in ... to get to the ATV."

When contacted by deputies, Brandau admitted she took the ATV and claimed it belonged to her and her "ex-husband." She later changed her story, subsequently stating "there was divorce paperwork regarding ATV ownership." Brandau eventually disclosed the location of the ATV, which deputies then returned to her estranged husband.

The evening before the incident, Brandau was arrested for assault and disorderly conduct by the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office for a separate incident at her husband's property on Winton Rd. The assault charge was dropped and she pled guilty to the disorderly conduct charge in July 2023.

Earlier on Sept. 13, Brandau was involved in an incident in at 45 E. Boundary St. in Ely, involving a domestic altercation along with felony assault, firearms, flight, and arson charges against Jason Gillson.

Brandau filed a plea petition on Feb. 2 for the ATV charges, resulting in the dismissal of the two felony theft charges and the stay of adjudication for the misdemeanor on Feb. 5. She received one year of unsupervised probation as the result of the plea bargain.



Hudson Kingston winning the 2023 Ely Marathon. He was named a Minnesota attorney of the year on Feb. 8. file photo

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

Ely Public Library

ELY- The library will hold an online Kahoot trivia game on books 6-10 of the "Dog Man" series by Dav Pilkey. The Kahoot will start on Thursday, Feb. 29 at 3 p.m. and end on Monday, March 4 at 8 a.m. Please register in advance with an email so the library can send the link to the Kahoot.

The library will hold its popular Hogwarts House Cup Championship on Saturday, March 2, from 1:30-4 p.m. This event is for adults and teens, grades 9 and up. This year, the event will be a Hogwarts House Feud, which is a "Family Feud" done in a Harry Potter style. The ever-popular breakout boxes will also be part of the event. Register in advance for this program. This event has a limited number of opening for attendees and has filled up in past. Anyone wishing to participate must sign up with the library by Tuesday, Feb. 27.

The library board

will meet on Wednesday, March 6, from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

The Get Crafty Group will make DIY eucalyptus shower melts on Thursday, March 7, from 1-2 p.m. This is an activity for adults. Please register in advance so the library can order enough supplies for participants.

The library will hold an evening breakout box event for students in grades 5-8 on Friday, March 8 from 7-9:30 p.m. Aimed at middle school students with the "winter blahs," this program is designed to give them the excitement of solving puzzles and riddles to open the mystery box to what is inside. The giant "ball o prizes" may also make an appearance. Please register for this program in advance.

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

All library events are at the Ely Public Library at 224 E. Chapman St., unless otherwise noted.

Babbitt Public Library

BABBITT- The Reading Wonderland Winter Reading Program is holding a coloring contest for adults. Entries will be accepted through Feb. 29. Pick up a coloring page at the library. Use colored pencils only. Prizes will be awarded for the best picture.

Local photographer and author Ken Hupila will discuss his books and work at the library on Thursday, March 7 from 3-6 p.m. Copies of his books "Singing Waters" and "Shore Lunch" will be available for purchase and signing.

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.

Babbitt Skating

BABBITT- The Ron Castellano Ice Arena is open for skating on Saturdays from 6-8 p.m. through April 27.

Contented Critters

ELY- A Tupperware fund raiser for the Contented Critters Animal Shelter will be held at the Ely Senior Center, 27 S. 1st Ave. E., on Saturday, Feb. 24 from 1-4 p.m.

Anishinaabe Storytelling

ELY- The first annual Anishinaabe Winter Storytelling Event will be on Wednesday, Feb. 28, at 2 p.m. at the Minnesota North College Vermilion Performing Arts Auditorium, 1900 E. Camp St.

Braver Angels

ELY- The next meeting of the Ely Braver Angels will be on Thursday, Feb. 29, at the Ely Senior Center, 27 S. 1st Ave. E., from 6:30-8 p.m.

50th Anniversary skating show

BABBITT- The 50th Anniversary Figure Skating Show of the Babbitt Figure Skating Club will present two performances on Friday, March 1, at 6 p.m., and Saturday, March

2, at 1 p.m., at the Ron Castellano Ice Arena, 30 South Dr.

Clarification

The story on the Highway 169 rollover in the Feb. 2 edition of the *Timberjay* relied on a communication from the Minnesota State Patrol that Tower Ambulance and the Fall Lake Fire Department responded to the incident. That report did not mention that Eagles Nest Fire and Rescue also responded to the accident and was the first agency on the scene. The *Timberjay* regrets the omission.

Correction

In the Feb. 16 article on the electric vehicle ride-and-drive event in Ely, the *Timberjay* reported that the nonprofit group CURE was located in the Twin Cities area. CURE is located in the rural community of Montevideo. The *Timberjay* regrets the error.

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 Ely Tuesday-Group@gmail.com or call her at 218-216-9141.

Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

►Feb. 27: No Tuesday Group Meeting

►March 5: Challenging Behavior Communicates: A Lighthearted Trip with Learning Theory into the land of Positive Behavior Supports with John Kopp

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2024



a pale crescent moon
honoring the vast night sky

darkness welcoming

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

Phone: 218-827-3345

Support groups

AA - Alcoholics

Anonymous

OPEN AA - 7:30

p.m. Wednesdays and

Saturdays, in-person,

First Lutheran Church,

915 E. Camp St., Ely.

AA FRIDAYS - 7 p.m.

Fridays, First Presbyterian

Church, 262 E. Harvey

St., Ely.

ELY WOMEN'S OPEN

AA - Monday at noon at

Ledgerock 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

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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.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Former OSB mill still a possible siding option

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- Folks in Cook could be pardoned for thinking that “out of sight, out of mind” is the approach Nashville, Tenn.-based LP Solutions is taking to the former Ainsworth oriented strand board plant south of town that the company acquired in 2016. With the plant shuttered since 2009, the dearth of any significant news about the site’s future in nearly two years, and its absence from expansion discussions at recent company quarterly investment meetings, the plant would seem to many to be a forgotten stepchild.

However, folks thinking that would be wrong, according to LP Solutions Director of Corporate Communications Breeanna Straessle, who responded Tuesday to an inquiry by the *Timberjay* as to the Cook site’s status.

“In May 2023, LP acquired an OSB mill located in Wawa, Ontario, Canada. We anticipate converting this facility into our next siding mill, aligning with future growth in market demand,” Straessle said.

“Following this, we have several viable options for expanding our siding capacity, with the Cook site being one among them.”

The Wawa acquisition falls in line with CEO Brad Southern’s savvy strategy to keep ahead of the siding demand curve. LP Solutions has pursued a two-prong approach, the first of which has been to convert some of its existing OSB production lines to siding production facilities, such as at Dawson Creek, British Columbia and Houghton, Maine. Wawa is representative of the second prong, acquiring new assets that are either ready-made or can be cost-effectively and quickly retooled to support siding production. The situation with the Cook facility has not positioned it to meet those needs.

But as Southern said in an investor’s meeting in 2022, Cook could be a fit for the company’s longer term plans. At that meeting, Southern outlined three possible avenues for expanding production capacity. One option was to add capacity at an existing siding mill. A second was to convert OSB



The former oriented strand board mill south of Cook is not slated for redevelopment any time soon by owner LP Solutions, but could still be an option for a new siding production facility, according to the company.

production capacity to siding. A third possibility was to build an entirely new facility specifically designed for siding production, referred to in the industry as a greenfield project.

“Each of those have different capital efficiency parameters, and then each of them has different ramp-up parameters,” Southern said. “There’s pluses and minuses for each of those three scenarios, and that’s exact-

ly what we’re working through.”

Southern made clear that Cook could factor into the third scenario.

“When I speak about possible greenfield, that obviously would include Cook,” Southern said. “The Cook land would be a really ideal place for us to build a greenfield siding mill.” While Southern said he was intrigued by the possibility, he also noted that that such a project would be, “probably

the least capital efficient means of securing new siding capacity.”

Straessle wasn’t in position to give any sort of timeline for when such a decision would be made, however.

“The timing and location of our expansion efforts will continue to be driven by strategic considerations aimed at maximizing our efficiency and market position,” she said.

It’s possible that the cancellation of the planned

new OSB mill in Cohasset by Huber Engineered Wood last February could increase the viability of producing siding in Cook. The \$400+ million plant would have had to get 80 percent of the wood used for its OSB production from Minnesota sources, under the terms of incentive agreements offered to Huber by the state. The area from which Huber would have sourced most of the 400,000 cords of wood needed annually to feed its mill would have almost certainly overlapped with the area a Cook siding facility would draw from. With Huber withdrawing, LP Solutions would not have to compete with them for the timber it would need to run a new plant.

So while a new siding mill in Cook remains a distant possibility, the notable thing is that it is still a possibility in the eyes of LP Solutions. Only time and market demand will tell, but Cook has, for better or worse, grown accustomed to accommodating time where the mill is concerned.

Entry deadline looms for NWFA photo contest

COOK- The deadline is approaching for photographers to enter their work in the Northwoods Friends of the Arts 14th annual photo contest “A Closer Look.”

Entries will be accepted until 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 2 at the NWFA Gallery at 210 S River St. in Cook. Entry forms are available at the gallery which is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays.

“A Closer Look” is more than a magnified image. It’s a challenge to photographers to delve into the details, the mysteries, the shadows, or the character of faces and things in our world. Entries should be 5x7 or 8x10 photos featuring portraits, flora, fauna or objects in detail.

The entry fee is \$10 per photo, and a display mat and sleeve will be provided. Students 18 or younger may enter three photos free of charge. There is no limit on the number of paid adult entries.

The contest exhibit and public voting begins on Thursday, March 7 and continues through Friday, March 29 when a gala reception will be held to announce the two winners of the popular vote contest. The chosen winners will receive \$100 and \$50.

To contact NWFA, email nwfamn.org@gmail.com, or go to the NWFA website at www.nwfamn.org. Photo contest entry forms are also available on the website.

Piatigorsky classical concerts coming March 7

COOK- The Piatigorsky Foundation’s classical musicians return to Cook to perform on Thursday, March 7 at 1 p.m. at North Woods School, 10248 Olson Rd. E., and for the public that evening at Trinity Lutheran Church, 231 2nd St. E., at 7 p.m. These traveling world class musicians are performing in several small towns in Minnesota from March 6-11.

Cellist Evan Drachman, founder and artistic director of the Piatigorsky Foundation, has combined musical talent with artistic vision to create a rich and varied career. As artistic director, he has become one of this country’s most respected authorities on the presentation of live classical music to diverse audiences.

In 1999, Drachman recorded his first CD, “A Frog He Went a Courtin’”. *The Baltimore Sun’s* Steven Wigler wrote of the recording, “Drachman possesses in abundance two qualities for which his grandfather was revered: the ability to make the cello imitate the hu-



man singing voice and, even more important, the ability to tell a story.” The Piatigorsky Foundation is named for Drachman’s grandfather, cellist Gregor Piatigorsky.

Drachman will be accompanied by a world class classical pianist, as yet to be identified, but listeners will not be disappointed. The evening concert at Trinity Lutheran will be a free offering organized by Northwoods Friends of the Arts. The school concert will be presented to children thanks to the financial aid of the Cook Lions Club.

SUPER SENIORS



The seniors of the North Woods boys basketball team were recognized at last Friday’s home game against Mesabi East. Above left: Seniors Jonah Burnett, Luke Will, Keenan Whitney, and Evan Kajala receive the game ball from and pose with Barb Novak, who has worked with the boys since fourth grade. Above right: Senior Tra’von Boshey, who died in a November car accident, was honored by his teammates with his No. 10 jersey displayed on the team bench and the team choosing to take a 10-second silent runoff of the clock on the opening tip. Boshey is pictured in a composite photo created by Connie Stone Photography in the same style as the individual player photos she did for the other team members. photos by D. Colburn and C. Stone



Cook-Orr Calendar

Wilenius to speak at library on Feb. 27

COOK- Local author Leo Wilenius will discuss his writing experience, the writing process and his books, “She Won’t Mow the Daisies” and “The Cabin Experience,” at the Cook Public Library on Tuesday, Feb. 27 at 11 a.m.

Leo is retired and resides locally in the North Country, which is the setting for many of the stories contained in his books. He continues to write articles for area print media and is preparing for a third book to be published this summer.

Cook arts org lists upcoming events

COOK- Area creatives should look forward to April when the first of two big upcoming art classes sponsored by Northwoods Friends of the Arts will take place.

Well-known local artist and popular NWFA instructor Jim DeVries will offer Ballpoint Pen Drawing for Beginners on Thursday, April 18 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at the gallery. DeVries will

lead students through the process of choosing a subject, developing composition and choosing the right tool, in this case a ball point pen. All supplies provided. Registration is required for this class. Call Alberta at 218-666-2153.

Duluth-based watercolor artist Mary Beth Downs will return to Cook in May for the NWFA-sponsored workshop “Keeping it Simple.” This two-day extensive workshop will focus on learning to work with a simple design and limited color to create a successful watercolor painting. There will be demonstrations to guide students, and the class is suited for all levels. The class will meet from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. on Thursday, May 9 and Friday, May 10 at the Cook Community Center. Call Alberta at 218-666-2153 or stop by the gallery to register.

Junior Jam talent show coming up Feb. 29

FIELD TWP- Mark your calendars and get ready for a rockin’ display of local talent at North Woods School on Thurs-

day, Feb. 29 at 6:30 p.m. at the annual Junior Jam talent show, a fundraiser for the junior class.

This year’s event has been expanded beyond the student body to include talented community members, and all are welcome to participate. Sign-up sheets are available at Cook Zup’s, Cook Public Library, the Cook Short Stop or the Lucky Seven General Store.

Acts must arrive at the school at 6 p.m. the day of the event.

This must-see event will cost \$5 for an adult ticket and \$3 for a child ticket, with all proceeds going to help the junior class stage a spectacular prom.

Chili cook off is Saturday in Orr

ORR- The third annual Tony Cornelius Chili Cook-Off will be this Saturday, Feb. 24 beginning at 4 p.m. at the Orr Community Center.

The event celebrates the life of Tony Cornelius, who died in October 2017 when a car going the wrong way struck his pickup truck head-on in eastern North Dakota. Money raised from the

chili cook-off goes to support the Tony Cornelius scholarship fund, which provides scholarships for North Woods School seniors.

“So far we’ve awarded \$6,000 in scholarship money, and we’re looking at awarding a \$1,000 scholarship this year,” said Kay Cornelius, Tony’s mother. “We’re looking for someone that is either going to do a trade or two-year degree that somehow relates to Tony as far as outdoors and things like that. They need to be an average student or above.”

Cornelius said that this year’s cook-off is shaping up to be the best one yet.

“People can expect great chili and a good time,” Cornelius said. “We have new chili cooks this year, so there’s different people that we normally have had mixed in there. We have a good mix of chilis, some red chilis, some chicken chilies, and some unique ones. We have probably more than 20 raffle items. We have a big Yeti cooler and there’s a \$100 gift card from Waschke’s.”

AGREEMENT...Continued from page 1

homes, as well as rental units, mostly for short-term stays.

Marjo RE will pay \$25,000 for the property, which TEDA purchased in 2020 from St. Louis County.

The plan appears to fit well with Your Boat Club's business model, in which dues-paying members can visit any of the club's marinas to use boats of their choice. The planned development is slated to take place directly adjacent to Your Boat Club's

marina on the East Two River, in Tower, which provides direct access to Lake Vermilion. The development will be connected to the marina via a walking trail among other ways.

"We've had tremendous interest already," said Luke Kujawa in a phone interview this week. "Interest from people hearing about it has been extremely strong. A lot of realtors and private parties want to know what's coming."

Kujawa said they

expect to order the first three model homes soon. Discussions are already underway about sewer and water extension to the site.

An architect's concept drawing for the project is well developed and soil testing and engineering work at the site was underway this week. The first batch of housing units could arrive in the Duluth port as early as April, according to Orlyn Kringstad, who is currently on contract with Marjo RE as project manager. Initial units are

being imported from the Norwegian home manufacturer Tinde-Hytter, which translates to "Peak Cabins" in English. At the same time, the company is working with Kringstad and his Norwegian business partner Lars Hanstad to enter the U.S. market with a subsidiary manufacturing plant in Tower.

Kujawa said the units produced by Tinde are attracting plenty of attention. "They're super nice, with both the construction and the quality. The

Scandinavian engineering and construction is first rate. These are high quality units and they're extremely energy efficient."

The units range significantly in size and can be as small as 400 square-foot cabins to as much as 1,400 square-foot three-bedroom homes. The units are all highly energy efficient, reducing the long-term expense and greenhouse footprint of the units.

Hotel project a later phase

While early plans for

the Marjo RE property included construction of a hotel, that development is now most likely to be located just upstream at the city's harbor, although TEDA has yet to obtain a firm commitment on the hotel project to date. For now, TEDA appears to be focused on facilitating the planned project on the Marjo RE property, which would represent the most significant increase in the city's tax base in generations.

PRIMARY...Continued from page 1

chair will receive a list of the names of voters who requested their party's ballot in the primary, which parties can use for get-out-the-vote efforts. The information is not to be posted publicly, and the candidate you select remains secret.

Republicans

Former president Donald Trump is far and away the leader for the Republican nomination nationally, and a January poll of Minnesotans tells the same story here, with Trump leading former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley 78 percent to 14 percent. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy are also ballot options, but all three have formally withdrawn from the race. Ramaswamy and DeSantis have both endorsed Trump, while Christie has not thrown his support to either of the remaining candidates.

Democrats

Incumbent Democrat President Joe Biden is likewise leading his party's race for the nomination by a huge margin, leading his closest challenger Minnesota U.S. Representative Dean Phillips by a 70-9 percent margin according to recent polling. Seven other candi-

dates are on the DFL ballot for the primary, including:

► Frankie Lozada is an entrepreneur who runs a New York-based events management company. Based on his social media posts, Lozada remains an active campaigner.

► Gabriel Cornejo is a Las Vegas-based entrepreneur who most recently worked as product manager and lead software developer for the National Merchants Association. Cornejo and his Renovate America campaign remain active according to social media.

► Cenk Uygur is a Turkish-born political commentator and media host known for his progressive online media broadcasts on The Young Turks network. Uygur is ineligible to be president as he does not meet the Constitutional requirement of being a natural-born U.S. citizen, but he believes that if elected the courts would overturn that requirement based on the Equal Protection Clause. Uygur's campaign also remains active.

► Armando "Mando" Perez-Serrato was a candidate in the 2021 California gubernatorial recall election. Serrato's career experience includes working as a para-educator and a behavioral therapist in general and special edu-

cation, as well as running his own company, Perez Combat Inc. Perez-Serrato has an active campaign website and appears to have an active campaign X account.

► Maryland-based Jason Palmer is a self-described entrepreneur, impact investor, and philanthropist who has served in executive and leadership roles at numerous corporations and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Palmer also remains an active campaigner for the nomination.

► California-based candidate Eban Cambridge described his background in a California voter guide as having experience as a licensed EMT, ten years as an Uber driver, and as a web developer. A URL for a campaign website returned an error message, but Cambridge does have several active campaign social media accounts, albeit with few posts.

► Bestselling author, political activist, and spiritual thought leader Marianne Williamson ran unsuccessfully for the Democratic nomination in 2020 and announced a second run in March 2023. She officially ended her campaign on Feb. 7 after losing in a landslide to Biden in the Nevada

primary, receiving only three percent of the vote.

Legal Marijuana Now

Having earned its status as a major political party in 2018 and retained it in 2020 after receiving more than five percent of the vote in qualifying electoral races, Legal Marijuana Now (LMN) would appear to be a party without a cause after the Minnesota Legislature legalized cannabis last year. But party spokesperson Kevin O'Connor said last year that the party wanted to evolve beyond its original goal to become a viable independent alternative to the DFL and Republicans.

LMN is part of some of the more interesting story lines for this presidential primary, as two of its candidates were submitted for the ballot without their knowledge or approval, while another campaigns with a boot on his head. The DFL has recently petitioned the state Supreme Court to decertify LMN as a major political party and bar them from nominating a presidential candidate.

The LMN candidates are:

► Krystal Gabel, a cannabis advocate from Colorado who is not running for president but whose name was submitted by LMN as a candidate without her permission,

something allowed by Minnesota law. Gabel told Colorado Public Radio that, "I was put on the ballot against my consent, and that very much felt like a violation of not only my privacy but of my constitutional rights," she said. "It even felt very physically icky and violating." Gabel requested that her name be withdrawn, but while LMN removed her from its own candidate list, the request came too late to remove her from the primary ballot.

► New Jersey based marijuana activist Edward Forchion is listed by that name on the LMN ballot, although in 2022 a New Jersey judge approved his petition to change his name to NJWeedman.com, according to his Wikipedia entry. Forchion appears to be another candidate named without consent, based on a Jan. 21 Facebook post of his which reads: "Somebody put my name on the ballot in Minnesota to run for President — wtf (No signature required / no consent needed) ... weird! That's not even my legal name!!!" The *Timberjay* found no evidence online that NJWeedman.com has been campaigning for the presidency, although he has made numerous unsuccessful runs for other political offices.

► Minnesotan Dennis Schuller is the party chairman for LMN who is an entertainment entrepreneur and recording professional and a former Richfield municipal planning commission member.

► Rudy Reyes, a California-based teacher, actor, archaeologist, and cannabis rights activist, serves as national chairperson for the Legal Marijuana Now Party, according to his Wikipedia entry. Reyes was a vice-presidential candidate for the party in 2000.

► Vermin Supreme is a performance artist and perennial political candidate from Massachusetts who campaigns wearing a boot on his head as a symbol of the media's obsession with candidates, he told Boston Public Radio. He also said the boot helps him to communicate with the public by amplifying his First Amendment free speech voice. Supreme has campaigned on a platform that includes free ponies for all Americans, time travel research, and using zombies to create energy. He also promises mandatory toothbrushing laws. Supreme finished fifth in the Democratic presidential primary in New Hampshire.

TRUCK...Continued from page 1

gallon tank, so it can be used to respond to vehicle fires or other small fires and will also be outfitted with medical rescue equipment. The truck is designed so that a single responder can take the truck to an accident scene and respond effectively with both medical gear as well as an ability to fight fire.

Fire Chief Tom Martin

said the department bought the surplus truck chassis for \$6,000, and the department has invested about \$55,000 into the project, including custom fabricating the truck's body to build a water tank and equipment storage. The vehicle would have cost about \$350,000 to purchase new.

Martin said department member Eric Garman

has been leading the restoration effort. Justin Koschak, who is a member of the Pike-Sandy-Britt Fire Department, custom designed and welded the new body, and the department was given use of heated garage space from Charlie Winger where they repainted and then assembled the new truck.

The truck has some

sentimental value to Martin. The truck was originally stationed at Camp Pendleton, a Marine Corp base camp in southern California. Martin's father was stationed there during that period in the early 1950s and worked on this same type of truck. Martin's father passed away two years ago, and the department received the truck,

which they bought from another Minnesota fire department a year ago.

The department has had a busy year with other projects, including redoing all the fire signs in their service area, as well as constructing a helipad landing zone with a concrete pad and lighting on a few acres of land adjacent to the fire hall, that the Rantala family

donated to the department. This created a safer zone for medical rescue, without the worry of having vehicles or people in the area, which was the case at the previous zones which include the old Four Corners lot or the horse arena area at Timber Hall. The new helipad zone is designed so that one person can secure the scene.

SKRABA...Continued from page 1

ballot boxes in Georgia and several other swing states. The film relied heavily on publicly accessible security video in place around the ballot box drop-offs. The group claimed to have reviewed thousands of hours of such video and alleged that their investigation had uncovered a systematic attempt to use individuals to ferry fraudulent votes to these drop-off locations. Notably, the film, which showed dozens of individuals depositing their votes in the ballot boxes, was never able to show the same person doing so repeatedly, which would have lent credence to their claims. Nor was the group ever able to produce witnesses with knowledge of the supposed scheme.

Georgia's State Election Board completed its own investigation and concluded that the individuals depicted in 2000 Mules were exercising their legal right to use the drop box to deposit their ballots, or the ballots of family members.

True the Vote, reportedly under pressure from funders to take their allegations to state elections officials, filed a complaint with the Georgia State Elections

Board in 2021 claiming to have "a detailed account of coordinated efforts to collect and deposit ballots in drop boxes across metro Atlanta" in the 2020 election.

The group, however, was slow to produce evidence in the case when Georgia elections officials attempted to investigate. Finally, in 2023, a Fulton County judge ordered the group to provide the evidence it claimed to have in its possession, including "the detailed account" the group claimed in its complaint. That included a request for any recordings, transcripts, testimony, statements, witness interviews, or notes that the group compiled in support of its claims. The judge's order also sought the contact information "for several individuals" who True the Vote claimed had personal knowledge of the activities it alleged, as well as a "contracted team of researchers and investigators" that the group cited in its complaint.

Just recently, however, True the Vote responded through its attorneys in a seven-page court filing that acknowledged that on

all points, the group had no information in its possession that supported the allegations in its complaint.

Is that causing any second thoughts by Rep.

Skraba, who not only organized the showing but brought other right-wing candidates, including attorney general candidate Doug Wardlow and St. Louis

County Sheriff candidate Chad Walsh, to the event to stir up the crowd? That's not clear. The *Timberjay* emailed questions and left a voice mail message for

Skraba at his legislative office, but Skraba did not respond as of press time.



Memories of the Early Days

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

Written by Marshall Helmsberger • Published by the Timberjay

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THE LEGISLATURE

Bill to prohibit sale of human bones receives hearing

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- When someone donates their body to science after their death, they likely never dream that their ultimate resting place would be on the mantle of someone's fireplace, but sales of real human bones do a brisk business online and in some Minnesota venues, and the Minnesota Legislature is considering steps to make the practice a crime here.

The House Commerce and Finance Policy committee is charged with

considering legislation to regulate business activity in the state with an eye toward protecting consumers, and on Tuesday along with bills regarding Internet and telecommunications providers and liquor stores, they discussed a measure introduced by Rep. Jamie Becker-Finn, DFL-Roseville, that would prohibit the sale of calcified human remains, otherwise known as bones, for commercial purposes.

Becker-Finn said the issue of bones for sale was brought to her by a constituent last year. The

person had walked into an oddities shop not far from the Capitol and discovered a real human skull for sale. The constituent asked Becker-Finn if that was legal.

"Right now, in the state of Minnesota it is legal to buy and sell human bones for commercial profit," Becker-Finn said. "It turns out it's not addressed in Minnesota statutes."

Becker held up a handout showing the website of a business in Oklahoma that sells human bones, one of many such businesses that conduct

sales online. Another, New York City-based JonsBones, has a "thoughtfully curated selection" of bones of all kinds. The items reviewed by the *Timberjay* had all previously been used for medical education purposes, according to their descriptions, items that included a \$3,800 second trimester fetal skull, a \$5,500 skull with facial reconstruction, and a \$4,600 half-skeleton bone box.

While Becker-Finn said she started work on the bill last year, its relevance was heightened three weeks ago when a Minnesota man pled guilty to federal charges of interstate transport of stolen goods for his involvement in a network of people dealing in human remains, including the former Harvard Medical School morgue director.

According to court documents, Matthew Lampi, of East Bethel, bought hearts, brains, lungs, skin, and other body parts stolen by a funeral home employee from cadavers that had been donated to the University of Arkansas for medical sciences.

Becker-Finn's bill would apply only to bones and not other body parts. She explained why the bill is limited in scope.

"We are specifically addressing the sale of bones because that is a practice that we know is actively happening right now in our state," she said. "It does not address other human remains and other body parts and things that we may be concerned about. I would welcome anyone wanting to work on that specific issue, but that's not this bill today in front of us."

Becker-Finn also said she has personal investment

in the issue because of her Indigenous heritage.

"For myself as a Native person, there's a long history of Native remains and bones being displayed, sold, brokered, and otherwise used for, I guess, entertainment as well as collector purposes," she said. "Obviously, I find that commodification of a human being reprehensible and I would hope that we all would."

Joe Sellwood represented the Minnesota Funeral Directors Association at the hearing, speaking in support of the bill.

"More than 600 funeral directors who make up MFDA's membership strongly believe that human remains should be treated with dignity and respect," he said. "There remains a quiet but open market for the buying and selling of human remains gathered as morbid collectibles and used for questionable purposes. This bill takes the first necessary step against this trade."

Sellwood also noted ongoing work at the federal level to require greater accountability and oversight of those receiving donated bodies with standards for chain of custody and standards for final disposition and return of remains.

The bill contains an exception for licensed health care providers at postsecondary educational institutions who need to obtain bones for legitimate medical, scientific, or educational purposes. A second exception is made for law enforcement needs related to the training of cadaver dogs. Anne Neu Brindley, R - North Branch, proposed an amendment to remove those exceptions,

but Becker-Finn disagreed.

"I understand the concern," Becker-Finn said. "These are legitimate uses that are already happening. I think a wholesale removal of the exceptions is going to create more problems than it solves."

Brindley's amendment was voted down by the committee.

Tim O'Driscoll, R-Sartell, asked how law enforcement acquires the cadavers it needs for training purposes, but Becker-Finn was unable to provide any additional information, offering the assumption that they are donated. O'Driscoll voiced his overall support for the measure, but indicated his belief that additional clarifications for the exceptions are necessary to clearly define the bill's parameters.

Brindley spoke again to voice her concern that the bill is limited to calcified remains, and referred to the Lampi case to reiterate her concerns about the possible commodification of other body parts, suggesting that omitting them from the bill could set up a legal interpretation that such sales would be allowable.

"I've already talked to a couple of members who might be interested in carrying a separate bill," Becker-Finn responded. "If folks want to work further to address the other issue, I am fully supportive of that. I just believe that these are two separate and distinct but related issues."

The committee voted to refer the bill to the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee for further deliberations.



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MITTENS...Continued from page 1

the final pattern for his Type 1 mitten. "It's based on a mitten made by an Ely firm called KMR," Reif said, "that made the mittens several years ago."

He got the pattern from

Chris Hegenbarth. She "dissected" some KMR mittens to make the pattern from them. Hegenbarth works at Minnesota North College, but she is married to Peter McClelland from White Wilderness Sled Dog Adventures, where good mittens are a necessity.

"It's a great mitten for mushing that lets you move your fingers inside ... It's super warm when it's super cold," Hegenbarth told the *Timberjay*.

Reif made his first delivery of Type 1 mittens to a retail store on Jan. 30. That was the day he dropped off a large box of mittens at Piragis Northwoods.

"We were originally going to sell them just during Ely Winter Festival," said Jay Gustafson, retail manager for Piragis, standing next to a rack at the store with eight pairs of Type 1 mittens. "As you can see, they're still here and still selling ... People really like that they're local."

Reif also manufactures a Type 4 mitten "based on a mitten design made by Midnight Mushing," an Alaskan firm. Hefter than the Type 1, the Type 4 was initially tested in -20 degree F conditions last year in the John Beargrease sled dog marathon by musher Kristen McCarty.

Next month, a pair of Reif's Type 4 mittens will be worn in this year's storied Iditarod in Alaska by musher Anna Hennessy. The mitts have also gone south — way south — to McMurdo Station. "I know that three pair are in Antarctica," Reif said. "One pair I sold and the other two got there organically."

Ozzie Reif

Elyites who frequent the Ely Folk School or trivia night at the Boathouse already know Reif's cheerful face around town. He grew up in Milford, Del. and went to college in Portland, Ore., at Lewis and Clark College, majoring in International Affairs.

Reif discovered Ely through the Boy Scouts. "I took a canoe trip with the Boy Scout camp when I was 16," Reif remarked. "I came back the next summer for a second trip." The experience left Reif "really hooked" on Ely and the Boundary Waters. He spent his summers since either working at the Boy Scout camp or volunteering with the Superior National Forest.

When he graduated from college in 2019, he moved to Ely and got a job at Wintergreen, making outdoor wear for two years. Then he worked for Friends of the Boundary Waters for a year and a half before going full-time working on his mitten business.

"Living in Ely, I've come to prefer the winter now more than the summer," Reif said. "The only drawback to winter in Ely is that it's a bit hard to canoe."

So how are sales going? Reif said he's been able to pay the bills so far, although he acknowledged this year's extraordinarily mild conditions likely haven't helped his local sales this year. For this Ely entrepreneur it seem, the chillier the better.

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THE LEGISLATURE

GOP lawmaker seeks to expand taconite assistance area

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL— North Country lawmakers are challenging a bid by Republican Sen. Jason Rarick to bring portions of Carlton and Pine Counties under the umbrella of the Taconite Assistance Area (TAA), which benefits from mining tax revenues.

The TAA, funded by mining production taxes, supports infrastructure and community development projects. The boundaries were established to include Iron Range counties with active mining operations. Carlton and Pine counties

had no such activity at the time the TAA was created and therefore weren't included.

Rarick's proposal is tied to upcoming mining expansion and would add three school districts in Carlton County and one in Pine County to the TAA.

"The intention is that as the Talon mine comes up into operation, begins mining, and the state starts receiving taxes from that operation, that these school districts would be then included, to receive monies," said Sen. Rarick.

However, the proposal has met strong opposition from Iron Range legislators,

including Democrats Rep. Dave Lislegard and Sen. Grant Hauschild. Lislegard criticized the bill for potentially diverting funds from the Iron Range to districts not currently within the TAA. Lislegard called into question Rarick's justification for the proposal, since the proposed Talon mine is located in Aitkin County, with only a portion of its leases extending into Carlton County.

Lislegard, who serves as the Chair of the Property Tax Division in the Minnesota House, expressed his determination to block the bill, stating it will not be considered

while he is in office.

"I spent my career fighting for the core Iron Range and so it's who I am and so what I'm going to continue to do while I'm in this seat," Lislegard said. "As God as my witness, this will not get a hearing."

Republican Sen. Rob Farnsworth of Hibbing also voiced opposition to the bill.

"While 20 percent of Talon's leases are in Carlton County, Talon officials have told me they have found 'no significant mineralization' yet," Farnsworth said. "Until we have a better idea of the mineral reserves in that

county, this bill is premature and doesn't have my support."

Farnsworth didn't rule out expanding the TAA as developments warrant as he also took a thinly-veiled swipe at Rarick's more vocal critics.

"Expanding the TAA, like we did for portions of Aitkin County last year, is a discussion we need to have because ultimately, the expansion of mining in Minnesota is a good thing," Farnsworth said. "Schools across the state are struggling with expensive mandates from last session. Grandstanding by legislators on this issue only

drives a partisan wedge on the Range that is not helpful."

Rarick acknowledged the concerns but expressed hope for ongoing dialogue.

The Iron Mining Association issued a statement underscoring the importance of iron mining to the region, state, and country, highlighting the industry's contributions to public schools across Minnesota through the School Trust Lands. The association stressed the sector's commitment to reinvesting in local communities and supporting the state's education system.

Briefly

Man killed in head-on with semi north of Orr

ORR- A 30-year-old man died in a head-on collision north of Orr on Tuesday when the car he was driving crossed over into the path of a tractor trailer.

According to the Minnesota State Patrol, Joshua Clyde Roudebush, of Clearbrook, was southbound in a 2010 Chevy Cobalt on Hwy. 53 approaching Lambert Rd. near Ash Lake at about 2:30 p.m. His car crossed the centerline into the northbound lane, colliding head-on with a 1989 Peterbilt tractor trailer driven by Geoffrey Norman Springer, 37, of Isle. Roudebush died at the scene, while Springer was not injured. The crash report said it was undetermined whether Roudebush was wearing a seatbelt or if he was impaired by alcohol. Springer was wearing a seat belt and alcohol was not a contributing factor.

The St. Louis County Sheriff's Office, Orr Fire/EMS, Cook Fire/EMS, Kabetogama Fire, and Voyageurs National Park Rangers responded to the scene.

Babbitt women in critical after crash in Pike

PIKE TWP- Emily M. Schnacky, a 22-year-old from Babbitt, was critically injured on Feb. 13 when her Chevy Cobalt left the roadway and rolled into the ditch along County Rd. 21 in Pike. Schnacky was traveling eastbound at around 2:45 p.m. when the accident occurred. She was transported by North Memorial Air Care to Essentia Health-St. Mary's in Duluth in critical condition.

The St. Louis County Sheriff's Office, Virginia Fire and Ambulance, Pike-Sandy-Britt First Responders, Breitung Police Department and the Minnesota State Patrol assisted at the scene.

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GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

Both incumbent supervisors facing challengers

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- Voters in the upcoming Greenwood Township election have some choices to make with two supervisor seats and one clerk seat on the ballot for the March 12 township election. Craig Gilbert has filed to challenge incumbent Barbara Lofquist, who is seeking re-election to her seat, while Lois Roskoski has filed to unseat Sue Drobac, who is also seeking re-election.

JoAnn Bassing has filed for the clerk seat, which she currently holds. Deb Spicer, who served as clerk previous to JoAnn Bassing, has also filed for the position. The *Timberjay* will have interviews with the clerk candidates in next week's paper.

The township has faced a host of controversies in recent years, with almost a full turnover of elected officers. The 2022 removal of the fire chief and assistant chief, which led to a majority of department members leaving the department in 2023 is certainly one issue on the minds of both candidates and incumbents. Incumbents Lofquist and Drobac both point to the increased training, accountability for township equipment, and active membership of the department, while Roskoski is questioning the board's actions and its impact on township residents. Gilbert, who has not, as of press time, responded to both telephone and email messages for an interview, is a fire department member, but he has not participated in enough trainings and 911-calls to qualify for pension credit in the last two years, according to Fire Chief Jeff Maus.

Other major changes have been the elimination of the township's two full-time positions (maintenance and assessor), which has led to lower township spending and a subsequent reduction in the local levy.

The current board's reluctance to fund the Tower Ambulance Service is being questioned by Roskoski.

Both Lofquist and Roskoski have voiced strong support for the current volunteer-led effort to build pickleball courts at the town hall. Drobac pointed out that the township had donated land for the effort. The question of whether to raise the levy to help fund the project is certain to come up at the annual meeting on March 12. Volunteers have already raised over \$30,000, which is enough to qualify for a \$30,000 matching grant from the IRRR, but more funding will be needed to complete the project.

Both incumbents are also proud of the board's recent actions to address a water quality issue at the

town hall well, as well as working on securing broadband internet access in the township.



Lois Roskoski

Lois Roskoski is a newcomer to Greenwood Township politics, but has 35 years of experience, working for the city of Virginia. "With my knowledge of small-town government, and my personality traits of being open, honest, and transparent, I feel I am very qualified to serve on the Greenwood Town Board," she said.

Roskoski pointed to the township's levy, which will be voted on at the annual meeting on March 12, as an important issue facing the township.

"Greenwood Township had a reserve balance of \$1.3 million, but the town board has dipped into the reserves of an average of \$100,00 per year since 2015. If that trend continues, Greenwood Township residents will face significant levy increases in a few years," she said. Roskoski said she didn't feel the board's recommended levy of \$175,000 for 2025, which would leave a reserve balance of a little over \$327,000 at the end of that year as advisable.

"In future years, the levy should be set at an amount so the annual expenditures equal revenues. I feel the reserve balance should be 1 1/2 to 2 times the annual budget amount," she said.

The town board also needs to take responsibility for the maintenance of Birch Point Extension, she said. "I contacted St. Louis County and obtained confirmation that Greenwood Township is responsible for maintaining 1.54 miles of township road (Birch Point Road Extension), and has been receiving Town Road Aid for several years," she said, noting this aid can only be used for the construction, reconstruction and gravel maintenance of town roads.

Roskoski breaks with the current position of the town board regarding funding for the Tower Ambulance subsidy. "I think it is appalling that the Greenwood Township officials have been unable to renegotiate with the city of Tower to renew the ambulance vehicle replacement aid agreement.

Greenwood Township is the only one of seven entities serviced by the agreement that has not paid their fees for the years 2022 and 2023, but continues to utilize the ambulance service," she said.

Roskoski did have concerns about the Greenwood Fire Department.

"The significant reduction of the Fire Department staff was the reason I became interested in Greenwood Township. I find it unbelievable that there is so much dysfunction between the leadership and the fire department members. The residents are the ones that are losing in this unfortunate situation, and we need to work at increasing the staffing levels within the Greenwood Fire Department in a professional manner. We live in a very remote location and response time can be a life-or-death situation for the people that live here," she said.

She is a supporter of the pickleball court project. "I wholeheartedly support the fundraising efforts by the volunteers working to construct three additional pickleball courts at the Greenwood Township recreation area and personally donated to the cause," she said.



Barb Lofquist

Incumbent Barb Lofquist says she is proud that the township, and town board politics, have become "more peaceful" over the last three years.

She is also a town board member who is willing to take action on problems, some longstanding, and figure out solutions. "I knew that water was bad for 18 years," she said. "It had a smell." The township has long provided drinking water for residents who have lakewater systems and residents routinely used an outdoor spigot at the town hall for their water.

"I've been using that water for almost 20 years," she said.

Lofquist got the board to agree to do water testing, beyond the basic tests done by the state for bacterial contamination and nitrates. The results showed sky high levels of arsenic, a naturally-occurring mineral found in the bedrock. She then researched options for removing the arsenic from

the water to make it safer for residents to drink, and the board agreed to spend the funds needed. She has also followed up on maintenance and regular testing, which has involved some back and forth with the filtration manufacturer.

"It was quite an achievement to get it fixed," she said.

As far as the fire department, Lofquist sees the changes this past year as positive.

"I am proud of being part of making our fire department efficient, responsible, and taking care of the maintenance of their equipment," she said.

"We now have a fire chief who goes on calls, which the previous chief did not regularly do," she said. She said Chief Maus is doing an incredible job, not constantly asking for more pension money, and increasing the training requirements for department members.

"I'd rather have 10 people who are active instead of 20 who are not," she said. "The pension club is over."

Lofquist said there is no reason for the township to have more than a million dollars in reserve, as it did in years past. "We have adequate funding to replace anything we need that is not insured," she said. She added that it took the new treasurer and clerk months and months to get the township's books back in order.

"Now we know where we stand," she said.

Lofquist said that she, along with fellow Supervisor Sue Drobac, organized the township's survey of residents to determine interest in getting broadband/high-speed internet in the township. The results of that survey are important for securing grant funding for future broadband expansion.

For the future, Lofquist would like to see the township work on attracting housing for moderate-income families on non-lakeshore lots, since most lakeshore property is not affordable for working families. She noted there are hardly any families

with school-age children in the township anymore.

Lofquist, who does own property on Birch Point Extension, and therefore has not been participating in town board actions on the issue, does feel it is the township's responsibility to keep the road maintained and in good repair. "It's a dangerous road," she said.

Lofquist would like to see the state Legislature step up and help solve the funding crisis with rural ambulance services. "It should be financed just like solid waste with a per parcel fee," she said.

Lofquist is also a fan of the pickleball court project.

"It's creating a community," she said. "I've changed my mind about enhancing recreational opportunities at the town hall." Lofquist said she is hoping to take up the sport and heard there was going to be beginner's classes offered.



Sue Drobac

Sue Drobac brings some added experience to the role of supervisor, since she formerly served as the town clerk. After she was re-elected to that role in 2020, she quit several months later after the town board approved a large reduction in the job's hours and salary. She ran and won a seat on the town board the following year. She has also served as board chair.

"I am hoping to have the township support and retain my seat for another three years," she said. "I'm very happy to say that the current board has accomplished quite a few things that continue to improve the township."

Drobac sees herself

as a team player, working together with other township officials on projects.

A major project has been working on bringing broadband service for most of the township. While initial township grant applications were still in process, she notes that the township was included, luckily, in a successful grant request from Bois Forte.

"This will cover the majority of the township," she said. The board is still working on securing funding, along with township funds that have been set-aside for this purpose, to expand broadband to the areas not covered by the Bois Forte grant.

Drobac also pointed out the board's work to improve ambulance coverage, and the work being done to improve the Greenwood Fire Department.

"Our firefighters and EMRs are working at keeping the department running well," she said, noting the department is seeing a slow but steady increase in the number of members, after the majority of department members quit after the leadership shakeup.

On the budget front, Drobac said, "We've kept the reserve funding for the township at a reasonable dollar amount. While there are no hard or fast rules for the size of a township's reserve, our board has set the goal of having approximately equal to a year's spending. The township has insurance on its buildings and equipment, so if there was any need for replacement."

Drobac also commended the town board for their unanimous and generous support of the pickleball project by donating the land for the effort.

Craig Gilbert

Craig Gilbert has yet to respond to the *Timberjay's* request for an interview. We hope to hear back from him soon, and if so, will include his remarks in next week's paper.



Women's Head Basketball Coach Vermilion Campus

Minnesota North College, Vermilion in Ely, MN is seeking applicants interested in a Women's Head Basketball Coaching position Fall 2024/Winter 2025.

This is a temporary part-time (TPT) position, that may be renewable for future years. The Women's Head Basketball Coach is responsible for player recruitment beginning Spring 2024 immediately upon selection, monitoring of player's academic performance, team preparation through scheduled practices, as well as, all aspects of a successful athletic program. All salaries are dependent upon academic qualifications and experience.

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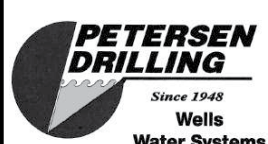


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GIRLS BASKETBALL

Ely dumps North Woods

Senior Grace LaTourell notches 41 points in 78-48 rout

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ELY- The North Woods girls were riding high at Ely last Thursday when senior River Cheney drained a half-time-buzzer-beating trey for a one-point lead at the intermission, 29-28. But Wolves' senior Grace LaTourell squashed any chance of a Grizzlies upset with a monster 29-point barrage in the second

half to leave the Grizzlies reeling on the short end of a 78-48 score.

The Grizzlies started out on the right foot with a steal by Helen Koch, who put the Grizzlies ahead 2-0. Hannah Penke quickly responded with Ely's first trey of the night, and the battle was joined.

A pair of deuces by Penke and a basket by Clare Thomas put Ely up 9-3 before the Grizzlies got their first score

from the floor on a drive down the lane by Tatum Barto. From there on, every time Ely tried to put some distance between them, the Grizzlies found a way to hang close. When a LaTourell layup gave Ely a 24-18 lead, Cheney responded with a pair of buckets down low. And with the Wolves up 28-22 with haltime approaching, the Grizzlies came up with a 7-0 run on a free throw by Barto, a triple by Koch, and

Right: Ely's senior Grace LaTourell's perfect form on jumpers was on full display in her 41-point performance against the Grizzlies.

photo by D. Colburn

Cheney's long range bomb to stun the Wolves and the Ely home crowd by taking the lead at the break.

See GIRLS...pg. 2B



STATE NORDIC SKI MEET

Ely boys take eighth place

Strong relay finish lifts Ely in final rankings at state Nordic meet

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

GIANTS RIDGE— A huge fourth-place finish in the boys sprint competition here on Thursday lifted the Ely boys team to eighth-place at the state Nordic ski meet on a bright but chilly day. Freshman Aksel Skustad and junior Silas Solum had finished first at the Feb. 7 sectional competition with a time of 14:48 in a race that requires each sprinter to complete two laps of the 1.2 km track.

But Skustad and Solum crushed that time at Thursday's state competition, qualifying for the finals with a time of 13:07.88. And they left even that mark in the dust in the final round, completing the hilly course in 12:15.03, just 20 seconds off the winning pace of 11:55.94, set by a team from Brainerd.

Above: Ely junior sprinter Silas Solum works his way through traffic during state meet competition last Thursday at Giants Ridge. Solum was paired with Aksel Skustad in the event and the pair finished in fourth place overall.

Right: Ely senior sprinter Ava Skustad works her way up a hill during the girls sprint event last Thursday.

photos by M. Helmsberger

The sprint competition has come to play an oversized role in team rankings, so Ely's strong showing in the event in a field of 24 teams helped to boost Ely's team ranking among the 16 teams represented at the state meet. The team was lodged in 13th place ahead of the sprint event, which

See NORDIC...pg. 2B



NORDIC WORLD CUP



Bianco 37th at World Cup meet

MINNEAPOLIS— Ely native Erin Bianco was among a handful of Minnesota skiers taking part in the Stifel Loppet Cup this past weekend at Theodore Wirth Park. The event was part of this year's World Cup tour and drew top Nordic racers from around the world. Bianco, who qualified for the World Cup circuit earlier this year, finished in 37th place, including fifth among Americans, in the elite field during the sprint competition on Saturday.

Left: Erin Bianco, huge crowd in the background, works her way up a hill at Theodore Wirth Park. photo by L. Shaull

HOCKEY PLAYOFFS

Ely routed in opener

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

CLOQUET— Ely's once seemingly promising hockey season came to a convincing end Tuesday evening in the first round of the Section 7A playoffs here. The Cloquet-Esko-Carlton Lumberjacks dominated play from start to finish in a 12-0 shellacking of the seventh-seeded Timberwolves.

Ely, which had built a 12-5 record at one point in the season, slipped in the rankings down the stretch and ended up seeded seventh and facing the number two seeded Lumberjacks.

There were few bright spots for the Wolves on Tuesday as the 'Jacks outshot them 71-10.

The Wolves did manage to hold off the onslaught through much of the first period, but once the scoring started, the 'Jacks were largely unstoppable as they racked up four goals in less than three minutes late in the period. They added five more in the second and three more in the final period to put an exclamation point on the rout.

The Wolves were flagged on seven penalties in the contest, to two for the 'Jacks, but it made little difference in the outcome as the 'Jacks went just one-for-seven on the power play.

The Wolves end their season at 14-12, still one of their best performances in several years. Looking ahead to next year, the Wolves will lose three of their top four scorers, seniors Drew Marolt, who led the team with 27 goals, Deegan Richards, who lit the lamp 16 times this season, and Brecken Sandberg, who added six goals on the season.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Grizzlies rout Littlefork-BF

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

LITTLEFORK- Littlefork-Big Falls, on Tuesday, had the unenviable task of hosting a North Woods girls team still smarting from last Thursday's loss to Ely, and the Grizzlies took out their frustrations on the Vikings with a 62-point beat-down, 89-27.

It was a monumental mismatch from the outset, with an opening basket by Tatum Barto giving the Grizzlies a lead they would never relinquish. The Grizzlies were firing on all cylinders as a Talise Goodsky putback gave the Grizzlies a 22-8 lead midway through the period, and North Woods kept on adding fuel to the fire, taking an insurmountable 47-18 lead by the half. The Grizzlies'

See GRIZZLIES...pg. 2B

BOYS BASKETBALL

North Woods chalks up three more wins

Tra'von Boshey, who died in a car crash in November, is honored on senior's night

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP – The North Woods boys basketball team ran its record to 18-4 this week with big home wins over Hill City and Mesabi East.

The Grizzlies got off to a fast start in this one with Louie Panichi, Talen Jarshaw, and Jonah Burnett all draining three-balls to start the game, and with a Luke Will free throw thrown in held a 10-2 lead early. The Grizzlies' press was effective early on, with Aidan Hartway converting a turnover for a lay-in and a 19-7 lead. Hartway scored again on the next possession, upping the advantage to 14 points. But the Hornets began to find success by going down low to 6'4" forward Jacob Roper, who converted a bucket and charity to narrow the gap to 23-17. Both teams looked rough on offense as the half wound down, but North Woods got a basket from Jarshaw, a pair of free throws from Will, and a buzzer-beating trey by Burnett to take a 42-29 lead into the locker room.

After a Hill City trey made the score 45-37 with about 14 minutes left in the game, North Woods made a move to pull away, using their defense and speed to good advantage. Evan Kajala smartly tapped a rebound to Panichi who hit Jarshaw on the fly for a fast break bucket and a 59-40 lead with 11 minutes left. A Burnett deuce and pair of free throws sandwiched around a Panichi 15-footer maintained the North Woods edge at 74-57.



Left: North Woods senior Jonah Burnett's shot against Mesabi East frames the No. 10 jersey of senior Tra'von Boshey in the background. Boshey was honored along with the team's four other seniors for senior night.

photo by D. Colburn

fueling a big-time run that left the Giants reeling under a 53-23 halftime deficit.

North Woods stayed on the attack in the second half, with Burnett scoring the deuce that started the continuously running clock with a 35-point 73-38 lead. The scoring slowed and the teams played even down the stretch with the Grizzlies claiming an 84-49 win.

Jarshaw put up 21 points to lead the Grizzlies, while Burnett hit for 19, Will knocked down 16, and Panichi scored 15.

Jugovich was impressed with the Grizzlies first half performance.

"It's not often that we put up 13 points in nine minutes and then finish the next nine with 39 more," he said. "We really took it to them once we got into our groove, but we've got to be able to hit that faster."

Fond du Lac

A delay in getting into their groove in a Thursday home matchup against Fond du Lac had the Grizzlies staring at one of their biggest deficits of the season, as the Ojibwe bolted to an 18-point 32-14 lead at the 7:20 mark of the first half. A Jarshaw triple with 3:30 left in the period put the Grizzlies on track to trim the deficit to nine at the half 41-32.

The Grizzlies were down 11 at 45-34 when

another Jarshaw trey at the 16:48 mark put them on track to make the uphill climb necessary to take the lead.

A Burnett double and a trey, Jarshaw putback, a Will fast break and a pair of Panichi free throws brought the Grizzlies back to even at 48-48, and an old-fashioned three-point play by Jarshaw gave North Woods the lead with 14:02 remaining. The Grizzlies never trailed again, riding their momentum to a 97-81 win.

The Grizzlies' defense came to the fore in the win, forcing 34 Fond du Lac turnovers and holding the Ojibwe to 27 fewer shots from the field. North Woods also had a solid night from the charity stripe, going 19-of-26 for 73 percent.

Burnett came up huge for the Grizzlies with 42 points, going 14-of-30 from the field and acing a perfect 11-of-11 from the line. The big game helped move Burnett back up the list of the state's leading scorers for all classes, where he was slotted sixth as of Tuesday. Jarshaw pumped in 24, and Panichi added 10.

North Woods was scheduled to start a challenging four-game finale to the regular season with a home game against Littlefork-Big Falls on Thursday, followed by a Friday road trip to Chisholm.

On Monday the Grizzlies will be in Ely to take on the Wolves, then return home next Friday to take on Deer River. The Warriors represent the biggest obstacle on the schedule, sitting just five spots below the 26th-rated Grizzlies in the playoff seeding formula rankings.

GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

Those who expected a second-half fight to the finish instead got a full display of how potent Ely's offense can be when LaTourell is in the zone. LaTourell canned a 10-foot jumper to start the tsunami, and kept right on rolling from there as the Wolves went on an 11-2 run, forcing North Woods Head Coach Liz Cheney to take a timeout with her team trailing 39-31. The Grizzlies couldn't find their shooting touch and the Wolves made them pay for the miscues, with the lead ballooning to

60-40. LaTourell drained a pair of three balls, and the only question remaining at that point was how big the Wolves' final edge would be. Penke, Visser, and LaTourell all contributed to the stretch run that gave Ely the 78-48 win.

LaTourell led all scorers with 41 points, while Penke also turned in a strong performance with 24 points. Cheney was the top scorer for North Woods with 22, followed by Koch with 11.

Ely Head Coach Max Gantt said there was no magic adjustment at half-

time other than one.

"What we said was work harder," Gantt said. "We wanted to try to move the ball more, we wanted to work harder on defense, we wanted to be more physical. We picked up more fouls, but who cares?"

Gantt contrasted LaTourell's explosive game against the 37 points she had against Chisholm on Feb. 12.

"When we went to Chisholm, she took a lot of their players one-on-one for buckets. Tonight, it was a team effort. It was because others were touching the

ball – Hannah's touching the ball, Clare's touching the ball, Sarah Visser is pushing the pace. She had 41 because she's a phenomenal scorer, but she doesn't get that if we don't play as a team."

Gantt said the Wolves still have goals to accomplish by the end of the season.

"We have 18 wins, which is awesome. If you'd have told me at the beginning of the year we'd be right where we're at with hopefully a two seed, we would've taken that all day. We want to play better

defense, we need to keep our turnovers down and keep the ball moving, but we feel good right now."

Cheney had high praise for LaTourell after the game.

"How do you stop Grace LaTourell when she's on fire? We could have all been on her but you can't take that away from her," Cheney said. "She was what made the big difference."

But Cheney was equally pleased with the Grizzlies' first half performance.

"We showed we can do it. We played amazing

defense, we were patient on our offense. We didn't get shaken up when they put the press on. I was really impressed with what we did, and I know we can play like that," Cheney said.

Both teams were scheduled to finish the regular season on the road this week, with North Woods' finale on Tuesday at Littlefork-Big Falls and Ely playing at Cherry on Tuesday and South Ridge on Friday. Seedings, opponents, and game times for the 7A sectional tournament will be announced over the weekend.

NORDIC..Continued from page 1B

left the team's hopes riding on its two sprinters.

"We knew our sprint team was solid," said Ely Head Coach Todd Hohenstein. "But you never really know how other teams you haven't competed with will compare. We did ski against Brainerd earlier this season and they had a great sprint duo. Our plan was to try and stick with them."

It turns out they may have stuck a bit too close. "During the first handoff our skier inadvertently stepped into the path of the Brainerd team," said Hohenstein. "No contact was made, and all skiers stayed upright. Brainerd went on to win the heat and we came in second." Yet, the error, which was inadvertent, appeared disastrous moments after the race when meet officials announced they were assessing Ely a 15-second



Ely freshman Aksel Skustad skis through a morning snow squall during the qualifying round of the state Nordic sprint competition.

photo by M. Helmsberger

penalty for obstructing the Brainerd racer, a decision that would have denied Ely its spot in the finals.

Hohenstein immediately appealed the decision and after some explanation and discussion, the officials opted to reverse the ruling,

sending Ely to the final round based on the sprinters' qualifying time.

The decision was the kind of break that Ely didn't experience in the opening day of the meet, which focused on the pursuit competition. "We did have

a couple issues during the morning [classic] race," said Hohenstein. Both junior Dylan Durkin, who has consistently led Ely in meets this season, and freshman Oliver Hohenstein, who was frequently right behind Durkin in recent meets, fell in heavy traffic early in their race. Hohenstein noted that the state meet is populated with highly competitive racers and the track can sometimes get crowded. "Skis and poles can get tangled on an uphill or taking a sharp corner," he said.

Durkin reportedly damaged the tip of one of his skis during the fall, which hampered his kick throughout the rest of the race. Despite the mishap, Durkin still topped the Ely field, but finished 52nd overall with a time of 26:48.6. That was still more than a minute faster than Durkin's combined time at

the sectional competition, where he finished fourth overall.

Hohenstein, who finished sixth at sections came in 56th at the state meet with a combined time of 26:58.6, a minute-ten-seconds faster than during the section competition, held on the same track at Giants Ridge.

While both racers recovered quickly from their falls, the incidents undoubtedly impacted their times. "A fall can cause you to lose a few places pretty quick," noted Hohenstein and that impacts the point totals for the team.

Other Ely racers finished not far behind. Junior Eli Olson finished 58th with a time of 27:04.2, while fellow junior Milo McClelland finished 72nd with a time of 28:17.5. Freshman Caleb Larson finished 89th in a time of 29:08.8.

In the girls sprint, Ely's team of seniors Claire Blauch and Ava Skustad combined to finish 13th in a field of 24 teams. Blauch and Skustad finished in fourth place in their qualifier with a time of 15:57.62, which wasn't enough to move on to the finals. The pair had finished second in the sectional contest to qualify for state.

Coming in, Hohenstein said the boys team had set a goal to finish in the top half, which they were able to do. The relay points added to our pursuit races from yesterday put us in 8th place, which allowed us to reach our goal," he said. "It is obviously very satisfying when stating a goal you have for a group, working very hard to achieve the goal, and finally making the goal reality."

GRIZZLIES..Continued from page 1B

defense was even more dominating in the second half, allowing the Vikings

only nine points as North Woods steamrolled their way to the easy 89-27 win.

River Cheney led the Grizzlies with 19 points, followed by Helen Koch

and Barto with 17 each. Koch was red hot from beyond the arc, nailing

five treys. Nine Grizzlies notched scores in the rout.

READ
the Timberjay!

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Good shooting helps Wolves roll over Tigers

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

CHERRY- The Ely Timberwolves girls were dialed-in from long range Tuesday night as they used a barrage of threes and good overall shooting to tame the Cherry Tigers 87-44. The 10-14 Tigers weren't

likely to keep up with the 18-6 Wolves, and that proved to be the case as Ely dominated the first half of play 54-24.

"It was a great first half and game of shooting the ball," said Head Coach Max Gantt. "We made 11 threes on the night. Just a lot of good team offense and solid team defense on the

night."

Grace LaTourell led the Wolves with 22 points and three treys. Hannah Penke had 17 points and also had three trifectas. Penke also led the defensive effort with multiple steals and blocks. Zoe Mackenzie had 11 points, including three threes. Sarah Visser had a solid all-

around game with two threes and a total of eight points, ten assists and ten rebounds, just missing a triple-double.

Now at 19-6, the Wolves head to South Ridge to close out the regular season on Friday.

The Wolves currently trail Mt. Iron-Buhl and Chisholm in the Quality Ratings Formu-

la rankings used to determine seedings for the sectional tournament. With 17-8 Chisholm on a three-game losing streak and drawing 22-2 Mt. Iron-Buhl for their season finale, it's possible the Wolves could overtake the Bluestreaks for a No. 2 seed with a win at South Ridge on Friday.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Mt. Iron tops Wolves 81-41

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

ELY— Turnovers have proven costly in back-to-back losses for the Timberwolves this past week. Playing on home hardwood on Monday, the Wolves fell behind early and couldn't catch up in an 81-41 pounding at the hands of Mt. Iron-Buhl.

"We had 20 first half turnovers which led to easy baskets for them," said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald. "We struggled offensively again and couldn't generate anything." The Wolves have faced troubles all year against larger, more athletic squads and they faced two of them this week in the Rangers and the Bluestreaks.

Sophomore guard Jack Davies mustered at least some offense for the Wolves on Tuesday, dropping in 13 points, while junior guard Caid

Chittum added 12.

Tuesday's contest was a virtual carbon copy of last Friday night's contest at Chisholm. "We lost 79-38 and 19 first half turnovers did us in," said McDonald. "Chisholm shot well and ran away with it."

Chittum led the Wolves offensively this time, with 13 points, while sophomore guard Drew Johnson notched 11 rebounds and six assists.

The Wolves travel to South Ridge on Friday. They'll be back home next Monday to host North Woods as the regular season winds down. They'll host Fond du Lac in the regular season finale on Friday, March 1.

Drew Johnson moves down the court through traffic.
photo by J. Greeney



Obituaries and Death Notices



Christina Premo

Christina Premo, 56, of Mt. Iron, passed away on Feb. 10, 2024, after a long battle with cancer. A celebration of life will be held from 1-7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 29 at the Iron Trail Motors Event Center in Virginia. A full obituary will follow in next week's paper.

Zachary S. Kainz

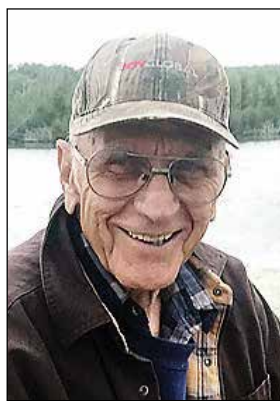
Zachary Scott O'Bryan Kainz, 28, of Chisholm, originally of Ely, passed away on Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024, at his residence. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 24 at The

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Babbitt with visitation beginning one hour prior to the service. Arrangements are with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his daughters, Nora (Licar) Kainz and Aspyr Kainz; parents, Scott (Michele) Kainz and Tamara (Tom) Herb; sister, Ashlee Kainz; stepsisters, Ashley Wright and Jamie (Chris) Pierce; paternal grandparents, Donna Davis and Bruce Kainz; aunts and uncles, Scott Wilson, Dawn Wilson, Travis (Kristi) Kainz, Sheila Kainz and Jennifer (Tom) Nemanich; and many cousins, nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Arlene L. Crain

Arlene L. Crain, 94, of Crane Lake, passed away on Sunday, Feb. 11, 2024. Services are being planned for a later date. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.



Richard Mariucci

Richard P. Mariucci, 86, of Mt. Iron passed away unexpectedly at his home in Ann's Acres on Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024. A celebration of life ceremony will be held for Richard on Saturday, March 16, at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Virginia. Visitation will be at 10 a.m. The funeral service will be at 11 a.m. A luncheon will follow at the church at 12 p.m.

Arrangements are being made through Landmark Funeral Home.

Richard was born to Sabatino and Lena (Dellago) Mariucci on Jan. 30, 1938, in Virginia. He grew up on Northside with his two brothers, Emil and twin Donald. At age 19, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Italy where he was a ski instructor, lifeguard, and earned commendations in marksmanship for heavy machine guns and mortars.

After his honorable discharge, he returned to the United States and married (Dolores) Carmen Salminen (deceased). Richard and Carmen raised their 4 children in Mt. Iron, Minn., and were married until Carmen's death in 2001. Richard was a loving husband and father,

providing his family with adventures, laughter, and cherished memories.

Richard worked in the mining industry his entire career but wore many other hats. He was a property owner, tending to rental homes and those who occupied them. He was a skilled welder, a problem solver, and loved to build with his own two hands. It seemed as though there wasn't anything Richard couldn't do or fix.

Richard didn't sit still. In his youth he was a competitive ski jumper across Minnesota and Wisconsin, and even tried out for the Olympics. He was the life of any party when he showed up with a bottle of his homemade wine in one hand and his guitar in the other. He would sing you a song, tell you a story, and make you laugh. He could for-

age for berries, hunt wild game, and tend a garden, then turn the bounty into jam, wine, and a good meal. Richard loved nature and fishing, which he enjoyed often with family and friends.

Richard touched countless lives with his help, hospitality, and laughter. He will be dearly missed by friends, neighbors, and family. Richard was preceded in death by his wife Carmen (Salminen), parents Sabatino and Lena (Dellago), and brother Emil. Richard is survived by his twin brother Donald (Annette), and his four children Clay (Rebecca) Mariucci, Mark Mariucci, Clint (Chris) Mariucci, and Annie (Brent) Oelrich, as well as numerous grandchildren, great grandchildren, cousins, nieces, and nephews.

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Financial Wellness

Q: What is the Price Transparency Act?
A: The Hospital Price Transparency Act put in place regulations by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that require hospitals to make information about their standard charges available to the public. In doing so, patients have a better foundation for patient-driven healthcare, allowing them to see the costs associated with care before scheduling their appointments.

Q: Does EBCH offer Financial Assistance?
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Q: Navigating healthcare billing is difficult; who can help me?
A: Ely-Bloomenson understands how difficult it can be to navigate your healthcare insurance and billing information. We have a wide variety of professionals who can help you understand your billing and payment options, including a fully staffed Business Office Team, a Patient Access Team Leader, and a Social Worker. Call us at 218-365-3271 during regular business hours, and our receptionist can direct your call to the appropriate support staff to get you the help and understanding you deserve.

Hospital Connection is a new feature from Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital (EBCH) this winter. We are excited to share our most recent updates and information in a question-and-answer format featuring a new topic each week. Throughout the next several weeks, we will share exciting information about EBCH, our newest services, and how we are a partner in the communities we serve. You can also find more information about EBCH by visiting our website at www.ebch.org. Like our Facebook page to keep up with current events and announcements.

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Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital is committed to caring for and enhancing the health and well being of the community it serves.



Outdoors

Our lives in the
Northwoods

LOOKING FOR SNOW? TRY...

Summer in Antarctica

Abrahamson finds adventure and more in visit to the coldest continent

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

REGIONAL- Steve Abrahamson, of Tower, is an avid traveler, but with help and a little prodding from his even more adventurous daughter and son-in-law, he recently completed a bucket list trip to Antarctica.

Nova (Abrahamson) and her husband John Nieuwenhuis had put together plans for a group of friends and family members to travel

to the coldest continent back in 2020, but those plans were waylaid by COVID-19. But this year, the couple along with Steve and a friend of John's made the 12-day trip. For John, it marked a particular milestone as he has now visited all seven of the Earth's continents.

The traveling group spent two days in Argentina, prior to the Antarctic trip, hiking in national parks in the southern part of that country. Then they boarded a small, 166-passen-

ger boat, to cross the infamous Drake's passage, and later spent seven days exploring the Antarctic peninsula.

"We saw three types of penguins, humpback whales, elephant seals, Weddell seals, and orcas," said Nova. She said she caught the travel bug from her father Steve, who has done a lot of overseas travel, but nothing quite as adventurous as their latest journey.

For Steve, it was a chance to scratch a life-long interest in polar exploration. "I've

Right: Steve Abrahamson, far right, with his daughter Nova, her husband John and a friend pose during their recent visit to Antarctica. submitted photo

always been a fan of the heroic age of exploration down there," he said. "I always had a dream of getting down to Antarctica but I never thought I would." But he said Nova and John are excellent plan-

See TRIP...pg. 5B



ADVENTURE

The big fish quest

Orr angler takes his passion to the extremes in his hunt for records

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- When is a world-record fish not a world record?

Adam Van Tassell of Orr knows the answer to that question all too well, as his would-be world-record fish is these days lazily cruising the waters of a lagoon off the Rio Cururu in the Amazon.

It's the record that got away.

But before getting to that adventure, a little backstory is in order.

Van Tassell's zest for pursuing what he calls "braggable" fish knows no bounds. Inspired by the fad of books and lists with titles like "101 Places to See Before You Die" and "101 Business Deals You Need to Look At," Van Tassell chose his own 101 quest about a decade ago.

"I said I'm going to do 101 braggable fish," he said. "Not only are they different species, but they have to be braggable. They're maybe not trophy class, but big enough that when you go back and show the pictures people go 'Whoa!'"

The show "River Monsters" and its host, extreme angler and biologist Jeremy Wade, who travels the globe in search of big and dangerous



Top: Adam Van Tassell poses with his record-sized fire peacock bass on a boat in the Amazon and, above, displays a giant vampire fish with its scary long teeth.

Facing page: Brock Van Tassell caught a wolf fish at the same time his father Adam caught a peacock bass. submitted photos

fish was a major inspiration for Van Tassell. It's a show he and his 13-year-old son Brock watch together.

"He goes all over the world catching these crazy fish and I was just mesmerized by this," Van Tassell said.

And because Pelican Lake falls far short of fulfilling the 101 species on his list, Van Tassell travels the world, too, taking his son with him.

"We've done two trips to the Amazon," Van Tassell said. "We've done a fishing trip to Costa Rica, and Belize several times. I'm going to Costa Rica in three weeks for another fishing trip. I've got a trip to Argentina in November and then Guyana, just north of Brazil, we'll go there in February of next year. The goal has been much more expensive than I anticipated."

It's quite an about face for someone who wasn't really into fishing as a kid.

"I had done a little fishing growing up in high school in Utah, but not much, like Boy Scouts, but that's really more like throwing rocks in the water while your line's out there somewhere," Van Tassell said.

It was a summer job he had at Pine Point Lodge on Crane Lake where owner Jeff Erickson got him hooked on fishing, Van Tassell said.

"Jeff taught me to bass fish," he said. "And it just kind

See QUEST...pg. 5B

Outdoors briefly

Voyageurs Wolf Project hosts webinar series

REGIONAL— The Voyageurs Wolf Project will be hosting another series of webinars to highlight some of the findings of their long-term research project on wolves in and around Voyageurs National Park.

The Voyageurs Wolf Project is a University of Minnesota research project that was started to address one of the biggest knowledge gaps in wolf ecology — what do wolves do during the summer? That includes providing a better understanding of predation and reproductive behavior during the non-winter months.

The webinars, which run from 6:30-8:30 p.m., are a way for the project's researchers to highlight some of the intriguing information they've been able to gather about wolf ecology during the course of the study. The webinars, which cost \$20 to attend, are also a way to help support the research. Upcoming webinars include:

► The fishing wolves of Voyageurs: a deep dive into the science of a unique behavior: Wednesday, March 13.

► Selfish parents, unhelpful adolescents, and starving pups: insight into how wolf packs and populations adjust to prey populations: Wednesday, April 10.

► Where and how wolves hunt and kill deer fawns: Tuesday, April 23.

To register, go to www.tickets.umn.edu and click on U of M Tickets and Events. Then look for the link to the Voyageurs Wolf Project.

Fishing reports

Ely area

There has been little improvement in ice conditions this past week. Anglers continue to report inconsistent ice, mostly ranging from 8-14 inches on area lake trout lakes. On crappie and walleye lakes, anglers have been reporting 12-15 inches of ice. Snow cover is almost non-existent, so four-wheelers and side-by-sides are the best way to travel on area lakes.

Lake trout fishing proved to be challenging this last weekend for trout anglers. Many reported inactive lakers that stayed tight to the bottom in 30-50 feet of water. Lakers would come in, look, then vanish. Pounding the bottom with heavy tubes, tipped with sucker bellies, was effective to draw in lakers and keep them interested enough to bite.

Stream trout anglers reported good fishing for rainbow trout on area lakes, particularly early in the morning. Small tungsten jigs tipped with wax worms or a dead minnow, dead sticked, have been very effective. Anglers report rainbows coming through in 5-15 feet of water. Some big splake have been caught this last week as well, mostly in 15-25 feet of water. Rippin raps, small bucktails and small tubes have been effective.

Courtesy of Arrowhead Outdoors. See more at ArrowheadOutdoorsElyMN.com.

QUEST...Continued from page 4B

of exploded in me. I got this desire to fish all the time."

That job also gave Van Tassell's girlfriend at the time, Kasey, a reason to come visit in 2004. He'd told her about the beautiful sunsets and fantastic fishing, and it was something she needed to see for herself. The girlfriend became fiancé when Van Tassell took Kasey to Vermilion Falls to propose. After time spent in Utah, Key West, and Hawaii, where Van Tassell attended college and earned a business degree in hospitality and tourism management, the couple found themselves back in Minnesota in 2010 working for a canoe outfitter in Ely. In 2011 they joined another couple in taking on a fishing lodge on the Gunflint Trail, until they sold their share in 2014.

Van Tassell and his wife, Kasey, then purchased Birch Forest Lodge on Pelican Lake in 2015. It was an opportunity they'd been waiting for, a chance to put down roots for their young family in the Minnesota North Country they'd come to love. The Van Tassells and their youngsters, Brock and Adyson, soon welcomed another child, Chase, into the family. Their dream of owning and operating a small family oriented outdoor recreation resort had finally been realized.

Stalking peacock bass

When Van Tassell and his son traveled to Brazil with one of his friends and his teenage son last November, they were primarily on the hunt for peacock bass. Van Tassell had met an outfitter from Brazil at a sport show several years ago who had



told him about them. "The peacock bass is considered the hardest biting bass in the world," he said. "There are over a dozen recognized species of peacock bass, and each species has its own world record."

However, when fishing in the Amazon basin, you never know what you might catch, Van Tassell said.

"We have caught monster piranhas, 200-pound catfish, vampire fish with fangs that are over two inches long, it's just amazing," he said. "There's 3,000 species of fish that live in the Amazon basin alone, and 90 percent live nowhere else in the world."

To say that Van Tassell's fishing destination was remote is an understatement.

"The Amazon River has thousands of tributaries. We were 900 miles from the main Amazon River," Van Tassell said. "We had to take a three-hour plane ride to a grass dirt airstrip. From there we drove 90 minutes. Then they floated us and our trucks on homemade rafts down a river to another remote road."

And when Van Tassell's Portuguese-speaking guide realized they wanted to catch really big fish, there was more trekking to do.

"There was this lagoon

that was off the beaten path," Van Tassell said. "We had no idea what we were getting into. We took the river and we had to take the motors off the boats and we literally dragged the boats over this bit of dry land. We had to cut logs to roll the boats on. So, we're portaging the boat, and we get in this little dried up creek bed and we are floating and dragging it through, walking in ankle to knee-deep mud. The whole time you're thinking about all the stuff that can kill you in that water - leeches, insects, little snails, electric eels, sting rays, and piranhas, so you're thinking this had better be worth it."

They reached the lagoon at midday, not an ideal time to be fishing for bass.

"I changed up and decided to throw a feather jig, like a big jig head with all these feathers on it," Van Tassell said.

He gestured to the

guide to get away from the edge and move toward deeper water, thinking the bass likely would have moved there.

"I only take about three casts and suddenly my rod just bent right over," Van Tassell said. "I set the hook and the drag just started zipping and I thought oh man, we found the lunker. We got it in the boat, and we were just so excited."

Van Tassell estimated it took about two minutes to pull the fish up alongside the boat, and it was clear it was bigger than anything they had been catching, because it wouldn't fit properly in the net.

It was a peacock bass, evident from the bright orange coloring underneath and the stripes on its sides. But beyond that, Van Tassell didn't know which particular species he'd caught.

The video taken of his catch shows him holding it up with a Boga Gripper scale clamped to its lower jaw.

"Whoa, nice fish, 12 pounds," he exclaimed. While Van Tassell would have been happy with some pictures, his guide insisted that they measure the fish. He evidently had some sense that the fish could be special.

With the world record for one variety of peacock bass coming in at nearly

30 pounds, Van Tassell said, he had no idea that he was about to return a world record member of the fire peacock bass species back into the lagoon.

"I didn't think it was a world record. I let it go," he said.

About six weeks later, Van Tassell was contacted by the Brazilian government, he said. His guide had turned in the measurements along with Van Tassell's contact information to the Brazilian Game Fish Association.

"They said, 'Did you know the world record (for fire peacock bass) is 10.6 pounds and you apparently recorded a 12-pound fish?' and I said no, I had no idea," Van Tassell said.

But the information provided wasn't enough to certify the catch as a world record.

"To verify the weight for International Game Fish Association standards you have to take the fish onto dry land and you have to hang it from a level brace with no one touching it, and the whole process is to be videoed, and you have to use a certain type of scale," Van Tassell said. "We didn't do any of that. It kills the fish when you do that, and we were just trying to get it back in the water."

The fish would have qualified for the Brazilian record, but only Brazilian

citizens are allowed to be national record holders, Van Tassell said, so he missed out a second time.

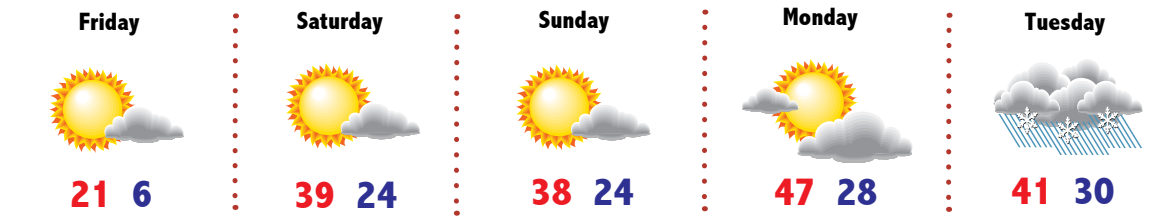
"But they have a whole category for foreigners who break Brazil records," he said, "so I'm in that record, even though mine is better than the Brazilian one. They sent me a certificate which I'll have framed, and we have a lot of photos and the video."

Van Tassell still has the personal satisfaction of being a world-record holder without a record, with a bass larger than any he might have caught in Pelican Lake, or Minnesota, for that matter. And he got to check fish No. 53 off his list, which still leaves a whole lot more fishing to do. "I just passed the halfway point," he said. "The problem is every time I catch a fish it makes getting the next one more difficult because that fish is not on the list anymore. And they've got to be big enough to brag about. It's going to be another ten years."

To let people follow along on Van Tassell's fishing adventures, he and his son have created a YouTube channel, "Crazy Good Fishing," where you will find the video documenting his world-record-sized catch and dozens more.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather



Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.
02/12	25	na	0.01	0.1"	02/12	27	21	0.00		02/12	26	21	0.00		02/12	27	19			02/12	26	21	0.00	
02/13	26	na	0.03	0.8"	02/13	26	17	0.01	0.8"	02/13	25	16	0.01	0.2"	02/13	28	16	No		02/13	26	16	0.03	0.6"
02/14	27	na	0.01	0.1"	02/14	26	13	0.00		02/14	24	16	0.00		02/14	30	21			02/14	27	13	0.00	
02/15	30	na	0.01	0.5"	02/15	33	18	0.00		02/15	31	18	0.01	0.1"	02/15	23	9			02/15	32	17	0.00	
02/16	19	-1	0.00		02/16	20	3	0.00		02/16	18	3	0.01	0.1"	02/16	10	1			02/16	20	2	0.00	
02/17	12	-10	0.00		02/17	11	0	0.00		02/17	9	0	0.01	0.1"	02/17	30	7			02/17	10	0	0.00	
02/18	29	6	0.00		02/18	30	10	0.00		02/18	29	8	0.00		02/18	28	10			02/18	30	10	0.00	
YTD Total			0.90	26.0"	YTD Total			1.27"	19.2"	YTD Total			1.72	34.7"	YTD Total			NA		YTD Total			1.80	24.3"

TRIP...Continued from page 4B

ners, so he was excited to be able to be a part of their adventure.

The trip was physically active, Steve said, with many excursions on shore once they reached the Antarctic Peninsula.

The only downside to the trip was the rough weather traveling on the boat back to Argentina.

Traveling through Drake's passage can be rough, he said, and on the trip back, it lived up to its reputation. "I spent two days flat on my back on my bunk, seasick!" said Abrahamson. "I didn't eat anything for over two days."

But the trip, overall, was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, he said.

"The natural beauty was amazing. The icebergs themselves, they were so massive. The penguin colonies. We got to kayak among icebergs and see as pieces of the iceberg calve off underwater and then pop up in the ocean. The colors, all greens and blues, were so beautiful."

The trip also included a mountaineering experience, something Steve, as one of the older travelers on the tour, was a little apprehensive about. But once he was up high on the side of a mountain, the view was something he will never forget. The only sounds, he said, were from icebergs calving nearby.

In the evenings, the tour hosted educational talks about biology, geology, and the environmental issues facing the arctic regions.

One night, along the front deck of the ship, Steve watched as an iceberg about one-third the size of their ship came closer and closer. He assumed the ship's crew knew it was nearby. But then the iceberg hit the side of the ship and the crew came running out.

The ship was in no danger it turns out, and the



Chin strap penguins at Orme Harbor on the Antarctic Peninsula.
submitted photo

ship was quickly pushed away from the iceberg.

Despite Antarctica's reputation for brutal cold, late December is near the summer solstice and the weather was relatively mild, mostly in the 20s, warmer than the weather back home in Tower that week.

One of the days on the trip, Nova, John, and Asa took a true polar plunge. Steve said he does try to swim wherever he is traveling, but on that day, he wasn't feeling well enough to try it out.

For his next adventure, Steve said he is looking at some trips to the Arctic, perhaps to see narwhals and camp out on the Arctic ice sheet.

Nova and John are continuing to travel this year. Since they both have jobs where they can work remotely, they have taken advantage of the work-from-home experience. Right after returning from Antarctica, they packed up their family, including three young children ages one to five, and headed to Costa Rica, where they will work for the next two months, while they and their kids get to enjoy the tropical climate.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

MORCOM TOWNSHIP

County of St. Louis, State of Minnesota

Notice of Annual Meeting Notice of Election

Notice is here by given to the qualified voters of Morcom Township, County of St. Louis, State of Minnesota that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024. In case of inclement weather, the meeting and election may be postponed until the third Tuesday in March, which is March 19, 2024.

The Election Poll hours will be open from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm, at which time the voters will elect:

- 1 Supervisor for a 3 year term
- 1 Clerk for a 2 year term

The Board of Canvass will meet on Wednesday, March 13, at 5:30 pm to certify the election results.

The Annual Meeting of Morcom Township will commence at 8:15 PM following the closing of the Township Elections on Tuesday, March 12, 2024.

The Morcom Township Annual Meeting will be held at the Bear River School.

Sasha Lehto, Clerk, Morcom Township
218-969-5812

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 16 & 23, 2024

VERMILION LAKE TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Vermilion Lake Township, County of St. Louis and State of Minnesota, that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024.

In case of inclement weather, the election and meeting will be postponed until Tuesday, March 19, 2024.

The election poll hours will be open from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at which time the voters will elect by ballot:

- One Supervisor for a term of 3 years
- One Clerk for a term of 2 years

The Annual Meeting will commence at 8:15 p.m. to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

The Annual Election and Meeting will be held at the following location:
VERMILION LAKE TOWN HALL, 6703 WAHLSTEN ROAD

NOTE: Board of Canvass will meet following the Annual Meeting.

Crystal Alaspa, Vermilion Lake Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 16 & 23, 2024

FIELD TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Field Township, County of St. Louis, and State of Minnesota, that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024.

In case of inclement weather, the election and meeting will be postponed until Tuesday, March 19, 2024.

The election poll hours will be from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. at which time the voters will elect by ballot:
One Supervisor for a term of 3 years
One Clerk for a term of 2 years

The Board of Canvass will meet following the Election.

The Annual Meeting will commence following the Board of Canvass to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

The Annual Election and Meetings will be held at the Field Town Hall, 1627 Hwy. 25.

The Reorganization Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at 7 p.m. at the clerk's home (9998 East Lind Rd., Angora). In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be held on March 26, 2024.

Any questions, contact the clerk at clerk@fieldtownship.com.

Pat Chapman, Town Clerk, Field Township

Published in the Timberjay, February 23, 2024

NOTICE OF PUBLIC ACCURACY TEST City of Tower, County of St. Louis, State of Minnesota

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public accuracy test of vote counting equipment to be used in the March 5, 2024 Presidential Nomination Primary Election will be held on Thursday, February 29, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. at the Tower City Hall, 602 Main Street, Tower, MN.

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 23, 2024

LEIDING TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Leiding Township, County of St. Louis and State of Minnesota, that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at the Leiding Town Hall.

In case of inclement weather, the election and meeting will be postponed until Tuesday, March 19, 2024.

The election poll hours will be open from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at which time the voters will elect by ballot:

- One Supervisor for a term of 3 years
- One Clerk for a term of 2 years

The Board of Canvass will follow the election.

The Annual Meeting will commence following the Board of Canvass to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

Regular Town Board Meeting
The regular meeting of the Leiding Town Board will be held on Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Marie Milan, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 23 & March 1, 2024

EMPLOYMENT



Northern Tier High Adventure POSITION OPENINGS

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OPENINGS

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

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Licensed Teaching positions grades 7-12 (B.A. or teaching license required):

- Special Education Teacher

Student Support and Community positions (no education license required) Benefits Eligible

- Special Education Assistant (para(Special Education) (Hourly \$17.50 - 24.50/HR +)
- School Social Worker (LSW, LGSW, LICSW, Licensed School Social Worker all acceptable - alternative certifications considered LADC etc.)
- Student Success Program Specialist, Indigenous Focus

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

FIELD TOWNSHIP

The Public Accuracy Test of the DS 200 and the Omni Ballot will be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 10 am at the Field Town Hall - 1627 Highway 25, Cook, MN
Pat Chapman/Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, February 23, 2024

KUGLER TOWNSHIP

The Public Accuracy Test will be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at 6 p.m. at Kugler Town Hall.

Chris Suihkonen, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, February 23, 2024

VERMILION LAKE TOWNSHIP

The Public Accuracy Test will be held on Wednesday, February 28 at 2 p.m. at the Vermilion Lake Town Hall.

Crystal Alaspa, Town Clerk

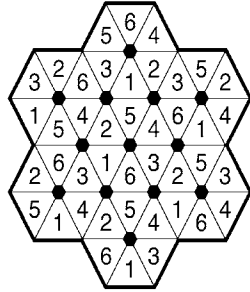
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by Linda Thistle

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

- ♦ Moderate
- ♦♦ Challenging
- ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

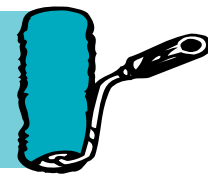
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EMPLOYMENT



DEPARTMENT OF IRON RANGE
RESOURCES & REHABILITATION

AGENCY ENERGY AND CLIMATE POLICY ADVISOR

Agency Policy Specialist
Permanent, Full-Time

The Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation is seeking to fill the permanent, full-time (1.0 FTE) position of Agency Energy and Climate Policy Advisor (Agency Policy Specialist).

The Agency Energy and Climate Policy Advisor will build productive networks to develop and provide internal expertise and vision to the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation (IRRR) on energy, climate, and integrated industrial decarbonization-related issues; it will provide informed advice and recommendations to the IRRR Commissioner and IRRR business development and community development teams regarding energy and climate policy and industry challenges and opportunities; it will collaborate with state experts and leaders to develop and lead execution of the agency's strategic plan and goals as it relates to opportunities and challenges in economic development in the energy, climate, and integrated industrial decarbonization sectors, with a focus on opportunities involving integration across the regional natural resource-based economy (mining, timber, manufacturing). This position will also contribute to the creation of IRRR policies and strategies for programs and projects that serve the needs of the Taconite Assistance Area (TAA) communities; represent the IRRR at various industry, community and/or business meetings, committees and task forces; and work to communicate and enhance the IRRR's economic development mission and goals.

This position is located in Eveleth, MN with the eligibility for a mixture of in office and telework. Occasional travel to events is required.

Learn more and apply online at
mn.gov/careers
Job ID: 73905

Application deadline: March 4, 2024

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AA/EOE, Veteran Friendly 3/1



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EMPLOYMENT



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SOCIOLOGY INSTRUCTOR

Vermilion Campus - Ely, MN

Temporary Part-Time – MSCF Faculty

Anticipated Start Date: August 19, 2024

The Minnesota North College – Vermilion Campus in Ely is seeking to hire a temporary part-time Sociology Instructor who is committed to excellence in teaching and learning; using active and experiential learning strategies; creating a student-centered environment; commitment to teaching students from a wide variety of backgrounds and working collaboratively with colleagues to create a successful student learning environment.

The successful candidate will embrace active and experiential learning strategies, have excellent communication skills, and demonstrate knowledge and commitment to assessment of student academic achievement.

Education Requirement: Master's degree with a major in sociology or a Master's degree with a minimum of 18 graduate semester credits (27 graduate quarter credits) in sociology.

Application Procedure: Send a letter of interest, current resume, copy of transcript, and contact information for three references. Official college transcripts required at the time of hire.

Email required documents to jamie.musburger@minnesotanorth.edu.

Application Deadline: March 12, 2024

AA/EOE Veteran Friendly