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Inside:
Greenwood votes to double levy... See /9
Enter our Easter giveaway... See /12
Antique snowmobile races... See 4B
Puzzle Book inside this week's paper!

The **TIMBERJAY**



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989 VOL. 35, ISSUE 10 March 15, 2024 \$1⁵⁰

DONATIONS OF NOTE

Woman's bequest to benefit Int'l Wolf Center

\$2.45 million from Eileen Sutz to benefit wolves in North America

by **CATIE CLARK**
 Ely Editor

ELY- The International Wolf Center is one of three recipients of a \$2.45 million bequest aimed to further wolf education and research.

In one of the largest donations made in support of wolves, Eileen Sutz, a native Chicagoan, bequeathed her

estate to three organizations dedicated to educating the public about wolves in North America. The recipients of her gift, Yellowstone Forever, the



Eileen Sutz

International Wolf Center, and Wolf Park will share in the funds equally. Each organization has plans to expand their wolf education programs and research with Sutz's support and vision behind them.

Sutz was a lifelong wolf advocate who had strong feelings about protecting and supporting wolves. Believing they were misunderstood and

Right: One of the ambassador wolves at the International Wolf Center in Ely. file photo

unjustly maligned, she saw the importance of educating people about wolves and protecting the wolf population.

Employing a legacy
 The International Wolf

See...**CENTER** pg. 10



MAJOR FEDERAL FUNDING

Focus on forest fuels

\$100 million for fuel reduction and the Superior is high on the list

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
 Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Significant federal support could soon begin flowing to northeastern Minnesota to help address the growing danger of wildfire to area communities. And that federal commitment brought a high-profile visitor to the region this week, when Dr. Homer Wilkes, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment toured several hazardous fuels reduction efforts in the region, including a project north of Ely on Tuesday.

Wilkes hardly needed to emphasize the wildfire potential during his visit, which coincided with some of the worst fire conditions ever seen in the region so early in March. At a time when two feet of snow is still typically on the ground, Dr.

Above: Nick Petrack, fire specialist with the Superior and Chippewa national forests, points to maps of the fuel reduction work being done along the North Arm Rd.

Right: Kawishiwi District Ranger Aaron Kania gestures while pointing out recent fuel reduction work along Slim Lake to Under Secretary Wilkes. photos by M. HelMBERGER

Wilkes found bare ground, low humidity, and tinder dry conditions, all factors that contribute to high fire danger. And with weeks yet until green-up, fire officials are already on high alert. Per the March report from the National Interagency Fire Center's predictive services, all of Minnesota currently has significant wildland fire potential.

While most fire reduction efforts at the national level have

See...**WILDFIRE** pg. 10



ELECTIONS

Incumbents ousted in Greenwood

by **JODI SUMMIT**
 Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP— Almost 360 Greenwood residents cast ballots in Tuesday's township election, and they showed a clear preference for new leadership. Challengers Craig Gilbert and Lois Roskoski easily took the two open supervisor seats. Gilbert topped incumbent Barb Lofquist 206-150, while Roskoski bested Sue Drobac 224-134. Former clerk Debby Spicer beat out incumbent clerk JoAnn Bassing 197-156.

This week's results were a stark contrast to last year's township election, where residents reelected incumbents John Bassing and Paul Skubic who were both running unopposed, while electing interim clerk JoAnn Bassing and interim treasurer Jeff Maus, who also both ran unopposed.

See...**OUSTED** pg. 9

THE LEGISLATURE

Do painters need more regulation?

by **DAVID COLBURN**
 Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- A Minnesota Senate bill to create a licensing system for painters and regulate the purchase of solvent-based paints is causing a stir among do-it-yourselfers and painters alike as many question the need for such legislation.

The bill, introduced by three DFL legislators - Sens. Jennifer A. McEwen, Judy Seeberger, and John Hoffman - would create a

See...**PAINTERS** pg. 9

See related **OPINION**

Too much regulation? pg. 4



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Community notices

FDLTCC to host Indigenous Healthcare Career Exploration camp in June

CLOQUET - The Indigenous Healthcare Career Exploration camp invites high school students from across the state to explore the health care field. The camp, hosted by Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, runs from June 12-14. The multi-day residential camp is open to students entering grades 9-12.

During the camp, students will have the opportunity to learn about various professions in the health care and long-term care sectors through connections with providers who are already working in the field. They will get a chance to explore a wide range of careers in healthcare and long-term care. They will also visit UMD Medical School, UMD College of Pharmacy, and RSI equine therapy farm.

Apart from learning about health care, students will also participate in cultural activities such as traditional games and ceremonies. They will go on fun excursions and stay in on-campus housing while being provided meals at no cost, thanks to the camp's funding partners. Scrubs camp is an excellent way for students to get introduced to the health care field while enjoying the beautiful FDLTCC campus.

This year's camp will be open to 40 students. Due to grant funding and generous partnerships, there is no cost to students. Spaces are limited, and applications will close on March 31.

Scrubs camps have been around since 2008 and were created by HealthForce Minnesota. The first Scrubs camp was held at Winona State University.

To learn more about the 2024 Indigenous Healthcare Career Exploration camp at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College or to apply, please visit <http://archsmn.com/learn/in-person-learning/programs/scrubs-camp/>.

EMPOWER to hold March 25 meeting at EFS

ELY - EMPOWER, an Ely-based progressive women's group will meet on Monday, March 25 at the Ely Folk School located at 209 E Sheridan St. at 6 p.m. The meeting will feature a documentary on home funeral and natural burial followed by a brief presentation and 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 pattenj@gmail.com. EMPOWER welcomes all individuals who self-identify as women.

Correction:

An article entitled "EMPOWER sponsors event to show women options for nontraditional, good paying careers" in the March 1 edition of the *Timberjay* listed membership and contact information at the end of the article that was incorrect. There are two area groups who go by the EMPOWER name. The article references the group affiliated with the Minnesota North College System. Their contact is angela.heikkila@minnesotanorth.edu or by phone at 218-293-6873.

Signup by March 31 for health care career camp

HIBBING - JET (formerly the NE MN Office of Job Training), the Arrowhead Regional Consortium for Healthcare Staffing, and the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging, along with community health care employer partners, will host an in-person, three-day residential SCRUBS Camp for Minnesota high school students (entering grades 9 - 12) from August 6-8. The camp will be held at Minnesota North College - Hibbing Campus.

The Hibbing camp offers a unique opportunity for students to learn about various health care professions from providers through hands-on experiences. Educational sessions will include Respiratory Therapist, Mental Health, Surgical Technician, Radiology Technician, Lab Technician, Nursing, Paramedic/EMT, Social Work, and more. In addition, students will visit UMD Medical School, UMD College of Pharmacy, and RSI Equine Therapy Farm.

This year's camp is open to 32 students. Due to grant funding and generous partnerships, there is no cost to students. Spaces are limited, and applications close on March 31.

TOWER

Banks joins Lake Vermilion Cultural Center board following Erickson retirement

TOWER- At their recent annual meeting, the directors of the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center (LVCC), bid farewell to Don Erickson upon his retirement, and welcomed Dr. Amy Banks to the board. Erickson served as chairman for two years and served on several committees including fundraising, where he secured an Arts and Tourism grant from the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board. This grant helped us with our continuing restoration project.

Erickson is a practicing attorney and has been instrumental in updating the LVCC bylaws. He lives in Virginia with his wife Sandy, and they look forward to continuing attending our many events and supporting the LVCC.

Banks says she is "looking forward to being an integral part of the LVCC community and hopes to help further our growth and mission in the community." Banks has many roots on the Iron Range having grown up in Mt. Iron. She then earned her degree in mechanical engineering at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Following that, she received her M.D. at the University of Minnesota-



At a recent LVCC Board Meeting, President Mary Batinich presented outgoing board member Don Erickson with a thank you plaque for his service on the LVCC Board of Directors. Standing left to right Mary Batinich, secretary Shelby Vaske, chair Elaine McGillivray, and new board member Dr. Amy Banks.

ta Medical School and is currently a physician at Scenic Rivers Clinic in Tower. She has enjoyed getting to know many local residents, both professionally and personally, during her four years in residence and is "grateful this community is her home." Her two children attend Tower-Soudan Elementary School and they

can often be seeing playing around town with their two pups.

Banks is excited about the ways the LVCC will enrich the Tower-Soudan community. "During early times of COVID-19, our communities were stressed in ways we never dreamed possible, but as diligent Minnesotans, we pushed ahead. We are now

regrouping with many of us reevaluating our lives, our personal choices and our physical and emotional health. I am hopeful that the past years of uncertainty will be a stepping stone for more mindful ways of living, which will connect us deeper to each other and our community."

HERE'S TO THE BIRTHDAY BEAR

Smokey Bear paintings available to view at three Superior National Forest offices in March

DULUTH - In celebration of Smokey Bear's 80th birthday, the Superior National Forest will kick start the celebration next month by hosting 19 historical paintings by Rudolph (Rudy) Wendelin of Smokey Bear. The Superior NF is one of just fourteen national forests and grasslands in the nation to host the painting collection during the 2024 birthday celebration event. Visit www.smokeybear.com for details of national campaign.



Historic Rudy Wendelin paintings to tour Superior National Forest office locations in March

The public is invited to view the collection at three of the Superior NF locations March 19-25. The special art shows will include Forest Service staff, art presentations,

and special appearances by Smokey Bear with commemorative memorabilia. For additional details check the Facebook pages and websites for the Superior NF and Smokey Bear.

The paintings are on display at the Supervisor's Office located at 8901 Grand Avenue Place, Duluth, from March 19-21. The office is open Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for viewing with a special art show scheduled for Wednesday, March 20 from 4 - 6 p.m.

The collection will be on display at the Gunflint

District Office located at 2020 W Highway 61, Grand Marais from March 22-25. The office is open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. for viewing with a special art show scheduled for Friday, March 22 from 4 - 6 p.m.

At the Kawishiwi District Office located at 1393 Highway 169, Ely the public can catch the final stop of the collection from March 26-29. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. for viewing. A special art show will also showcase the collection on Thursday, March 28

from 4 - 6 p.m.

On loan from the USDA National Agricultural Library, these paintings were completed from 1977 through 1995 and remain the most famous depictions of Smokey Bear. Painter Rudy Wendelin worked for the Forest Service as an illustrator beginning in 1933 and was the mastermind behind Smokey's human-like appearance in his signature ranger hat and blue jeans. Thanks to Wendelin's art, Smokey's message "Only YOU can prevent wildfires" has prevailed through the generations. Bring the whole family to see these historical paintings and possibly Smokey Bear in person at a National Forest near you.

For larger tours, please contact the corresponding office to arrange. In the event that the collection delivery is delayed, adjusted details on art viewing will be sent out.

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TOWER CITY COUNCIL

Tower looks to update its charter

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER— City officials here are looking at possible changes to the city's charter, a key city document that hasn't been updated since 1997, according to Mayor Dave Setterberg. Some of the possible updates mentioned at Monday's city council meeting reflect changes in the structure of the city government in Tower that have rendered portions of the charter obsolete. "We no longer have the Gunderson Trust, for example," noted Setterberg.

Some of the updating would be more clerical in nature. The charter is riddled with significant typographical errors which would presumably be fixed as part of an update.

Setterberg also suggested splitting the roles of the clerk-treasurer and going back to having a clerk and a separate, most likely, part-time, treasurer.

The extra cost of hiring a separate treasurer to handle city finances could be recouped by the potential savings on the city's audit, which would likely not have to be done annually if the clerk-treasurer position was split. The annual audit currently costs the city about \$30,000, or about eight percent of the city levy.

Separating the clerk and treasurer positions would also address the longstanding concern raised by the city's auditor about the poor segregation of duties within the city's financial operations. Setterberg also noted that a separate treasurer would provide some additional redundancy at city hall.

While such changes to a charter are typically the purview of a city's charter commission, city councils in Minnesota cities under 10,000 may initiate charter changes without charter commission action. The changes would still

need to be approved by the voters, which could potentially be part of the city's November's general election ballot.

The council authorized the creation of an ad hoc committee to discuss possible changes in the charter in time to bring the question to the voters in the fall.

At the same time, the council agreed to take another look at the clerk-treasurer position job description as a separate issue.

In other business, council member Joe Morin told the council about planning for the creation of a school forest for the Tower-Soudan Elementary and possibly the Vermilion Country charter school. Morin said the school forest would provide an outdoor learning space for kids to explore and potentially help maintain. The planning group working on the effort has identified about 64 acres of city-owned land on top of the hill north of town that is within walking distance of the school. Designation of the site would be done through a joint powers agreement that would have termination provisions if the city ultimately decided it was no longer in the city's interests. The designation would not impact the city's ability to conduct forest management, although it could prompt the city to look at some restrictions on certain activities, such as hunting with firearms, which could pose a safety risk to students.

The council gave Morin a green light to continue pursuing the concept, with no timeline on when the question might come back for an up or down vote.

In other business, the council:

► Approved the final payment of \$34,897 to Mesabi Bituminous for work on the city's kayak landing. The funding will

come from an IRRR trails planning grant. Clerk-treasurer Michael Schultz told the council that the IRRR grant will go for the construction of a Green Flush bathroom facility near the civic center, with about \$50,000 left for site prep.

► Heard from Schultz that it will take another month to get everything in place on the bonding plan for the purchase of the county public works facility. Schultz said the county was fine giving the city at least until May to get its funding together for the purchase. Among the steps the council must take is approval of a Capital Improvement Plan, which will require a public hearing in advance. The council approved a motion to set that public hearing for Monday, April 8, ahead of the city council meeting. In the meantime, Schultz said county officials have indicated that the city could begin moving some equipment onto the property if so desired.

► Heard from Schultz that Mayor Setterberg and ambulance supervisor Dena Suihkonen recently testified to the Minnesota Senate Taxes Committee in support of legislation authored by Sen. Grant Hauschild that would provide one-time emergency financial assistance to rural ambulance services that are experiencing financial shortfalls. Several other Iron Range area officials testified at the hearing, including Ely Mayor Heidi Omerza and Virginia Mayor Larry Cuffe.

► Referred a proposal to change the harbor north zoning ordinance to allow for single family residential development to the city's Planning and Zoning Commission for consideration and a public hearing.

► Considered an estimate of the cost to connect the "Around the Horn" trail, which serves as a seven-mile loop trail con-

necting Tower, Soudan, and the McKinley Park and Hoodoo Point campgrounds. The estimate of \$785,300 from JPI Engineering would likely be paid mostly through grant dollars, although a local match would likely be required. "Tower's portion would be about \$72,000," said Schultz. "It would have to come down a lot for it to be comfortable for me," said council member Bob Anderson. Setterberg said he didn't see the project as time sensitive. "I don't see a huge rush," he said. The city will continue to work with Breitung Township to seek a way to move the project forward.

► Discussed a number of possible community infrastructure projects that could be included in an upcoming application to the IRRR. The city is seeking funds primarily to close a funding gap for sewer replacement work between S. Second and S. Third Streets but city officials are hoping to add a few more items to the grant request. Among the items identified for possible inclusion in the request are:

1. Improvements to train depot infrastructure.
2. An airport chip reader.
3. Improvements to water infrastructure at the Lakeview Cemetery.
4. Docking at the kayak launch.
5. Digital water meters.
6. Replacement of solar panels at the train depot, which were broken at some point recently.

► Approved a motion to issue a Request for Proposals from a consultant who can advise the city on the possible restoration and uses of the historic train depot.

► Discussed but took no action on the announcement that the Tower-Breitung Wastewater Board may be receiving \$1 million in a federal earmark for expansion of

its wastewater treatment capacity to facilitate community growth. Setterberg noted that council member Josh Zika, who has a background in wastewater management, has been exploring some treatment expansion options that might be built for a million dollars or possibly less.

Schultz noted that the city is also putting in a preliminary request for additional federal funding to help pay the cost of water and sewer extension to the Marina Drive area to serve planned development in that area.

► Discussed but took no immediate action on a request by the Tower-Soudan Civic Club to donate up to \$6,000 along with volunteer time to spruce up the entrance to the Herbert R. Lamppa Civic Center. Council members expressed concern about the potential need to remove an underground fuel oil tank believed to be located in front of the civic center and that such work would destroy any landscaping the group might complete. Council member Morin said he would check with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to get more information on the possible tank removal.

► Discussed options for handling very large

and aging ash trees planted years ago in the boulevard along S. Second Street. Schultz said the city has been receiving complaints from residents there for some time that the trees pose a risk to property, including homes and vehicles parked on the street. Schultz suggested that rather than removing trees on a complaint basis, the city should develop a plan for either maintaining or removing the trees. "That could be leaving them as is, removing the major problem trees, or maintenance on the current trees," Schultz wrote in his agenda item on the subject.

The council, after considerable discussion, opted to refer the matter to the city's Forestry Board.

► Accepted the results of the presidential primary voting in Tower. Out of 54 voters, Donald Trump received 32 votes on the GOP ballot and Nikki Haley received four. On the Democratic ballot, Joe Biden received nine votes, while two voted uncommitted, and one each for Dean Phillips, Jason Palmer, and Armando Perez-Serrato. On the Legal Marijuana Now ballot, Vermin Supreme and Dennis Schuller received one vote apiece.

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OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

Editorial

Too much regulation

Is legislation to regulate painters really solving a problem?

When it comes to free enterprise in the U.S. there is always a balancing act between the rights of Americans to engage in private contracts for work performed and the need for regulation to protect the public from unscrupulous actors or dangerous products.

A bill introduced in the Legislature recently, that would require state licensing of anyone who provides painting services for hire, appears to be regulation that goes too far. The measure, co-authored by Duluth area Sen. Jen McEwen, would establish a licensing requirement for painters and would also place restrictions on the ability of the public to purchase larger quantities of oil-based paints.

This strikes us, at best, as a solution in search of a problem. At worst, it looks like an effort by established painting companies to limit competition from the many individuals who do a little painting on the side and, without the overhead of a larger company, may be able to get the job done for less.

There are plenty of such folks in our area, many of whom serve our many lake home and cabin owners, and they do quality work at an affordable price. Some may opt to go through the hassle of applying and paying for a state license, but many won't bother. They'll just quit offering painting services. That will have the effect of limiting the supply of painters, which is almost certain to increase the cost for consumers when it comes time to hire a painter. That's already a problem in many other trades, where the costs are often not only high, but where it can be difficult to find anyone to provide such services. We need to expand supply in the trades, not reduce it.

We recognize that there are likely a few folks out there who may try to abuse consumers by using poor quality paint products or showing poor workmanship.

But that could happen regardless of this legislation because unscrupulous operators likely will continue to offer painting services with or without the new law. What's more, the mere fact someone is licensed is no guarantee that they do quality work. And trust us when we say that if a consumer ends up with a poorly handled project, the state of Minnesota isn't coming to the rescue whether or not the state has issued a license.

That's where the old adage "buyer beware" still plays a role. Smart consumers know to check references before hiring any kind of professional for work on their home or cabin. They can also provide direction to those they hire. The best way for a consumer to protect themselves from a painter who uses a substandard product is to select and purchase the paint for a project themselves. But that would actually be harder under this legislation since it limits the type of paint products the public can purchase.

We understand that many other occupations have licensing and certification requirements, but it could be argued that some of those have already contributed to the limited supply of professionals like plumbers, carpenters, and electricians. In the past, we had part-time "handymen" who were available generally for smaller projects that homeowners either didn't have the time or the skills to take on themselves. Many of them have disappeared, or limited the types of jobs they take on, in part due to licensing requirements. This legislation will only add to that trend.

At a time when the public is concerned about inflation, does Minnesota really need a new law that is virtually guaranteed to increase the cost of a needed service? We suspect most Minnesotans would answer with a resounding "No."



Letters from Readers

Permitting reform needed to build our energy future

Strong market forces affecting our energy sector are creating our clean energy future through "beneficial electrification" of our lives and economy, offering us a better quality of life and protecting our environment for less cost. We need enormous amounts of clean, cost-effective wind, solar and hydroelectric, plus major energy storage, to make these "renewables" our reliable "baseload" power and fully harvest these benefits.

Unfortunately, the costly permitting delays on projects that would expand the existing electric grid are a major roadblock for building and connecting proposed new "renewables" projects. Permitting delays adversely affect siting, building, and connecting new renewables and storage, as well as expanding and upgrading high-voltage transmission, substations and local grid distribution lines.

By 2050, we must build and connect three times the existing capacity of our electric grid to meet this demand—a huge challenge considering it took over 100 years to develop our current grid. Our utilities and electric distributors are working to meet this demand, "Since early 2021, planned wind and solar capacity across 116 utilities has more than doubled, increasing from 144 to 295 GW by 2035."

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) offers powerful federal funding incentives, combined with new Minnesota state funding, to help utilities and every electricity consumer accomplish this

important clean energy transformation. These incentives all focus on massive expansion of renewable power generation and transmission for electricity consumers. Our nation is blessed with large areas (mostly in the central U.S.) that are ideal for renewables generation. Most residential, commercial, and industrial electricity consumers are located near our coasts. Consequently, we must design and build huge amounts of new renewable generating capacity, primarily in the rural Midwest, and connect it to consumers in distant population centers through major transmission infrastructure expansion. This incredible demand and powerful incentives for clean energy also strongly encourages rooftop solar and battery storage for homes and businesses (distributed generation) with upgrades needed of local grid infrastructure. These upgrades create opportunities to develop safer, stronger local grids more "resilient" to our increasingly severe weather and natural disaster events.

The IRA's potential to create clean energy electrification benefits for our economy is enormous. A February 2024 Climate Power report summarizing the 18-months since IRA passage states, "A bulk of the new clean energy projects are located in congressional districts represented by Republican members of the House of Representatives—totaling 144,532 new jobs and over \$262.19 billion in investment across 274 clean energy projects in 133 Republican-held districts.

E2's Executive Director Bob Keefe stated, "...We're witnessing one of the biggest and most far-reaching

economic revolutions in generations, thanks to the IRA. What this study shows is that this boom extends beyond clean energy and clean vehicles and to everything from construction to restaurants to retailers to real estate.

"Even if you don't care about climate change, even if you don't like clean energy or electric vehicles, you ought to like the jobs, investments, sales and tax dollars coming to your state and your community because of this clean economy transformation."

Unfortunately, Princeton's REPEAT Project shows 80 percent of the IRA's potential benefits will not happen unless we modernize our outdated, inefficient "permitting" process. "Permitting reform" is critical for rapidly building important renewable energy generating and transmission projects on local, state and national levels. We need clean energy permitting reform on all levels to streamline and dramatically reduce the average 10-year period from proposal to completion of new renewables and transmission, while preserving important environmental protections, affected-community engagement and input. Call your state legislators at (651) 296-6013 and ask them to support the Minnesota Energy Infrastructure Permitting Act (SF4784/HF4700) and other important clean energy permitting reform legislation.

Michael Oversend
Two Harbors



COMMENTARY

Old recipes and a pinch of this and that

These past few days I have been sifting through recipes for an upcoming spring family gathering at an eccentric aunt's. I got the notion to bake up some of our favorites and bring them for everyone to enjoy. Years before mother left



SCARLET
STONE

the planet, I became the primary holiday cook and baker, except for every Christmas my mother did rally and make what we siblings refer to as the "diabetes bars." These

were stored in the red and green patterned cookie tin. I must make those for sure and put them in the tin even though Christmas has come and gone because to serve them any

had the traditional butter, flour, nut crust and then a brown sugar, toffee layer covered with melted chocolate chips and more nuts that successfully fueled a big sugar high. After they were baked, the bars

An absolute spring and summer family favorite was "money cake." This recipe entered our lives in the 1960s from a former classmate of my father's whose name was

Minerva. Her nickname however was "money" and the name stuck with the cake. Everyone has eaten this in one form or another. It's the box yellow cake mix with the pineapple, Mandarin oranges, and whip cream on top that was all the rage years ago, and like Cher, has staying power and will forever be appearing at parties, potlucks, and funerals. The money cake will be made onsite however, as it doesn't travel well but I have some concerns. Auntie and her live-in, Frank, recently moved, and with their arduous downsizing process

I'm not sure she will have an electric mixer or even a 9x13 pan anymore. On top of that when Frank became zealous for the Mediterranean diet a couple years ago, coupled with both continuing to reduce when Ozempic came on the scene, those staples from their previous ideal Betty Crocker kitchen may have been the first things on the garage sale table. I had better phone ahead and check on that.

One recipe that does not fit on an index card is my grandmother's mincemeat. There are 21 ingredients listed beginning with 2 cups of chopped

lean meat with a note that says "venison neck is best but beef will do." It's an expensive recipe to make calling for all of the dried fruits, marmalades, various peels, coffee and cider but well worth it. Gran made this before Thanksgiving, and it matured in glass jars prior to being used for pies and cookie fillings at Christmas. It is by far the best mincemeat I have ever tasted, and I developed a taste for it at a young age, popping Gran's filled tarts into my mouth.

I have yet to attempt

See RECIPES...pg. 5

Opposing right-wing Zionism is not antisemitic

The First Crusades (1095 A.D.), mobilized by Pope Urban II for Christians to retake the "Holy Land" from Muslim heretics, marks the beginning of European conquest and colonization. Christianity, white supremacy, and rising nation-states fostered a virulent Eurocentric ideology of dominance. Mid-15th century Africa, Americas, Asia, and Australasia, "empty lands" inhabited by non-Christians" awaited merciless invasion.

Doctrines of Christian Discovery beginning in 1452, granted right of discovery to Portugal and later to all Christian nations those "vacant lands" occupied by inferior inhabitants. Following the American Revolution, British right of discovery was claimed by the U.S. in Manifest Destiny to justify land theft and expansionism into the late 19th century.

Defeat of the Ottoman

Empire (1917) and the British Mandate (1922) activated Christian Zionism for a Jewish state, predating the Holocaust with religious pretext to fulfill Biblical prophecy of Christ's return. An absurd claim of Biblical rights has no legal status, moreover, Palestinians are closer descendants of people 2,000 years ago than are the dispersed population of immigrant Jews. Imposing a Zionist regime on a 96-percent Palestinian majority began a 100 years' war.

Arthur Koestler, a Jewish intellectual succinctly stated, "without moral or legal right, one nation solemnly promised to a second nation the country of a third." Palestine, centuries old, is the indigenous Palestinian homeland.

A genocidal campaign of ethnic cleansing eliminates a people from their homeland. Erased history transforms "empty land of invisible people" into settler colonialism.

Critiquing U.S. policy and right-wing Zionism is not antisemitic bigotry.

Oil and military interests of American empire depend on a Middle East beachhead. Annual U.S. aid (\$4 billion) to Israel is complicit with colonial oppression. Historical context, centuries-old, explains deadly Zionist occupation of indigenous Palestinian lands, confining Muslims into tiny reservations as experienced by First People of the Americas.

**Harold Honkola
Stillwater**

Partisanship a growing threat

George Washington is regarded as the Father of our nation. His leadership roles during the revolution, the Constitutional Convention and as first president of an emerging nation assures him of that lofty distinction. But it's his political insights in conjunction with his non-political virtues that sets him apart from others of his founding generation.

Washington did not belong to a political party although in both heart and

mind he was a Federalist concerned with establishing a central government strong enough to overcome the deficiencies of the former Articles that constituted a mere compact of the states, absent authority. In his Farewell Address, as reviewed by Bret Baier in his 2023 book "To Rescue the Constitution," Washington warned of the pernicious force of political parties, cautioning against their 'baneful effects' that can inflame disagreements, heighten resentments, undermine the government and enliven a spirit of mischief that makes it difficult to govern, thereby threatening the unity of the nation.

He regarded partisanship as the greatest threat to the nation's survival, making the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it. The spirit of party 'agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; foment occasionally riot and insurrection.'

Clearly partisanship today is not only a threat to the conduct of business in government but threatens the very continuation of our democratic republic. Although it's hard to imagine the emergence of a system to replace our two-party one it's not so hard to imagine legislators being actually capable of honest and productive dialogue in an effort to reach compromised solutions to problems needing resolution.

**Jerry Brown
Buyck**

That pizza could have fed many starving children

I was appalled by the front page story in the March 8 *Timberjay*, "Big Guy, Big Eats, Big Fun."

Contrasted with March 8 *Star Tribune* pg A4 showing 3 children carrying battered pots as they walk to a food distribution point in Gaza, it is disheartening.

I think the *Timberjay* needs to apologize and speak to the numbers of

kids who could be fed by that gigantic pizza one man is going to eat in order to entertain!

Thanks for letting me vent, but I think this issue needs to be addressed somehow.

**Emily Brown
Ely**

We welcome your letters

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

We ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

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

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

Commentary

EMS, child care, broadband top issues for rural Minnesota

I represent the largest and most rural district in the Minnesota State Senate and one of my biggest frustrations is when rural communities are constantly told to just wait. Wait for state funding for that critical local infrastructure project. Wait for that ambulance to arrive, hopefully in time. Wait for broadband to finally reach your community and home. Wait for a child care center to open so you can start a family where you grew up. Wait for that permit so your community can have the jobs you've been waiting for. And on and on it goes.

The truth is, while we may be rural in most of northern Minnesota, we punch above our weight in what we provide to the rest of the state. From our incredible outdoors in the Boundary Waters and Iron Range to the critical minerals and timber needed for many of the items we use every day. I'm grate-



**SEN. GRANT
HAUSCHILD**

ful to represent this region and my focus is on ensuring other policy makers know we're not waiting any longer. With every policy we work on, I make sure others understand the impact it will have on Greater Minnesota and what we need to make it work for northeastern Minnesota.

With that in mind, to prepare for the 2024 Legislative Session, I launched my Northland Strong Initiative to focus

on the issues that matter most to us here in northern Minnesota. That initiative took me to communities across the Arrowhead to hear directly from constituents about the concerns they have. I hosted roundtable discussions on a range of topics, from child care in Ely and emergency medical services (EMS) in Breitung Township, to how our state government can work better for rural communities in Grand Marais and protecting our outdoor heritage with resort owners in Voyageurs National Park. These were just the beginning with many more to follow.

Hearing directly from constituents is the best way for me to be grounded in my policy work at the Capitol and how I came up with my legislative agenda for the 2024 session. This includes bills to help families better afford child care, provide one-time emergency funding for rural EMS services,

create an advisory council for better coordination among state agencies, advancing local government aid for townships for the first time since 2014, and reforming the low-density broadband program to ensure remote townships can secure the funding they need to finally bring high-speed internet to their residents. While this work is ongoing, my goal is to get as much as I can and continue to leverage my vote as the tiebreaker in the state Senate majority to deliver for the Northland.

In addition, I am working to convince members across-the-aisle to vote for an infrastructure package because the bonding bill is the only bill that requires a super-majority of votes to pass. Within the bonding bill, I am working to prioritize local projects like the Tower-Soudan drinking water project and the Ely baseball fields. However, the reality is that in

our district alone I have over \$110 million in requests and it will be impossible to fund them all. That is why I need to prioritize those projects that are critical infrastructure and shovel ready. In addition to local projects, I am also the chief author of two broader bonding bills that would send more funding to the Northland through a Greater Minnesota Workforce Housing bonding bill and an increase in bond funds for Public Facilities Authority (PFA) which would go toward water and sewer projects predominantly in rural communities.

In the Legislature, it is easy to get side-tracked on a lot of the partisan nonsense that goes on in our politics. Far too many representatives on both sides of the aisle focus on partisan issues and place blame only on the other

side to distract residents from the real challenges we all face together. My goal is to focus on the real, bread-and-butter issues that matter most to our communities like the ones I've described above. Sadly, the outside dark-money groups are sending mailers around our district misleading on my record related to gas taxes. If you receive one of these, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office directly to hear from me about my position because I can assure you it's not what is being described. I can be reached directly at Sen.Grant.Hauschild@Senate.MN.

It is an honor of a lifetime to represent you and the rest of the Northland in the state Senate, thank you!

**Sen. Grant Hauschild
District 3**

RECIPES...Cont. from page 4

making potica from the recipe I wrote down while in high school learning to make the Slovenian staple. We were at my friend's home on the east end of Aurora and her mother, who was our home economics teacher, taught us the process with maximum detail. I remember that day of instruction like it was yesterday, and we were on our toes as she made us measure everything so exact. She was a great teacher and the potica turned out perfect.

Let's not forget the recipes for creating food with non-traditional utensils. I have a recipe for chocolate waffle cookies from a college friend's farm in central Iowa. I have baked these on several occasions, and they are great tasting cookies but I don't have my waffle iron any longer. Maybe I could use my Rowenta steam iron and press balls of dough between parchment papers. I'd back off on using the steam feature to avoid soggy of course. Seriously though, if you think about it, Iowa farm wives would barely have enough time to get all their basic work done let

alone locate a waffle iron and bake four cookies at a time while standing close by with the fork ready to pluck them off only to be gobbled down by six sons and a mean ugly daughter standing next to the table. Some of this stuff really doesn't seem practical especially for some of us who are slowly downsizing. There are simply too many gadgets and not enough storage space.

The most mysterious discovery is that I somehow acquired the barbecue recipe from the old Ting Town restaurant that used to be just west of Chisholm. Even though I lived in that area for a few years in the 90s, I can't remember who gave me the recipe and have never used it.

Nowadays people don't use recipe boxes as much because they find things on the Internet to cook or bake, but it's just not the same. I would miss the little notes... like "a pinch of salt or a dash, a smidge, a toss" of this or that ingredient that were written on the side margins by me or another person, not to mention how meaningful it is to

see the actual handwriting of friends or long-ago deceased relatives. A piece of them lives on in these recipes for sure. My oldest enduring recipe collection still remains in mom's hand-painted recipe box that has the larger sized index cards.

Yes, the maternal goddesses in our lives; moms, grands, aunties, and teachers may gift us with their riches which can be anything from China, stainless serving sets, zig-zag afghans, jewelry...but we can't forget the recipes. My former mother-in-law made amazing fried chicken served with buttery milk potatoes and carrots from their garden. That was over forty years ago but I still remember the taste of her cooking. In addition, all her holiday desserts were fabulously divine and puffed and fluffed from start to finish.

I can remember phases of my life through the various recipes too. There are several that I have from my rugged Alaska period in the 80s including salmon recipes and holistic crafted cracker creations, seedy breads, and some vegetarian dish-

es from a friend I met while living high on top of a ridge overlooking Fairbanks to the south and the Goldstream Valley to the north. None of us hippie types living on the ridge had running water so I remember doing dishes after cooking was an arduous task. During the long dark winters indoor projects like experimenting with recipes was fun. Years later after my life resembled a traveling circus, I moved to Ely and belonged to a weekly women's motivational group called "healthy choices" that introduced me to things like quinoa, farro, and couscous, not to mention bok choy and dragon leaf kale. That phase of my life generated some healthy know-how to be sure and funky grains are always welcome in my kitchen. Let it be known however, I never was, and never will be a fan of tofu. Now it's time to do some spring baking.



**the
TIMBERJAY**

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Read the entire paper on-line every week. On-line subscriptions cost \$29.95/year; details and payment at www.timberjay.com.

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

Week of March 18

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 the \$250 cash prize in Week 33 of the Charlemagne's 52 Club is Pat Tschida of Angola.

History Tidbit: In 1872 George Stuntz, a surveyor, discovered ore in this section of Minnesota which was found to be very valuable. In 1884 Charlemagne Tower and George C. Stone formed the Minnesota Iron Company with Edward Breitung.

The Township of Breitung is named after Edward Breitung who was a politician from Michigan. The village of Soudan was established March 3, 1885 and gets its name from D.H. Bacon contrasting Soudan's cold, bitter winters to the tropical climate of the Sudan/Soudan area of Africa. Soudan has since returned to being an unincorporated community.

Lunch Bunch to meet on March 14

TOWER- The Lunch Bunch will meet on Thursday, March 14, at 12:30 p.m., at Benchwarmer's in Tower. RSVP to Kathy at 218-753-2530. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Bookmobile stops

REGIONAL- The Arrowhead Bookmobile will be in the Tower-Soudan area on Wednesdays: March 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@alstlib.info, or website at alstlib.info.

Subscribe to the
TIMBERJAY!
Call
218-753-2950

**TOWNSHIP ELECTION RESULTS****Breitung, Greenwood, and Vermilion Lake results****Greenwood Township**

Township residents ousted the three incumbents (see story on page one), and elected Lois Roskoski and Craig Gilbert as supervisors and Debby Spicer as clerk. Township residents set the 2025 levy at \$300,000.

More on the annual meeting in next week's paper.

Breitung Township

SOUDAN- At the Breitung Township annual meeting, Erin Peitso was elected to the position of township supervisor with 53 votes and Amber Zak was elected as clerk, also with 53 votes as a write-in. Current clerk Dianna Sundaahl did not file for the seat. The town residents discussed the

levy but did not set it, since the board is waiting to find out more about project funding from other agencies and the level of support the Tower Area Ambulance Service will need. The people will reconvene to set the levy on Tuesday, Aug. 13 at 6 p.m. More details in next week's *Timberjay*.

Vermilion Lake Township

Jen McDonough received 26 votes for supervisor and Frank Zobitz received 27 votes for clerk. The township's 2025 levy was set at \$40,215. More details in next week's paper.

HOLIDAY FUN**Tower Easter Egg Hunt set for Sunday, March 24**

TOWER- The Tower Firemen's Relief Association will host their annual free Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, March 24, from 12 noon - 3 p.m. at the Lamppa Civic Center in Tower. There will be an egg hunt, prizes, raffles, and fun for ages infant through sixth grade. Hot dogs and chips will be served.

Over 4,000 eggs will be hidden on the grounds outside the civic center. The hunt is scheduled to begin promptly at 12 noon, so please get there a little early because it doesn't take long for all the eggs to be collected. Be sure

to dress for the weather.

The event is being held on a Sunday this year, and a week earlier than normal due to scheduling conflicts.

Embarrass Easter Egg-Stravaganza March 23

Celebrate spring at the Timber Hall Event Center in Embarrass on Saturday, March 23 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. with an Easter egg hunt, cake walk, games, and more. All area children are invited.

**COLLEGE NEWS****Tori Barsness earns Master's Degree**

NEW ORLEANS— Tower native Victoria "Tori" Barsness was awarded a master's degree in psychology from Capella University during a March 2 ceremony here. Barsness, who graduated from Tower-Soudan High

School, is the daughter of LeAnn Barsness, who continues to live in Tower.

Barsness is in her ninth year in the U.S. Air Force, having served several years at Kadena Air Base, in Japan, before her most recent posting at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona. At both postings, she has frequently won numerous top awards, including twice winning NCO of the Quarter at Luke. While serving in Japan, she was awarded Armament Technician of the Year in both 2017 and 2018.

In 2021, she was promoted to an Airman Leadership School Flight Instructor, at the 56th Force Support Squadron at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona. In that position, she was responsible for implementing policy and teaching enlisted personnel attached to the Air Force's largest fighter wing, providing leadership, guidance, and direction to students and installation agencies.

Most recently, she was assigned as an F-35 Armament

Maintenance Supervisor, continuing to serve at Luke AFB.

"I'm so very proud of my daughter," said LeAnn Barsness. "It's been a long haul and she's really excelled in her career."

Local students named to University of Minnesota-Twin Cities Dean's List

TWIN CITIES- The following students have been named to the 2023 fall semester Dean's List at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. To qualify for the Dean's List, a student must complete 12 or more letter-graded credits while attaining a 3.66 grade point average.

Audrey Anderson, Soudan, Junior, Col of Educ/Human Development.

Cooper Hanson, Tower, Junior, Carlson School of Management.

Allison Maus, Tower, Sophomore, Col of Educ/Human Development.

Minnesota North College Announces 2023 Fall Dean's List

HIBBING- Minnesota North College announces the students recognized for academic achievement during the Fall 2023 semester. Congratulations to over 900 students that completed 12 or more credits while earning a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.25 or higher.

April Druen, Embarrass
Jaezreel Johnson, Embarrass
Keith Laflamme, Embarrass
Jacob Mackai, Embarrass
Callie Peterson, Embarrass
Caleb Ramponi, Embarrass
Colton Rebarich, Embarrass
Calvin Winger, Embarrass
TJae Banks, Soudan
Maria Lindquist, Soudan
Emma Lambert, Tower
Neva Levens, Tower
Ryan Rothfork, Tower

YOUTH HOCKEY**Ely Squirts finish a successful season**

ELY- The 2023-2024 Ely Squirts had a phenomenal season. The season total was 29 games played and one scrimmage, and they finished the season with 22 wins and seven losses.

The Ely Squirts played a variety of teams from the Iron Range, Duluth/Hermantown, Grand Rapids, and Bemidji. They also faced larger Twin Cities programs and have certainly showed their strength on the ice.

The team appeared in three tournaments and turned a lot of heads along the way. At the Silver Bay tournament in early December, Ely finished second out of eight teams. At the Bemidji tournament in mid-January, Ely finished second out of 16 teams, and at the Two Harbors tournament in early February, Ely finished second out of eight teams.

The team is made up of boys from Ely, Tower, and Babbitt in grades three through six.

The 2023/2024 Ely Squirt team would like to thank the communities for all the support



Back (from left): Coach Mike Lund, Leo Shock, Connor Macho, Ricky Bush, Miles Marzella, Nixon Levens, Blake Stalboerger, Oliver Kochendorfer, Coach Tony Harding. Front: Harvey Fenner-Vogl, Hayden Engen, Toren Harding, Nolan Niskala, Brody Grotberg, Henrik Lund, Gordon Smith. Not pictured- Head coach Luke Macho, coach Jeremy Engen. submitted photo

to the program this season and especially the rink managers in Ely and Babbitt. The coaches

would like to thank the parents for all their support and dedication to our kids.

EASTER CHURCH SCHEDULES**St. Martin's Catholic Church Easter Schedule**

Holy Thursday, March 28
St. Mary's - 5:30 p.m.
Good Friday, March 29
Holy Cross - 3 p.m.
St. Martin's - 6 p.m.
Holy Saturday, March 30
Blessing of the Easter Baskets - St. Martin's - 12:30 p.m.
Easter Vigil Mass - St. Mary's - 8 p.m.
Easter Sunday, March 31
Holy Cross - 8 a.m.
St. Martin's - 10:30 a.m.

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.

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Easter Services

SOUDAN- Palm Sunday, March 24, worship service at 8:30 a.m. with special music by Deb Tuominen and Louise Wiermaa. Brunch to follow the service. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Maundy Thursday, March 28, service at 5 p.m. with a seder meal catered by Chef Chris from Vermilion Country School, will be serving lamb and a traditional seder meal. Please RSVP before March 18 by calling 218-753-3047. All are welcome.
Easter Sunday, March 31,

worship service at 8:30 a.m. with special music by Martha Bush. Brunch to follow the service. All are welcome. Martha, the Harp Lady, has a Master's Degree in Art Therapy from St. Mary's University in Minneapolis.

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.

AROUND TOWN

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:

► March 19: Poet Michael Kleber-Diggs

► March 26: Learning about Owls with Eben Spencer

► April 2: Meet new Elyites

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2024



thinking about blooms
bulb plants rising up grandly

in a month or so

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

Study materials and pre-

test available. Call 218-

365-3359, or

1-800-662-5711.

CAREGIVER

SUPPORT GROUPS:

Babbitt: 3rd Monday of

Month: 6-7:30 p.m. at

Carefree Living.

Ely: 4th Monday of

Month: 10-11:30 a.m. at

Ely-Bloomenson Hospital.

Conference Room B.



Upper Left: Rachel Carter (left) and Emily Bialik (right) from Ely Memorial High School show off their gold medals. They both received the highest rating of "superior" for solo performances at the Minnesota State High School League Music Contests last week. In the same competition, Ely High School Concert Choir received a "superior" and two "excellent" ratings and was only one point away from bringing home a trophy. The Ely High School Pop Choir received an "excellent" rating. Gabe White, Matthew Johnson and Colton Bramley received Excellent ratings for individual performances. submitted photo

Upper Right: The much loved "So much food!" Knights of Columbus fish fry once again packed the downstairs at St. Anthony's last Friday. The fish fry dinner will be served two more times during Lent, on March 15 and 22. photo by C. Clark

Lower Left: Local poet Elizabeth Gade takes the mic at the March Northern Lakes Arts Association "Call of the Wild" poetry reading last Thursday. Gade's volume of poetry, "Fawn and Freeze," is available through Amazon. She will be publishing a new collection in June. photo by C. Clark



LOCAL HISTORY

Ely-Winton Historical Society hires new manager

ELY- The Ely-Winton Historical Society (EWS) is pleased to announce the hiring of Adam Kovall of Ely as its new manager. Kovall, who officially started the first week of March, brings a professional resume which includes executive leadership, and a proven track record in the field of data science.

"I am grateful to be selected as the new manager and really look forward to immersing myself in the stories and histories," said

Kovall. "I have a deep interest in the personal narratives, historical artifacts and interpretation that EWS takes on. To be one of the caretakers of local history, making it relevant for people, is going to be very meaningful."

A former resident of Southern California, Kovall has local family connections and moved to Ely last fall. He spent many summers here and always hoped to spend more time, particularly since his father moved

back about 15 years ago. Kovall commented, "I enjoy the dark skies, the quiet, and the numerous outdoor activities which are so abundant. The biggest surprise so far is that the winter was not as cold, nor had as much snow, as I expected and wanted."

Pam Turnbull, EWS Board President, is enthusiastic about this year. "We have fresh energy with the hire of Adam and our board of directors is happy to be working with him. We anticipate his

leadership and partnership will create a more effective organization." Turnbull and Kovall agree that his new perspective is a strength, as is his willingness to move forward with the vision of the board of directors and the community for the society.

Asked about his motivation for taking on the manager role, Kovall recalls a childhood visit to the Field Museum in Chicago, saying an exhibit on human development was something he never imag-

ined seeing and was an experience that has stuck with him. "Museums are a place of learning and observing interesting things. The museum, and the work here, feels like a good place to spend my time."

Please check the website <https://www.ely-wintonhistory.org/> or the Facebook page for current operating hours for the EWS museum, located in Ely at MN North, Vermilion Campus.

Chamber of Commerce dinner goes on safari

ELY- Dust off your hiking boots, put on your pith helmet, and join the Ely Chamber of Commerce at their annual Celebrate Ely event scheduled for Thursday, April 11, hosted at the Grand Ely Lodge. This year's keynote speaker is Steve Fredlund, "The Safari Guy."

"We are pulling out all the stops as we have done the last several years at Celebrate Ely," said Eva Sebesta, the execu-

tive director at the chamber. "Last year we had the 'Groovy 60s' theme, the year before was the 'Survivor' theme, so we are raising the bar and going all out safari. While a costume is not required to attend, we certainly encourage attendees to dress up as a safari adventurer or a favorite animal."

"Celebrate Ely is focused on bringing our community together and having fun, while recognizing what an amazing

place we live in. We live on the edge of a wilderness area in arguably the most beautiful place on earth, surrounded by a community of people that love this place we all call home," added Sebesta.

The event features a social hour with games, photo booth, and cash bar from 4:30-5:30 p.m. A buffet dinner starting at 5:45 p.m. with savory BBQ beef, honey glazed ham, and vegetable lasagna, plus all the fixings.

There are door prizes and chamber news, plus our annual awards. Come and celebrate our newest Good Neighbor Business, Good Citizen Volunteer, Excellence in Customer Service, and Bob Cary Spirit recipients.

The pinnacle of the evening is Steve Fredlund, who is a safari enthusiast, visionary, coach, and consultant. Steve's message, "The Safari Way to Greater Happiness" will provide attendees with five

key tips to reduce stress and find greater happiness in life. Steve is a two-time TEDx speaker and author of "Do the Right Thing," just released in January.

Tickets are \$30/person and on sale at the chamber office located at 1600 E. Sheridan St., Ely, or call 218-365-6123 to reserve over the phone. More event details are available at Ely.org/CelebrateEly.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

Ely Public Library

ELY- The spice for March is poppyseed. Pick up a free spice kit with a poppyseed sample and recipes to try at home from the front desk at the library.

The Curiosity Cohort Program for adults will meet on Wednesday, March 20 at 1 p.m. to learn about and have a hand at interpreting tarot cards. Please register in advance for this program so the library can order enough materials for participants.

The library will hold a Kahoot online trivia game on the first three books of the Inspector Gamache series of books by Louise Penny. Registration in advance with an email address is required so the library can send the link for the trivia game. The Kahoot will start at 3 p.m. on Friday, March 22, and end at 8 a.m. on Monday, March 25.

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- 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.

St. Pat's Day Dance

ELY- The Ely Folk School will hold its annual St. Patrick's Day Dance for all ages at the Ely Senior Center on Friday, March 15, from 7-10 p.m. No experience necessary. All dances will be taught. Cost is \$10. Children free with parent.

Easter Bonnet Parade

ELY- The annual Easter Bonnet Parade at the Ely Senior Center will be

on Saturday, March 16, from 1-3 p.m. This event is not just for seniors. All bonnets must be homemade. The best bonnets will win prizes. Coffee and dessert will be served.

NLAA Art Show

ELY- The Northern Lakes Arts Association art show for March, "Weaving Color in Comfort" by Grace Klein, will be held March 18-31 at Ely's Historic State Theater. This novel and colorful show will display works of handmade papers woven into intricate patterns. The papers are made from abaca, flax, and cotton fibers, and are colored using aqueous dispersed pigments and other natural dyes.

Braver Angels

ELY- The next meeting of the Ely Braver Angels will be on Tuesday, March 19, 6:30 p.m. at the Ely Senior Center, 27 S. 1st Ave. E. The group

pursues and teaches practical skills to return civility to political civics. All are welcome.

Homebuyer Class

ELY- Ely Community Education will offer a free homebuyer's class taught by Tom Omerza, on Wednesday, March 20, 5:30-6:30 p.m., at the media center at the Ely Public School campus, 600 E. Harvey St. Sign up at elyclasses.com.

SAGE fundraiser

ELY- The SAGE ("Students achieving goals equally") Foundation will hold a fundraiser on Saturday, March 23, and Sunday, March 24, from 5-7 p.m. at the Ely Folk School, with pizza, Dorothy Molter root beer, good company, and a silent auction.

CPR-AED Class

WINTON- The Winton Community Center,

102 Main St., will be the site of an American Heart Association Heartsaver CPR-AED first-aid classes on Saturday, March 23 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Heartsaver training includes basic first aid, CPR, automated external defibrillator use, and choking response for adults, children, and infants. Cost is \$75. Call 218-235-4016 to sign up.

List your event

Do you have an upcoming Babbitt, Ely, or Winton event? Email event details, location, time, place and event cost to catie.timberjay@gmail.com by close-of business on the Tuesday the week before the event takes place for a free notice.

ORR CITY COUNCIL

Orr motel will be converted to apartments

New owners seeking long-term financial stability after poor winter

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- The North Country Inn Motel will be converted to apartments soon, as a representative of the new owners met with the Orr City Council on Monday to find out about any necessary zoning modifications to accommodate the new use.

BC Ventures, a Wayzata-based real estate investors group focused on multi-family and apartment living, bought the 30-year-old motel in November for a reported sales price of \$405,000.

In a written statement presented to council members in their meeting packet, the company cited the "extremely volatile" business market in the months since their purchase of the motel due to the record warm winter and lack of winter recreational activities in the area that typically brings in customers.

"We are interested in making this business a sustainable investment where income becomes more predictable," the statement said. "We also believe having long term residents in rooms will have a greater loyalty, greater tax and greater

communal impact versus having short-term visitors. The current model is no longer sustainable."

The conversion would create 12 studio apartments and one three-bedroom apartment, which would ideally be ready to rent May 1 after the company invests about \$100,000 in the conversion, and optimism is running high for demand.

"We believe we have a waiting list of people ready to go," the statement said. Brandon Schuh was present at the meeting to try to clarify questions surrounding zoning.

"It's kind of a two part request," he said. "One part is that we were unsure of whether it needed to be rezoned or not. If it did, we would like to start the process of rezoning the property for apartments."

Noting that the area is zoned for business use, city clerk Angela Lindgren said in her review of the zoning ordinance apartments were not listed in that classification.

Adam Johnson of Benchmark Engineering chimed in with comments after reviewing the ordinances himself. He suggested two possible options, one being to



The North Country Inn Motel could become apartments by this summer if investors get the necessary zoning in place.

Google Maps photo (an answer) we will be able to give you a good idea on how long this might take."

The council approved a motion by member Bruck Black to table the discussion. Unless the council would call a special meeting in the interim, the matter would not be discussed again until the council's regular April meeting. Should the recommended course of action include a public meeting, time would need to be allowed for affected parties to be notified and the meeting to be advertised. It would likely be difficult in that scenario for BC Ventures to meet their hoped-for May 1 readiness date if remodeling work didn't begin before the zoning question was settled.

Schuh asked for clarification on the turnaround time for getting resolution on the zoning issue, and council member John Jirik responded that they wouldn't be able to answer until they got more clarity as to how to approach the request.

"Honestly, we're not experts on how this goes," Jirik said. "Once we get

Ambulance service

Ambulance director Donna Hoffer gave the council an overview of service operations, including the following points:

►The service has performed 25 total runs to date for 2024, 12 in February.

►Total runs for 2023 were 180. Hoffer provided a breakdown of the types of runs, indicating 11 were for Bois Forte mutual aid, 22 were for Cook Ambulance Service mutual aid, 18 were medical transports, four were fire standbys, 10 were rendezvous with Virginia ALS, 11 were helicopter rendezvous, and 16 calls were non-transports. Hoffer noted that per city council request, the service only does medical transfers from Cook Hospital to Duluth, Cloquet, and other local hospitals.

►The service currently has 1 emergency medical responder, 11 EMTs, six drivers and two students. Four of the drivers are enrolled in an EMR course being hosted by Orr Ambulance. There are 11 total enrollees.

►Ambulance service members who live outside of the area receive no-cost lodging at Oveson's or Orr

Carefree Living. "This is a great service for our members and the community," Hoffer said.

►Hoffer said the service is "limping along" with its pager system, and that they need to get both radio and pagers to ensure receipt of dispatch messages by responders.

Other business

In other business, the council:

►Approved a building permit for Curt and Nancy Glass.

►Approved a building permit for Peter and Caroline Coggan.

►Approved a request from Viita Excavating to use Bay Point Dr. beginning April 1 for work at 4695 Baypoint Dr. Part of the road is on city property and winter road restrictions could still be in place, although Black said they should be lifted by then. Viita agreed to fix any damages done to the road.

►Accepted seven donations totaling \$1,000 for the Orr Fire Department Easter Drive Thru on Saturday, March 23 at the Tourist Information Center.

Cook council holds special meeting for purchases

COOK- The Cook Fire Department will get new pagers, the maintenance department a new truck, and the library a new roof as a result of actions taken at a special Cook City Council meeting on Monday.

Council members reviewed a bid from DSC Communications for a digital pager system to replace the outmoded and oft times ineffective analog pagers. The fire department requested 35 of the 800Mhz single-band pagers for \$25,427.50. Programming the pagers will be an additional cost of \$375, bringing the total bid to \$25,802.50.

Councilors approved the purchase, the funds for which will come from the department's truck fund. They also approved seeking a buyer for the city's old ladder truck.

The maintenance department will be getting a 2024 Chevrolet Silverado 3500HD truck equipped with a plow and a light bar from Waschke Family Chevrolet after approving the company's low bid of \$64,757.45. A second bid was received from Kolar Chevrolet for \$65,343.52.

Maintenance supervisor Tim Lilya said that they had been offered \$18,000 for a trade in for the 2016 Ford truck being replaced. That was well below the \$21,500 the truck was valued at online, and with the plow the city should be able to sell the truck for well more than the trade-in value, Lilya said.

As for the library, the council moved forward with the first necessary step in taking care of the problematic flat roof by approving a bid of \$18,600 from Short Elliott Hedrickson Inc. (SHE) to perform the necessary engineering for a new pitched roof to better accommodate water runoff. City administrator Theresa Martinson said that the library has a maintenance fund that will pay for half of the cost of engineering. Library director Crystal Whitney will be seeking grant funds to cover the construction costs. A special grant application for library construction opens in May. When replacing the roof it will also be necessary to replace the HVAC system that has been sitting on top of it.

North Woods students bring well-being to the fore with first ever Mental Health and Wellness Event

by KELLY ENGMAN
North Woods Principal

FIELD TWP- The North Woods Student Leadership team is a group of students in grades 9-12 who are committed to improving the North Woods School culture. Early in the school year, the group identified that student mental health and wellness plays an important role in the school culture. The students de-

cidated to make this a priority area of focus this year and developed a committee to plan an event to showcase this area of focus. On Wednesday, March 6, the High School Leadership team hosted the first Mental Health and Wellness Event at North Woods School. The day's activities took place in the gym and consisted of many centers that each focused on some aspect of wellness, men-

tal health awareness or coping skills. Each grade level had a class period to explore these resources.

The students collaborated with many organizations and individuals, including our ISD 2142 District Project Aware Coordinator, Range Mental Health, Bois Forte Behavioral Health Services and other individuals who are committed to sharing strategies with our youth. The students worked

closely with our social worker, Megan Nemeck, and our school counselor, Jill Stark.

We are proud of our Leadership Team students for planning amazing opportunities for the students to practice coping skills, learn about wellness and mental health, and to have the opportunity to win prizes, thanks to a generous grant from Bois Forte.



Above: From back left, students Kate Cheney, Amber Sopoci, Sophia Mathys, and Brynn Chosa, and front, Annabelle Calavera, Jessy Palmer pose for the camera. Top right: Bois Forte Health and Human Services was represented by Jenna Porter. Bottom right: Sophia Mathys distributed healthy snacks.



Cook-Orr Calendar

School to stage Mean Girls musical on March 21

FIELD TWP- North Woods School 7-12 graders will be staging the musical "Mean Girls, JR.," a musical based on the 2004 film and the hit Broadway show, on Thursday March 21 at 7 p.m. at the school. The musical is about chasing popularity and being true to yourself. This musical from book writer Tina Fey (30 Rock), lyricist Nell Benjamin (Legally Blonde) and composer Jeff Richmond (Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt) is packed with keen wit, an undeniably catchy score, and a sincere message for everyone.

The production is free to the public and will also

be live streamed over the schools Hudl network.

Firefighters to hold drive-thru Easter event in Orr

ORR- Mark your calendars to celebrate Easter with the Orr Fire Department as they host the Orr Easter Drive-Thru on Saturday, March 23 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Orr Tourist Information Center.

Designed for kids ages 0-10, the drive-thru will feature the Easter Bunny and Orr firefighters offering eggs that could win a bicycle or an Easter basket.

Seven local donors have contributed a total of \$1,000 to help with the

event, and donations will continue to be accepted from businesses, groups, and individuals to make this Easter extra special for those children who can attend.

NWFA photo contest voting is open

COOK- It's time to take "A Closer Look" and vote for your favorite photos at the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery contest in Cook, 210 S. River St.

This "popular vote" photo contest exhibit is on display until Friday, March 29 when a celebrating reception will be held at the gallery from 5 to 7 p.m.. Two winning photos and the photographers will be announced

and awarded a cash prize! Voting hours are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. See examples of last year's winners at Northwoods Friends of the Arts website: www.nwfamn.org.

Catholic Holy Week service schedule set

REGIONAL- The Catholic Parishes of Lake Vermilion and Pelican Lake have announced their Easter Holy Week schedule.

Holy Thursday, March 28
St. Mary's - 5:30 p.m.

Good Friday, March 29
Holy Cross - 3 p.m.
St. Martin's - 6 p.m.

Holy Saturday, March 30
Blessing of the Easter

Baskets at St. Martin's - 12:30 p.m.

Easter Vigil Mass - St. Mary's - 8 p.m.

Easter Sunday, March 31

Holy Cross - 8 a.m.

St. Martin's - 10:30 a.m.

Minnesota North names academic honor students

REGIONAL- Minnesota North College has announced the names of area students recognized for academic achievement during the Fall 2023 semester. Students must complete 12 or more credits while earning a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.25 or higher.

Cook
Ethan Byram, Mason Clines, Micaden

Clines, Addy Hartway, Aidan Hartway, Lane Kneen, Garrett Lappi, Zane Lokken, McKenna McCormick, Kayla Palm, Nathan Palm, Louie Panichi, Madison Taylor.

Gheen
Sierra Schuster

Orr
Cooper Antikainen,

Evelyn Brodeen, Addison Burckhardt, Alex Burckhardt, Jonah Burnett, Madison Dantes, Anevey Goodsky-Spears, Helen Koch, Sean Luce, Tiauna Peltier, Jaden Whiteman.

**Read It
HERE**

ELY SCHOOLS

ISD 696 renovation project remains on track

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The Ely school district's general contractor reported that construction costs are currently steady, which is welcome news as the district moves ahead on the next phase of their ongoing facilities improvement project. The steady pricing is in sharp contrast to the inflation that plagued projects during the COVID-19 crisis, which threw the district's original cost estimates for the new addition, with its cafeteria, a gym, media center and offices, out the window.

The wild cost increases of the summer of 2021, when lumber alone tripled in price, now appear to be in the past. "Costs are currently stable," said Karl Larsen of Widseth Smith Nolting and Associates at Monday's school board meeting here. Larsen was there to present the third and final of the project's bids for the board's approval. The current year-long project will replace

windows and renovate parts of the district's school buildings.

Larsen presented the last major bid for the project, for \$1.703 million for interior "Phase 2" renovations plus an "add alternate bid" of \$51,000 for staff bathroom facilities. Three firms bid on the work, with the board accepting the low bid from Max Gray Construction.

Larsen reviewed the current status of the renovation project. "The original budget for construction was \$3.474 million. The current bids for the construction are \$3.569 million, which is a \$100,000 over what was budgeted." However, the \$100,000 difference is under the budgeted contingency for the project of \$178,491.

The previous bids were \$131,494 for renovations to the chem lab and art room, and \$1.684 million for "Phase 1" window replacement. Most of the work is scheduled for over the summer, though Superintendent Anne Oelke did note that "some of

the window work may run into the fall."

In other business, the school board:

- Discussed but took no action on a proposed policy for dismissing school on days when certain high school teams compete at state level contests. When school board member Tony Colarich questioned the need for such a policy, Athletic Director Tom Coombe noted that Ely had sent teams to the state championships (excluding Nordic skiing) "five times in the last 28 years." School board chair Ray Marsnik concluded the short discussion, saying, "We will continue to study this as there is nothing pressing."

- Approved the February financial report, including receipts of \$2,734,680 and disbursements of \$324,780.

- Accepted the retirement of Frank Ivancich from his Social Studies teaching position effective at the end of the 2023-24 school year.

- Approved the following

coaching positions for the spring season as recommended by AD Coombe: Frank Ivancich, head baseball coach; Cory Lassi, head softball coach; Will Helms, head boys track coach; Rob Simonich, head boys/girls golf coach (co-op with NE Range); Megan Wognum, assistant softball coach; Max Gantt, assistant baseball coach; Darren Visser, assistant boys track coach; and Aaron Donais, junior high baseball coach. Donais' position is paid for by Northeast Range School.

- Approved the following volunteer assistant coaching positions for the spring season as recommended by Coombe: Jim Witttrup, Derek Johnson, and Emmett Penke, volunteer assistant baseball coaches; Kelsey Ivancich and Jeff MacKenzie, volunteer assistant softball coaches; and Beth Ohlhauser, volunteer assistant track coach.

- Approved the second readings of the revised Minnesota School Boards Association

Policies 209, code of ethics; 214, out-of-state travel by school board members; 404, employment background checks; and 535, service animals in schools. Approval of the revised policies will be on the agenda at the next school board meeting. When approved, the service animal policy will be a new policy for the district.

- Approved a \$400 donation from the Ely PTO for dictionaries for the media center, and a \$500 gift from Krista and John Haven for school security.

- Briefly discussed the draft of the Ely Memorial High School schedule for 2024-25 and resolved to discuss the schedule in greater detail at the upcoming school board study session on March 25.

- Heard a report from Superintendent and Elementary Principal Anne Oelke that the projected enrollment for Kindergarten for the 2024-25 school year is 34. The current Kindergarten enrollment is 19.

GREENWOOD

Residents vote to double their levy for next year

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- Greenwood Township residents, at their annual meeting on Tuesday, approved a significant increase in their levy for next year, putting the township's tax levy in line with its spending for the first time in several years.

The township approved much smaller levies in several previous annual meetings in order to draw down accumulated reserves that had once topped \$1.3 million.

But on Tuesday, residents rebuffed the town board's request for a \$175,000 levy for next year, approving a \$300,000 increase, instead. About two-thirds of the 50 voting residents in attendance

voted in favor. About 60 people attended the meeting, but only registered voters are allowed to vote on the levy.

Chairman John Bassing's presentation showed a modest increase in projected expenditures from 2024 to 2025, increasing from \$332,980 to \$352,580, while anticipating receipts holding steady at \$246,000. Township reserves as of Jan. 1 of this year sat at \$672,008 and were projected to drop to \$433,673 at the beginning of 2025.

While there is no set formula for a required amount a township should hold in reserve, Bassing said in past years the state auditor had recommended an unreserved fund balance of 35-50 percent of annual operating expenses.

The 2025 budget included

line item increases for snowplowing, insurance, election-related costs, and fire protection and training, along with decreases in wages, fire department repair costs, and telephone costs, for an overall budget increase of \$19,600.

Former clerk Debby Spicer asked why the reserves had fallen so steeply.

Bassing explained the board had lowered the levy and had been spending down the reserve.

"That reserve was too high," Bassing said. "That is money we collected from our property owners."

A motion by Steve Roskoski to set the levy at \$250,000 started the discussion. He noted that the township was looking at increased expenses in the next few years

including a requested \$25,000 expenditure for the \$91,000 pickleball project, expenses for the upkeep of County Rd. 4136, and possible investments in fire department equipment.

Roskoski's motion was soon amended to increase the levy to \$300,000.

Bassing said the town board wasn't intending to spend down the reserves to nothing, and noted the township gets other income besides the levy, estimated at \$150,000 a year. But most in the audience seemed to feel that increasing the levy from the suggested \$175,000 was a good idea.

"I think we should be paying for the Tower Ambulance," said Dale Horihan. "We are getting that service." He also noted that most people who live in

Greenwood could afford to see the township portion of their taxes, which has been set at an effective rate of \$24 per \$100,000 in property value, go up.

Sue Drobac questioned whether all township residents could afford to see their levy increase.

"We have enough in reserves," Drobac said. "No reason to have all that extra money. Everything here is insured."

Former supervisor Mike Ralston said he felt that setting reserves at 35-percent of township spending was not sustainable. The financial projections from the town board were still showing the township with reserves set above the annual expenditures, so above 100-percent.

OUSTED...Continued from page 1

Issues raised by candidates this year included the board's oversight of the township fire depart-

ment, the current town board's delays regarding the maintenance/improvements needed for Township

Rd. 4136 (Birch Point Extension). The pickleball court project, the township's lack of support for the

Tower Ambulance Service, and the level of township financial reserves, were also salient issues in the

race. The new board members will be sworn in prior to the township's

reorganizational meeting, set for Thursday, March 28 at 6:30 p.m.

PAINTERS...Continued from page 1

six-member painting contractor board that would establish the minimum qualifications for the licensing of paint contractors and journeyworker painters, as well as continuing education requirements.

According to the bill, an applicant for a paint contractor license must:

- Demonstrate to the satisfaction of the commissioner good character, honesty, and integrity.

- Pass a written or oral examination to ensure an applicant's competence.

- An applicant for a journeyworker painter license must have at least three years of apprenticeship training in painting before applying for and taking the journeyworker painter license examination.

The bill would also restrict the amount of solvent-based paint a regular consumer can buy, limiting it to one gallon or less. Larger sales could only be made to a licensed painter. Household spray paints would be excluded from the restriction.

Tower painting contractor Nick Levens is willing to allow a little latitude for regulating large commercial contractors who take on specialized painting projects, but believes the bill goes too far to include established local painters like him. Levens said he's been painting for 25 years, typically has four-to-eight employees, and

does about a quarter of his work painting residential new construction, another quarter doing repaints, and about half commercial painting.

"I'm not qualified to paint a bridge or some industrial coatings, but I'm overly qualified to paint a bedroom or an exterior of a house," he said. "I can see (licensing) being necessary in some aspects of the trade, but definitely not all of them. A lot of painters never get involved in the type of painting that, in my opinion, would require advanced training or advanced personal protection. It's overregulating an industry that doesn't necessarily require everyone to fall under the same umbrella."

Levens said the profession is basically self-regulated in the different types of painting that are performed.

"If the state of Minnesota is looking for someone to bid on the repainting of a bridge, they're not calling me for that project. I don't have a bond, I don't have infrastructure, I don't have the labor force to do that work," he said. "And a residential builder wouldn't call the people that paint bridges to come paint their bedroom. We specialize in things that we can handle that we're qualified to accomplish, and we're competent. It's like a residential contractor wouldn't put up a skyscrap-

er, right?"

Because of the specialized nature of various types of painting, Levens guessed that he might be challenged to pass a general licensure exam without some intense study.

"A lot of it will be classroom work based on use of specific chemicals and coatings and confined spaces and PPE," he said. "It's probably real technical work, which there's definitely a place for, but it probably requires sitting through nine months to two years of classroom training. A lot of it would be book-work based on specific scenarios where you would have to be exposed to the technical answer to pass the test. I could perform and pass with flying colors a test on the products and techniques I use day to day, but someone else that uses a different skill set would probably have a tough time. A shop like mine with five or six painters with a firm grasp of what we do would have a real problem going in and taking and passing a test that doesn't have anything to do with my aspect of the trade."

Levens likened it to a test most adults are familiar with, a written driver's license exam.

"A lot of people couldn't pass their driv-

er's test today," he said. "You really have to refresh yourself to relearn technical answers that override your experience. I'm an experienced driver with a clean driving record, but I would probably have trouble with some specific answers that you would only know if you were fresh out of the class."

Levens worries about the impact a new licensure system would have on his business, particularly if he had any problems with the process.

"I don't necessarily see where more regulation or a license is going to do anything other than affect people financially," he said. "I built my whole career on this, and if I had to start over or really change what I was doing, my whole family and all of my employees would be impacted by it, to the point where I don't know how I would even succeed."

And it would definitely affect his customers, too.

"The price tag for a residential consumer would probably double, which makes it unaffordable for a lot of people to have a professional come in and do their painting," Levens said. "And there's very few painters painting rurally."

The apprenticeship requirement for journey-person painter licensure aligns with the programs

already offered by the Little Canada-based Finishing Trades Institute, the official training center for the International Union of Painters & Allied Trades District Council 82. The alignment bolsters the claims of many that the bill is designed at least in part to benefit unionization of the painting industry.

Levens affirmed that he is not anti-union but expressed concerns for the challenges of those would-be apprentices in terms of lifestyle, travel, and cost to access those opportunities, particularly given the level of skills needed to do the type of work he does that he's been able to learn primarily in-house.

"It seems to me that it's not settled enough to make an informed decision by the Senate, like the ramifications or the downstream effect is yet to be determined," Levens said.

Levens also wondered how the new board would assess the morality component of the licensure requirement.

"Here's a real-life scenario. I worked with a man who was incarcerated 25 years ago and he just sold a very successful drywall and painting company up here," he said. "He's gone on to do great things with his life, maintain sobriety

and that lifestyle. Would that person be penalized or called out by the morality board, or whoever is going to dictate (the requirements)? It seems crazy. And if you're going to do that for the painting trade, you should do it for the concrete trade and the roofing trade and the plumbing trade, and why stop there?"

Levens said he is certainly not alone with his concerns about the bill.

"I've talked to other people about this, like my paint rep at the Sherwin-Williams store in Virginia. Most accredited painters are working out of that store, and they failed to see the issue, and they're boots on the ground. No one would know more than they do about who's doing what, and if people are having problems. I didn't hear any of that. But people are quite interested in this."

The *Timberjay* contacted International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 82 via email asking for a representative to comment on the bill and possible benefits that could come from its passage, but they did not respond prior to press time. The *Timberjay* also contacted Sen. McEwen's office for comment on the bill. The senator did not respond prior to press time.

READ THE TIMBERJAY!

RELIGION AND POLITICS

Study: More than half of state's GOP backs Christian nationalism

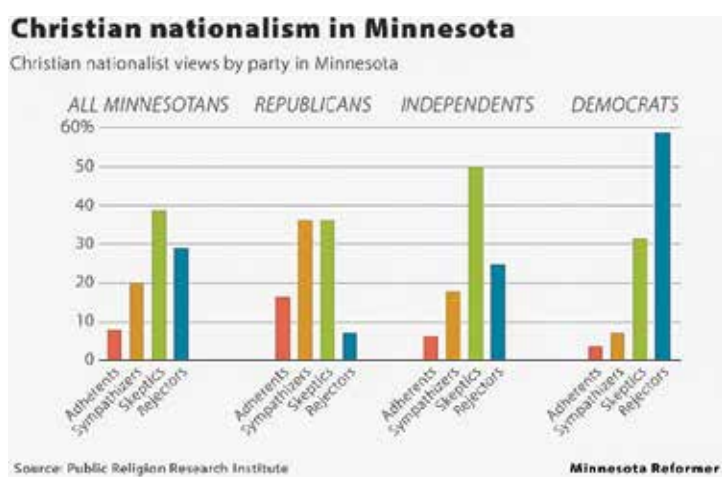
by CHRISTOPHER INGRAHAM
Minnesota Reformer

REGIONAL—Nearly three in ten Minnesotans — including a majority of Republicans — hold Christian nationalist views, according to a new survey of all 50 states conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute.

Christian nationalists support an aggressive fusion of church and state, and believe in a “Christian primacy in politics and law,” in the words of conservative commentator David French.

For the purposes of the PRRI survey, respondents were asked how much they agreed with the following five statements:

- ▶ The U.S. government should declare America a Christian nation.
- ▶ U.S. laws should be based on Christian values.
- ▶ If the U.S. moves away from our Christian foundations, we will not have a country



anymore.

▶ Being Christian is an important part of being truly American.

▶ God has called Christians to exercise dominion over all areas of American society.

The survey group categorized Americans based on their levels of agreement with those propositions. Those who agreed

with all five were classified as Christian nationalist adherents, while those supporting most of them were categorized as sympathizers of the cause.

People disagreeing with most of the five items were labeled as skeptics, while those rejecting all five completely were dubbed rejectors.

Of the 450 Minnesotans

surveyed, eight percent were adherents and an additional 20 percent were sympathizers, while 39 percent were skeptical and 29 percent rejected all five notions completely.

Those breakdowns were virtually identical among all Americans as a whole.

In Minnesota, 53 percent of Republicans are adherents or sympathizers, while half of independents are skeptics and a solid majority of Democrats reject Christian nationalism.

The margin of error for the Minnesota sample was +/- 5.8 percentage points, while for the national sample it was +/- 0.8 percentage points.

Relative to other Americans, Christian nationalists are less likely to have a four-year degree, more likely to be over age 50, more likely to be Republican and more likely to identify as a born-again or evangelical Christian.

Support for Christian nation-

alism is especially high in conservative rural states. In neighboring North Dakota, for instance, fully half the adult population espouses Christian nationalist views. Support is also high in Republican strongholds along the Gulf Coast as well as parts of Appalachia.

Christian nationalists “see political struggles through the apocalyptic lens of revolution and violence,” according to the PRRI report. Roughly half of adherents and sympathizers believe “there is a storm coming soon that will sweep away the elites in power and restore the rightful leaders,” compared to 22 percent of skeptics and just seven percent of rejectors.

Additionally, more than one third of Christian nationalists agree that “because things have gotten so far off track, true American patriots may have to resort to violence to save the country.” Just 17 percent of skeptics and seven percent of rejectors say the same.

WILDFIRE...Continued from page 1

been focused in the West in recent years, federal officials announced in late February that a \$100 million pot of money from the Inflation Reduction Act would go to fund the Collaborative Wildfire Risk Reduction Program, or CWRRP, to bring federal dollars to a total of 24 states, including Minnesota. About half of the qualified states weren't included in an earlier \$400 million allocation to address 21 of the most fire-prone landscapes in the West. Of the latest allocation, Wilkes said the vast majority will go to federal lands in the eastern half of the country and that the Superior National Forest is one of the highest priorities for the funding. Grants under the program can be up to \$20 million, so the funding stream could be considerable.

This week's federal visit was held along the north arm of Burntside Lake and included visits to recent prescribed fires near Slim Lake. Nick Petrack, a fire specialist working on both the Superior and Chippewa national forests, told the nearly three dozen representatives in attendance at the event that few areas are as vulnerable to wildfire impacts as the North



About three dozen representatives of various governmental units and non-profit land management advocates attended Tuesday's event.

Arm Rd. “As you come off the Echo Trail, this is a one way in, one way out road,” said Petrack. He said the road includes several private cabins as well as two YMCA camps tucked in between Burntside Lake and the border of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. “You have upwards of 800 kids at these camps during the summer, so from a fire and emergency response perspective, we need to take care of the fuels that we can.”

Given the mixed ownership throughout much of the Superior, Petrack said effectively dealing with

forest fuels requires partnerships with neighboring landowners, from private owners to the state and county. Joe Smith, who manages the Widjiwagan Y Camp, talked about his efforts to address fuel loading in and around the camp, working in conjunction with the Forest Service.

That was a point stressed throughout the day by Wilkes, who said he was impressed by the degree of cooperation and coordination he was seeing in the region when it comes to fire management. “I see a lot of preventive work has been done,” he said. “Folks around this part

of the country are proactive, rather than reactive, so we want to try to keep it there.”

Wilkes said the Superior, as the largest national forest in the eastern region, offers a lot of opportunities for progress in a region that is prone to some of the largest wildfires in the eastern half of the country. “And then the partnerships are very strong here, so I wanted to come in and see how we bring the two together to leverage a large opportunity.”

Wilkes said the funds, along with other major investments and initiatives already underway in the region, could help the

Forest Service significantly reduce fuel loads near developed areas, otherwise known as the wildland-urban interface. While North Arm Rd. has been a top priority, Petrack said the Forest Service would soon be shifting its focus to the other side of Burntside's north arm, in what it is calling the Hi-Lo project, which encompasses a large area along the Echo Trail, just north of Ely. It's a roughly 63,000-acre area that is heavily used for outdoor recreation and includes many private inholdings for lake homes and cabins, resorts, and camps.

Tuesday's event was well attended and included several representatives from the U.S. Forest Service as well as the Minnesota DNR, St. Louis County, and a number of nonprofit groups that have a stake in fuel reduction efforts. A Forest Service fire crew was forced to leave early, however, when the call came in about a grass fire on County Rd. 21, one of the first of what is expected to be a long spring fire season.

Northern Minnesota contains some of the most fire-prone landscapes in the eastern half of the country, particularly on

the Canadian Shield, where shallow soils—which dry quickly in drought—and combustible species like jack pine and balsam fir have contributed to a growing number of large-scale fires in the region over the past two decades. Fire officials have noted that past policies of immediate fire suppression along with climate change have greatly increased the incidence and the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the U.S.

According to Superior National Forest spokesperson Joy VanDrie, nearly 200,000 acres on the forest meet the criteria for the federal CWRRP funds, far more than most national forests in the eastern half of the country.

About the program

The Collaborative Wildfire Risk Reduction Program is an effort to promote greater equity in funding distribution from the Inflation Reduction Act. The competitive process is intended to support projects that will significantly reduce wildfire risk with a focus on very high wildfire hazard potential areas and/or high-risk fire sheds in the national forest system.

CENTER...Continued from page 1

Center has sought to teach the world about wolves since it was founded in 1985 by Dr. L. David Mech. The center brings 40,000 visitors a year to Ely and reaches many more people through its busy website, quarterly magazine, virtual learning, and webinars.

The center will use the Eileen Sutz estate funding to train new wolf educators across the world so they can bring the science about this misunderstood apex predator into their home communities.

“Thanks to these funds, our organization has a huge opportunity to leverage our community of followers around the world through the launching of a wolf educator training program,” Executive Director Grant Spickelmier said.

“It's inspiring what this woman's passion for wolves is creating,” Spickelmier told the *Timberjay*. Spickelmier outlined that the center will draw from its vibrant online community and partner with other science education organizations to develop its volunteer educators.

The center knew about Sutz's gift in December and started planning. “We will be able to support the training program for

three years with our third (of the money),” said Spickelmier. The center will hire a manager for the program who will be based in Ely. The training for the volunteer educators will have three components: live interactive education with the center's staff, online general knowledge modules about wolves, and pre-recorded videos with specialized content about wolves. The center has already created the first five of the online modules.

“We will have a pilot program in place by May,” explained Spickelmier, “with a slow roll out as we ramp up to the full program in 2025.” The pilot will enroll 30 people, focusing initially on western states with wolf populations.

“By training and equipping community wolf educators we can reach new audiences that might not otherwise hear from the International Wolf Center and simultaneously create a new set of engaged volunteers and champions for science-based wolf education. We like to think that Eileen herself would have been the first person to sign up.”

Eileen Sutz

Sutz's connection to wolves began in her youth. As a ballet dancer, model,

and free spirit ahead of her time, she overcame many obstacles in pursuit of her dreams. She often experienced being misunderstood and constrained by the confines of conventional life and found strength and resonance with wolves. She admired and found inspiration in their independence, loyalty, and resilience as

well as their beauty and gracefulness.

Over the years, Sutz's successful business career allowed her to pursue many of her passions including founding a theater company, supporting animal rescue organizations, and traveling the world to follow the Rolling Stones on tour for over 10

years, but her most enduring and passionate interest remained the welfare of wolves.

Physical ailments led to Sutz being homebound in her later years, and during that time she devoured news about wolves and began passionately defending them at any given opportunity.

Following Sutz's unexpected passing from a stroke in 2022, the search began to find organizations that fulfilled her vision and weren't laden with bureaucracy. The three selected organizations have spent the past several months determining how they'll expand their efforts thanks to the gift from Sutz.

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CITY OF ELY

Ely finds developer for apartment project

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY — At the city council meeting here on Tuesday, Ely Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski reported that the city has found a potential developer for its planned housing project after more than a year of searching.

“The apartment complex housing project has been picking up some momentum here in the last probably month or so,” Langowski told the council. “Working with Ely’s Housing and Redevelopment Agency, we’ve been able to get a developer, so now we’re working with them on an almost daily basis starting to put this project together.”

The current proposal is for a 37-unit single-building apartment structure. Units will range from studios to large three-bedroom apartments, rented at market rates or less if possible. The plans include a small playground and twenty stalls of covered parking. The city will be able to leverage \$2,000 in planning costs and the value of the city’s property by the city garages near the hospital as matching funds as they pursue grants.

The grants situation looks promising, Langowski said. The city applied for a \$1 million housing grant from the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board and Langowski said that the city received a recommendation for \$850,000. The city’s developer, D. W. Jones, is currently preparing an application to the Minnesota Housing and Finance Agency which is due by the end of April, to pursue workforce housing funding already allocated for projects like Ely’s. If that funding as well as the IRRR moneys come through, the city will need to bond for \$3.5 million.

When funding is secured, Langowski estimated that preliminary planning and utilities work could commence this year with the main phase of construction taking place in 2025.

In other matters of business, the city council:

➤ Approved the attendance of the city council and staff at the Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting on April 17 and the chamber’s “Celebrate Ely” event on April 11 at the Grand Ely Lodge.

➤ Approved the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting on April 11 from 5-6 p.m. in the council chambers.

➤ Approved a recommendation from the tree board to display the Tree City USA flag in City Hall.

➤ Approved a recommendation from the tree board to provide financial support for travel expenses of not more than \$270 to send Claudia McBride to the Shade Tree Short Course in the Twin Cities.

➤ Approved the recommendations from the planning and zoning commission (P&Z) and the park and recreation board to proceed with the Miners Lake East Parking Area Project and to install a portable restroom.

➤ Did not accept a recommendation from P&Z for Attorney Klun to review the state noise and lighting requirements. The recommendation was turned down on the advice of Langowski, who pointed out, “We already follow the state statute concerning noise and light. When a project is developed, we are required

to follow the building code, the zoning code, our local ordinances and all state and federal laws. So, I don’t know if there’s necessarily a reason for additional review of ordinances concerning noise or light when we follow the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency guidelines.”

➤ Heard the report from council member Angela Campbell that the Heritage Preservation Commission’s oral history project for the 100-year anniversary of the Ely Memorial High School building will record the oral history videos on March 13 and 14.

➤ Approved the recommendation from telecommunications advisory board (TAB) to authorize additional filming of events and meetings at a rate of \$25 per hour. Additional filming will be authorized by TAB on a monthly basis.

➤ Accepted the letter of resignation from the P&Z from Mike Banovetz and approved posting for the open position. Emily Rose will replace Banovetz at the chair of P&Z. Banovetz faced unruly and vocal residents attending P&Z meetings last fall who focused much of their ire over the proposed RV parks in the Spaulding neighborhood on Banovetz. He will continue to serve on Ely’s Police Commission and on the cemetery and projects committees.

City council member Al Forsman thanked Banovetz for his service. “He’s been very instrumental on a number of projects,” Forsman said, “like short term rentals. He’s donated a lot of time on behalf of our community.”

➤ Approved the recommendation from employee relations to approve the budgeted pay increases for the fire department. There have been no increases since 2021.

➤ Approved the recommendation from the park and recreation board to allow Jeremy Kershaw with the Heck of the North Bike Race to camp at Semer’s Beach on July 19-20.

➤ Approved the recommendation from Ely Utilities Commission (EUC) to purchase 48 load management relays for \$9,984.

➤ Approved the recommendations from EUC and the employee relations committee to hire Destin Anderson for the Water/Wastewater Operator II position.

➤ Approved a recommendation from EUC to pay AE2S invoice 92687 for the wastewater treatment facility improvements project for \$10,105, invoice 92688 for water treatment plant improvements for \$7,191, and invoice 92689 for general consulting services for \$474.

➤ Heard the report from Fire Chief David Marshall about a successful prescribed burn at the Dorothy Molter Museum on Monday. At the burn site, the Ely Fire Department worked with the U.S. Forest Service and Natural Resource Technician (NRT) program students from the Vermilion Campus of Minnesota North College.

“It was the first time ever Vermilion NRT students did that sort of understory prescribed burn,” Marshall remarked, “where you have trees overhead and they were burning underneath. It was a great experience for the students.”

➤ Heard the report of Police Chief Chad Houde on the ongoing and successful efforts to hire new patrol officers for the city’s open positions.

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GIRLS SECTION 7A BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS

Ely's hopes dashed in semi's Top-seeded Cromwell-Wright rallies to down Wolves 57-51

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

DULUTH- The Ely Timberwolves girls had No. 1 seed Cromwell-Wright on the ropes in last Wednesday's Class 7A semifinal game in Duluth, but couldn't seal the deal as the Cardinals came back in the second half to win 57-51, eliminating the Wolves

from the tourney.

Utilizing a 2-3 zone defense, the Wolves held the Cardinals below their season scoring average, and executing good ball control behind the shooting of Hannah Penke and Grace LaTourell, Ely took a five-point lead into the locker room at halftime.

But Ely had more difficulty finding their range

in the second half, allowing Cromwell-Wright off the mat. The Cardinals hit a pair of big treys down the stretch to seal the victory and clench a spot in the final.

"It was a high level basketball game, maybe even state level," Ely Head Coach Max Gantt said. "We just couldn't hold on. We went a little cold from the field

Right: Ely senior Grace LaTourell wrapped up her high school basketball career with over 1,900 points. file photo

down the stretch. They hit a couple big threes at the end. Deep threes. Sometimes basketball is a make or miss game. Overall I was incredibly
See GIRLS...pg. 2B



BOYS SECTION 7A BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS

Grizzlies crushed by Cherry Had solid first-round win over Chisholm

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

HIBBING- An exciting season of North Woods boys basketball came to an inglorious end on Saturday in Hibbing, where the Grizzlies were overwhelmed by powerhouse Cherry 97-39.

The highlight of the day for Grizzlies fans was North Woods sophomore Mya Kinsey performing the national anthem - things went south for the Grizzlies quickly from there.

The Tigers roared out of the box with a devastating 18-0 run to start the game. When senior Jonah Burnett finally got the Grizzlies on the board five minutes into the game, any hopes North Woods fans had of hanging close with the Tigers were replaced with questions of how bad the final beatdown might be. Everything was working for Cherry, from their inside scoring game to star Isaac Asuma draining NBA-range three pointers. North Woods could manage only a free throw by Burnett and a pair of charities by Evan Kajala as the Tigers steamrolled their way to a 36-5

Above: The Grizzlies' Evan Kajala is fouled by a Cherry defender.

Right: The Grizzlies' Jonah Burnett works inside for a shot under heavy pressure.

photos by D. Colburn

advantage. A deuce and a trey by Talen Jarshaw got the Grizzlies to double digits at 39-10, but the Tigers weren't about to loosen their grip on the game, largely holding the Grizzlies in check with dominating defense as they kept pouring on the points to lead by a crushing 62-19 at the half.

Luke Will had a driving score to get the Grizzlies on the board first in the second half, but for the next 11 minutes Burnett was the only offense for North Woods, hitting a trey, three deuces and three free throws. Cherry sent in their first wave of reserves with 12 minutes remaining, leading 87-28, and

See GRIZZLIES...pg. 2B



SECTION 7A PLAYOFFS

Wolves bow out to MI-B in first round

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

MT. IRON— It was one-and-out for the Timberwolves in the Section 7A boys basketball tournament as they fell 73-53 to the second-seeded Rangers in the opening round here last Thursday.

The seventh-seeded Wolves, who came into the game at 11-15, had lost big to Mt. Iron-Buhl twice before this season and were the definite underdogs, particularly on the Rangers' home court. But the Wolves kept it closer than in their previous encounters. "We handled their pressure better this game and held our turnovers down, which allowed us to hang around in the game," said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald. "We never threatened them but we didn't get blown out like we did the

See WOLVES...pg. 2B

ARCHERY

Grizzlies win at Hibbing

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

HIBBING- The North Woods middle school archers were on target again last Saturday at the Region 2 3D target meet in Hibbing, capturing first place.

Seventh grader Cooper Long placed second among 65 middle school boys and won his grade level group. Seventh-grader Laurin Glass accomplished the game feat on the girls side, shooting against 45 other competitors.

Lincoln Antikainen was the top-scoring high school boy, placing third in the division and taking first among tenth graders.

Others scoring top five finishes in their grade levels included sophomore John Danielson, seventh grader Brady Swanson, senior Cadence Nelson, senior Riley Las, eighth grader Kalle Nelson, and fourth grader Bailey Brunner.

The Region 2 bullseye tournament will be on Saturday at Coleraine.

CARING FOR KIDS

"Buddy Bears" donated

Bikers club provides stuffed bears for kids in emergencies

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- It was still a bit early in the season for a motorcycle ride, but a group from the East Central Minnesota Chapter of

A.B.A.T.E (American Bikers for Awareness, Training, and Education) took a road trip by car to Tower March 9, to deliver a little comfort to a child during a time of stress. That came in the form of 40 small stuffed "Buddy Bears," which first responders can use

Right: Members of the ABATE club pose with area emergency responders.

to calm a child at the scene of a fire, accident, or other incident.

The bears were dis-

See DONATION...pg. 2B



ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Businesses hurt by snow drought can apply for loans

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Small businesses or agricultural operations in northeastern Minnesota may be eligible for federal low interest loans to help them recover from ongoing drought conditions, including this winter's lack of snow.

Gov. Tim Walz announced this past week that the state has unlocked federal funding for small businesses that suffered losses due to the lack of snow and he urged qualifying businesses to apply soon.

"From skiing and snowshoeing to winter festivals, snowy winters are part of our way of life in Minnesota," said Walz. "The low precipitation we've experienced this winter has had a real economic impact on small businesses that rely on snow and winter tourism to grow and survive. I encourage all impacted business owners to apply for assistance as soon as possible."

From December to February, Minnesota experienced the warmest meteorological winter on record, and it was among the least snowy in many locations as well. Through the end

of February, Duluth had recorded only 15.7" snow this winter, with an average snow depth of 1.8." This lack of precipitation has exacerbated an ongoing drought and the resulting impact to businesses makes them eligible for these federal loans.

Impacted businesses in counties with a drought declaration can apply for the Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) through the Small Business Administration (SBA). The loans are designed to help businesses get through emergency situations that have impacted their economic well-being. Under the EIDL

program, businesses can borrow up to \$2 million to cover their actual losses. Businesses pay no interest on the loan for the first year and a maximum rate of four percent for the rest of the loan period. To take advantage of the program, businesses must apply by the application deadlines for any of the three declarations that include St. Louis County. Those deadlines are April 4, April 15, or May 13, 2024.

Business owners can learn more about eligibility and find an application at the SBA's disaster assistance page.

Businesses impacted by a

lack of precipitation will enter their county's name and see a list of all open disasters for their county. They should pick one where the incident includes "drought."

Submit applications and find additional disaster assistance information at <https://lending.sba.gov>. Applicants may also contact Minnesota's Small Business Development Centers and SBA's Customer Service Center at disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. You can also call 800-659-2955 from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Area trails organizations net funding from trails task force

REGIONAL- Five North Country organizations netted almost \$19,000 in Small Project Grants from a \$100,000 program administered by the Iron Range Tourism Bureau (IRTB) and St. Louis County Trails Task Force, with funds provided by the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation.

The grants provide funding for projects that foster the development and long-term sustainability of recreational trails and facilities in Northern St. Louis County.

Area grant award winners include:

► Buyck Fire Department, \$1,521 to create and install signs on area snowmobile trails to

allow riders to report their location in an emergency situation.

► Ely Igloo Snowmobile Club, \$5,000 to replace the Kawishiwi Falls Hiking Trail Bridge.

► Growing Futures, LLC, \$5,528 to purchase gear for the group's Introduction to Wilderness offerings which provide outdoor overnight experi-

ences to people of color.

► St. Louis/Lake County Northeast Regional ATV Joint Powers Board, \$4,300 to purchase trail counters and conduct an ATV trail use survey.

► Voyageurs Snowmobile Club, \$2,500 to enhance the Winchester Lake Overlook with a shelter and picnic tables. "It's great to see a

high level of dedication to trail construction, trail maintenance and projects that enhance the experience for everyone who enjoys being outdoors," said Beth Pierce, IRTB executive director. "Anything that develops or improves our trails and helps our clubs is an investment in our local quality of life and the visitor experience and can become

a tool for attracting new residents."

Eligible applicants include cities, townships, counties, nonprofits and tribal units of government within the St. Louis County and the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation service area.

Call Jim Plummer at 218-274-7006 for Regional Trails grant information.

GRIZZLIES...Continued from page 1B

went deeper into its bench after the clock started running continuously. Louie Panichi finally broke into the scoring column with a pair of charities with six minutes to go, North Woods reserve John Carlson tallied a free throw, and Keenan Whitney canned a trey from the top of the key for the Grizzlies' final hoop of the season in the 97-39 loss.

Burnett scored almost half of the team's points with 19, as the Tigers held scoring threats Will and Panichi to single digits and well below their season averages. Cherry put five players into double figures, led by Asuma with five three balls and 21 points.

It's the second consecutive year the Tigers have bounced the Grizzlies out of the sectional tourney in the quarterfinals, last year winning 105-76 on the way to the Class A state championship.

Chisholm

After a heated narrow 80-78 win at Chisholm on Feb. 23, the atmosphere in the standing room only gym at North Woods last Thursday for the rematch was electric with anticipation of another extreme battle. What they got instead was a full display of the Grizzlies' offensive and defensive prowess, as the home team scored a decisive 79-57 win.

The final margin in no way reflected the intensity of play on the court. This was full-speed high energy basketball, with the Bluestreaks grabbing an early 6-5 edge. But two baskets by Burnett, a fast break and a drive by Panichi, and a Burnett dunk fueled a 10-2 run that put North Woods up 15-8, and the Grizzlies never trailed again. Defending the perimeter against the three-ball that had been

Chisholm's most effective weapon in the first game, the Grizzlies made the Bluestreaks play their game at their tempo as they gradually pulled out to a 38-35 lead at the half.

A pair of Chisholm treys gave the Bluestreaks' fans hope that they would start lighting it up from outside, but the Grizzlies remained firmly in control. An acrobatic drive by Hartway, a pair of charities by Burnett and a hoop by Evan Kajala put North Woods up by 21 at the nine minute mark, 64-43, and with reserves collecting ample playing time late, the Grizzlies closed out the 79-57 win to advance to the quarterfinal round of the tourney.

Turnovers illustrate just how intense the struggle was, as North Woods turned the ball over 24 times while forcing 29 Chisholm errors. The



Grizzlies had a solid edge in turning those miscues into points, however, outscoring

Chisholm 29-10.

Burnett once again led the North Woods scoring

Left: The Grizzlies' Aidan Hartway goes in for a layup against Cherry.

photo by D. Colburn

attack with 27 points. Panichi was close behind with 22, and Will had 11.

Burnett has been near the top of the MN Boys Basketball Hub list of state scoring leaders for all classes this season, and was ranked sixth on Tuesday after weekend sectional play. At 813 points for the season and with lower-ranking players also done for the season, Burnett will finish in the top ten in the state and may well have enough of an edge to hold on to sixth.

The Grizzlies finished the season with a record of 22-6, improving on last season's 17-11 mark.

GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

proud of our effort and the way we executed. Hannah Penke had 20 points. Including some strong post ups and a couple threes." LaTourell scored 14 points, with 12 of those coming in

that half. Sarah Visser had 16 rebounds.

The Wolves finished the year with a record of 22-7, the second most wins in program history.

"We have gone 45-12

the last two years- that's real success," Gantt said. "This group of seniors and starters have been a part of that. Grace LaTourell graduates with over 1,900 points scored, third in program

history. Hannah Penke had over 900 points and some of the top highlights we can remember seeing. Sarah Visser finished with over 1,000 rebounds."

And the senior trio

provided much to the team beyond the numbers, Gantt said.

"All three seniors were incredible defenders as well," he said. "Most importantly they were

great teammates. Now we have a younger group ready to step in next year and mix in with some of our experience. This season was an incredibly fun and successful journey."

WOLVES...Continued from page 1B

first two games." Indeed, after heading into the break down by 15, the Wolves played nearly even with the Rangers in the second half.

Sophomore Jack Davies finished the season as he started it, leading the Wolves on offense as he scored 22 of the team's

25 points in the first half. Junior guard Caid Chittum got in on the action in the second half, adding nine points for the Wolves along

with seven rebounds, while junior forward Trenton Bishop added eight points for the Wolves.

Looking ahead to next

year, the young Wolves squad will return with their entire starting lineup and top reserves. "So, hopefully we will be better but

they will need to spend some time in the offseason working on their skills," said McDonald.

DONATION...Continued from page 1B

tributed to the Tower, Vermilion Lake, Eagles Nest, and Greenwood fire departments along with the Breitung Police Department. And if area departments are in need of more bears this summer, the motorcycle group said they would be happy to deliver more since the group is hoping to organize a group ride to the area later this summer.

The bears are purchased with charitable gambling money, which means the bears have to be delivered in person, rather than mailed or shipped, so members can complete required paperwork. The bears are donated to fire and ambulance departments, women's shelters, and other organizations that work with children in crisis situations.

The club does one large raffle fundraiser a year, plus some other smaller events, like their Valentine's Auction Get-Together to raise money for their outreach efforts.

The club's focus is on motorcycle safety education, but they also sponsor group rides and trips.

"If I can ride 8,000 miles in a season, I am happy," said group president Jim Pierson. "We often do 100-mile long rides as a group, sometimes 150 miles, and we also like to ride for a charitable cause."

The group sponsors safety and education programs, along with awareness campaigns like "Start Seeing Motorcycles" and "Look Twice, Save a Life."

Pierson said the buddy bears have been very well received by EMS workers.

"It is something for a child to hold onto and focus on," he said.

Jane Doyle, the statewide coordinator of A.B.A.T.E groups in Minnesota also traveled to Tower.

"Thanks to the East Central Chapter for bringing the bears up," she said.

Jen McDonough, owner of the Tower Café and longtime first responder and firefighter knew of the program from her previous volunteer work and had contacted Doyle about getting the bears up in this area. She is also a member of the Vermilion Lake Fire Department and is a EMR for the Tower Ambulance Service.

You can learn more about A.B.A.T.E at <https://www.abatemn.org/>.

A Big Thank You!

I would like to thank: *Vermilion Lake Fire Department, Pike-Sandy-Britt Fire Department, Embarrass Fire Department, Breitung Fire Department, Tower Fire Department, Tower Ambulance, St. Louis County Sheriff, Como Gas, and the community and my neighbors for being there when I needed them.*

"Thanks to all who stepped up to help during this time."

"Thank you so much for your diligence in responding and fighting the fire."

"I am so happy no one was hurt."

Donations can be sent to:

Paul Koslucher, 6108 Wahlsten Rd, Tower, MN 55790

Physical donations can be dropped off at:

6108 Wahlsten Rd.; items can be dropped off by the deck near the boat.

Or donations can be given to:

Ginger Koslucher who works at Fortune Bay.

Thank you and in gratitude,
Paul Koslucher



Obituaries and Death Notices



Gertrude Mosnik

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our mother, Mrs. Gertrude M. Vertnik Mosnik, 90, of Ely, who passed away on Nov. 27, 2023, following a decline in her health. She was cremated on Dec. 4 at Prasser Kleczka Funeral Home in Bay View, Wis. She will be buried next to her husband in the Ely Cemetery on Friday, June 21, 2024, when a service and celebration of her life will be held by her family. Please address any correspondence to her daughters, Diane Mosnik, 2357 E Bennett Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53207 or Debra Mosnik, 7583 5th St. N, Oakdale, MN 55128.

Gertrude "Gert" was born in Ely to Matthew and Gertrude Zaverl Vertnik on July 3, 1933. She resided in Ely most of her life until moving into a long-term care facility in Milwaukee, Wis., near her daughter Diane. The family is extremely thankful for the care she received at Creek Side Terrace in Oak Creek her final two years. Gert married Albin Mosnik, known to all as "Beanie," on June 21, 1958, in Ely, after Beanie returned from his military service in the army during the Korean War. They were married nearly 50 years prior to Beanie's passing in 2008.

Gert loved her Ely community and her Slovenian heritage. She was very social and loved polka music, accordions played by her friends, dancing to polkas, going to the casino, watching game shows and doing word puzzles. She also loved baking and was well known for her poticas and other Slovenian foods and desserts. She enjoyed blueberry picking with her family and her blueberry potica was wonderful. She was active in local women's clubs and organizations, including the VFW Auxiliary and Yugoslav Club; she was a member of St. Anthony's Catholic Church. She also worked part-time in some women's clothing stores in Ely.

Gert is survived by her children, Diane Mosnik, Debra Mosnik and Steven Mosnik; grandchildren, Jenna Mosnik and Brody Mosnik, whom she loved very much;

and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Albin Mosnik; parents, Matthew and Gertrude Vertnik; sisters, Stanislava Vertnik, Mary Cudlipp (Russ), Anna Horgas (George), Frances Olson (Robert) and Angela Golobich (Anton "Tony"); and brothers, Frank Vertnik (Wanda) and Matthew Vertnik (Marion).



Jason F. Gehrke

Jason Fredrick Gehrke, 82, passed away on Friday, March 1, 2024, with his loving family standing vigil at his side. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends. A celebration of life will be held from 1-4 p.m. on Sunday, April 14 at the Balkan Town Hall, 5524 Hwy. 73 in Chisholm.

Jason is survived by his wife, Sharon Knowles Gehrke; sons, Jason (Denise) Gehrke and Rodney (Sundie) Gehrke; daughters, Sherry Lawrence, Char Harris and Jan (Henry Jr.) Skahl; fourteen grandchildren; twenty-four great-grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Mildred Pratt Gehrke; father, Theodore F. Gehrke; sisters, Mary Lou Gehrke Sundhiem and Katherine Gehrke as an infant; first wife, Sarah Hutchinson, also known as Connie; and several aunts, uncles, cousins and dear friends.

Barry M. Day

Barry Merle Day, 52, of Nett Lake Bois Forte Ojibwe Reservation, passed away on Monday, March 4, 2024. A wake was held on Sunday, March 10 and a funeral service was held on Monday, March 11, both at the Bois Forte Government and Services Center. Lance Kingbird officiated. Casket bearers were Kent Isham, Klib Isham, William Villebrun, Martis Voss, Adam Strong and Mike Isham. Honorary casket bearers were Christy Zika and Elsie Jones. Arrangements were with Mlaker Funeral Home of

Cook.

He is survived by his son, Talon Day; mother, Jewel Day Walker; father, Ronald Boshey; brothers, Ronald, Damon, Dean, Neil and Charles Graue; nieces, Kateri, Loya and Genesis; nephews, Dylan, Douglas, Shawn, Michael, Daysaun and AJ; and special friends, Christy Zika and Elsie Jones.

John A. Swenson

John A. Swenson, 79, of Ely, a proud veteran of the U.S. Navy Seabees, found peace at his home on Tuesday, March 12, 2024, with his beloved wife and their three devoted pups by his side. John was a tireless supporter of the tourism community and chose Ely as his final resting place. There will be no services at his request. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

He is survived by his wife, Sheryl of Ely; mother, Betty Koski; sisters, Yvonne Schmidt, Cathy Baker and Barbara Hall, and sister-in-law, Debra Foster, all of Indiana; and the special friend he treasured as a son, Chris Eilrich of Ely.

Ray H. Hario

Ray H. Hario, 80, a lifelong resident of Ely, died on Saturday, March 9, 2024, in Carefree Living in Ely. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, March 15 at First Lutheran Church in Ely with Rev. Zachariah Bergdorf officiating. Visitation will be one hour prior to the memorial service at the church. Private interment will be in the Ely Cemetery at a later date. Memorial donations may be directed to First Lutheran Church in Ely or the Salvation Army. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

He is survived by his former wife, Susan Hario of Ely; paternal cousins and maternal cousins.

Michael Prijatelj

Michael "Mike" Prijatelj, 74, of Owatonna, originally of Ely, passed away on Wednesday, Feb.

28, 2024, at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester after complications from a cardiac event. A family memorial and burial will be held this summer in Ely.

He is survived by his wife, Antoinette "Toni" Okasich Prijatelj of Owatonna; daughter, Rachel (Adam) Stange of Austin; grandchildren, Augustine and Zephyrine; brothers, Jerry (Carol) Prijatelj of Sauk Centre, Joey (Rusty) Prijatelj of Aurora and Peter (Cec) Prijatelj of Virginia; sisters-in-law, Mona (Tim) Trembath of Thornton, Colo., and Evie Haverkost of Mt. Iron; other friends and relatives.

Anton Buckanaga

Anton James Buckanaga, 29, of Tower, died

unexpectedly in his home on Wednesday, March 6, 2024. A wake was held on Sunday, March 10 and tribal rites were held on Monday, March 11, both at the Vermilion Wellness Center. William Peters was the Spiritual Advisor. Pallbearers were Brandon Hanks, Kyle, Bill Peters, Bryan Jr., James, Harvey Jr. and Aiden Strong. Honorary pallbearers were Michele, Rena, Sophia, Paxton and Andrew. Burial was in the Bois Fortes Vermilion Cemetery. Family services were provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower.

Anton was born on May 26, 1994 in Minneapolis, the son of Miles Parkhurst and Angela Buckanaga. Anton liked

beading, family time, car rides and music with his siblings. He loved his children, family and friends.

Anton is survived by his mother, Angela Buckanaga of Tower; children, Carter, Evalette and Taven Buckanaga, all of Minneapolis; sisters, Michele and Rena Buckanaga, Sophia Medicine and Tara Carlos, all of Tower; brother, Brandon Hanks of Tower; numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and many friends.

He was preceded in death by his father, Miles Parkhurst; grandpa, Andrew Buckanaga; grandma, Vivian Francis; and many uncles and aunts.

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Outdoors

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FOREST MANAGEMENT

OLA to review DNR's use of federal wildlife funds

Legislative auditor announces investigation after allegations that DNR misused funds for timber harvest

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— The Office of the Legislative Auditor, or OLA, has announced it will undertake what's known as a "special review" to examine the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' alleged misuse of federal grant funds designed to benefit wildlife and their habitat. The OLA informed DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen of the review in a March 1 letter that noted that the legislative auditor recently

completed a preliminary assessment of the allegations.

The decision by the OLA to undertake a special review is extraordinary. The office typically conducts only two or three such reviews annually and only in cases where there is at least some evidence of a failure to follow state policy or laws. While the DNR has been subject to such reviews in the past, they are infrequent and the agency has never been investigated for its handling of the federal grant dollars, known as Pittman-Robertson funds, at

subject in the upcoming review. That's according to former deputy DNR Commissioner Steve Thorne, now retired, who spoke to the *Timberjay* for this story. "This is very unusual nationally," said Thorne.

Craig Sterle, a retired DNR forester, agreed. "Our take is that they wouldn't be looking at this if it wasn't serious."

Special review authority

The OLA is authorized by state law to undertake special reviews to investigate allegations that an entity subject to

Right: The letter from the Office of the Legislative Auditor announcing the special review.

OLA review, such as the DNR, "may have failed to comply with legal requirements related to the use of public money or other public resources."

The letter to Commissioner Strommen indicates that the OLA will be in touch soon to discuss the special review process going forward. The OLA

See REVIEW...pg. 5B



THEY DON'T MAKE 'EM LIKE THEY USED TO

Snow machines of yore

Always plenty to see at Melgeorge's Antique and Classic Snowmobile Race



Above: A classic mid-1960s vintage Polaris Colt likely brought back memories for many baby boomers who grew up snowmobiling.

Left: A 1963 Trailmaker has the look of a homemade contraption but it was actually manufactured in Hibbing from 1963-1965 by the Abe Mathews Company.

Lower left: A racer makes his way around the track, avoiding the ungroomed glare ice just ahead. Steve Koch, of Melgeorge's, had to groom about four acres of ice with harrow spikes so the snowmobiles would have traction on the otherwise glare ice.

Below: Snowmobilers of all ages got in on the act.

photos by D. Colburn



MANAGEMENT

Bill would require wolf season once delisting is final

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

ST. PAUL— Three northeastern Minnesota lawmakers have introduced bipartisan legislation that would require the Department of Natural Resources to implement an open season on gray wolves in the state once the species is delisted as threatened in Minnesota.

Rep. Dave Lislegard, DFL-Aurora, Rep. Roger Skraba, R-Ely, were two of the three co-authors of the bill, HF 3903, which would also establish a northeast deer management task force by Oct. 1 of this year and would require the DNR to work with the task force to develop policies and law changes designed to increase the white-tailed deer population in the Arrowhead. The task force would be comprised of individuals who live or "operate" within the region and calls for membership to include hunters, wildlife managers, tribal members, a representative from the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, or MDHA, and other interested parties.

DFL Sen. Grant Hauschild, of Hermantown, is the chief author of a companion bill, SF 3988, in the Minnesota Senate. Hauschild introduced the measure late last month and it has since been referred to the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy committee. To date, no hearings have been set on the legislation in either body.

MDHA Executive Director Jared Mazurek lauded the legislation. "There is no denying that northern Minnesota's deer population is declining," he said. "These bills provide a common-sense solution to one of the many factors contributing to this decline: predation. While there are a number of natural predators of the white-tailed deer, including bears, coyotes, bobcats, and wolves, the gray wolf is currently the only species we do not actively manage."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service set a wolf recovery goal at 1,251-1,400 wolves, a target that was surpassed decades ago. The DNR expanded that goal to 1600 wolves, yet current estimates put the Minnesota wolf population at 2700-2900 wolves, which comprises about half of the entire wolf population in the Lower 48 states. "The Minnesota wolf is more than fully recovered and active wolf management must resume as soon as possible," said Mazurek.

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REVIEW...Continued from page 4B

indicates they expect their review to be completed in the second half of 2024.

The only other special review currently underway by the OLA focuses on the Department of Education's oversight of the massive fraud committed by representatives of the nonprofit Feeding Our Future, which bilked millions in federal COVID dollars by falsely claiming they had provided meals to students. The OLA expects that investigation to be completed in the first half of the year.

Longstanding concerns

The *Timberjay* reported on the allegations most recently back in January, when the Fish and Wildlife Service released a draft report on its findings in the matter in response to a Freedom of Information Act request by the nonprofit Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. That report, originally written in early 2020 during the final year of the Trump administration, provided stunning conclusions on what appeared to be a wholesale violation of a federal grant program by the Minnesota DNR.

The 28-page report, which was never released publicly in final form,

provided the conclusions of a series of visits by FWS biologists in early 2020 to three state wildlife management areas, or WMAs, to investigate complaints that the DNR was misusing its federal funds to support logging urged by the timber industry. The federal funds obtained by the DNR were specifically dedicated to benefit wildlife and wildlife habitat yet appeared to be used instead to pay for hundreds of commercial timber sales that the DNR's own biologists said provided little benefit to wildlife or were even detrimental due to the environmental damage caused by the loss of important habitat or the logging activity itself. As the *Timberjay* reported last August, the FWS has been at odds with the DNR over its use of federal wildlife funds for what appear to be purely commercial timber sales on WMAs since at least 2021. The FWS had actually suspended its funding to the DNR for a time, but that funding was restored this past September after the DNR agreed to do a better job of documenting the wildlife benefits of its management activities.

While many field level wildlife officials within

the agency continue to express disappointment in the agency's actions surrounding timber sales on WMAs, top officials within the agency insist that the agency has done nothing wrong, and that the disagreement with federal officials has mostly been resolved. "Let me assure you that Commissioner Strommen expressed to me her continued confidence in our management of WMAs," wrote Dave Olfelt, director of the agency's Division of Fish and Wildlife, in a March 7 email to DNR wildlife staff.

"The fact that FWS fully reimbursed our 2021-2023 grant and has issued our 2023-25 grant demonstrates their confidence in the work we do and that issues FWS identified have been addressed," said Olfelt in response to questions from the *Timberjay* back in January.

Former deputy commissioner Thorne calls Olfelt's comments "cynical" and suggested that the division head is well aware that it's the field staff who have lost confidence in

DNR brass over the issue. What's more, he said the DNR has failed to comply with the agreement it signed with FWS last year, under which the federal agency agreed to release some funds it had earlier suspended.

Thorne accuses the DNR of stonewalling on the issue. "Instead of responding positively, and addressing the issue, the agency has tried to say, 'there's nothing to see here.'" Thorne said back when he was with the agency, officials would have spoken out publicly and resigned over the mismanagement of WMAs and the misuse of federal funds. "Instead, the agency is running true to form with its pattern of recent years, trying to tell the field staff to stay quiet and that everything is fine. Everything is not fine, and someone from the agency needs to stand up and say that."

Close-knit agencies

The alleged misuse of federal wildlife grant dollars by the DNR appears to have come as a consequence of a 2018 change

in DNR policy to substantially boost timber harvests in response to pressure from the timber industry. The new policy, known as the Sustainable Timber Harvest Initiative, or STHI, came under fire from the start from wildlife officials who argued that the harvest targets in the initiative made it difficult, if not impossible, to meet the DNR's obligations to provide adequate and appropriate wildlife habitat on DNR-managed lands. That change devastated morale among DNR wildlife managers. An internal survey conducted by the DNR last fall found that 90 percent of its wildlife officials reported being either "very or somewhat dissatisfied," primarily as a result of the new focus on commercial harvest and the widespread discounting of wildlife concerns within the agency, even when involving WMAs. Of those surveyed, fully two-thirds indicated they were "very dissatisfied." Some wildlife staff reported seeking medical help for stress management and

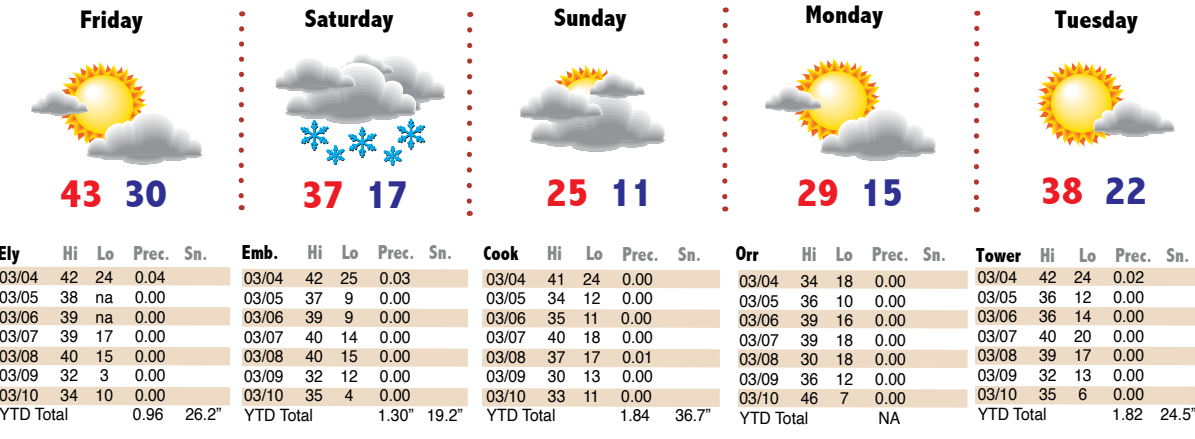
panic attacks brought on by the disagreements within their offices over forest management.

The change also faced pushback from the federal FWS, particularly when the pressures to boost timber harvest seemed to leave wildlife concerns secondary. Thorne said that while FWS could have pushed the DNR harder over the issue, he recognized that that isn't always easy to do between agencies that typically work as partners. "They've always cooperated closely, so it's very difficult for them to start taking a public position that you guys aren't doing your jobs. As a longtime manager, I know it's very easy to damage an agency over something like this. They tried to work out an agreement, but every time the DNR didn't follow through."

While the FWS has released some funding, Sterle noted that the agency is conducting its own regular five-year audit a year ahead of time given the concerns about the DNR's use of the funds.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather



Fishing reports

Ely area

Ice conditions are quickly deteriorating in the Ely area. Ice is beginning to pull away from the shorelines, cracks are opening up, and areas of open water are being reported on many area lakes. Four-wheeler and side-by-side travel, over ice, is no longer recommended. Anglers looking to still ice fish should look to smaller lakes, which are easier to get out onto and fish.

With the deteriorating ice conditions, not many anglers fished for lakers this weekend so reports are limited. The few anglers who did venture out generally reported slow fishing for lakers this weekend, although anglers who did find them reported they

were in 60-80 feet of water. Small silver and blue, lipless crankbaits or tubes fished about 20 feet under the ice seemed to be effective.

Crappie fishing has remained largely hit or miss. Seems the majority of anglers are able to catch crappies, but size and numbers remain the main challenge. Anglers catching crappies have been successful with purple, white and pink jigs tipped with crappie minnows. More active crappies have been hitting soft plastics in red or white. Panfish are starting to school up in 15-25 feet of water.

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



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Palm Sunday, March 24
Worship service at 8:30 a.m. with special music by Deb Tuominen and Louise Wiermaa. Brunch to follow the service.
Maundy Thursday, March 28
Service at 5 p.m. with a seder meal catered by Chef Chris from Vermilion Country School, will be serving lamb and a FREE traditional seder meal.
Please RSVP before March 18 by calling 218-753-3047.
Easter Sunday, March 31
Worship service at 8:30 a.m. with special music by Martha Bush. Brunch to follow the service. All are welcome. Martha, the Harp Lady, has a Master's Degree in Art Therapy from St. Mary's University in Minneapolis.
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EBCH
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Q: What is Medicare?
A: Medicare can seem complex and confusing, but essentially, Medicare is a federal insurance program that provides coverage for all individuals over 65, individuals under 65 who have specific disabilities, or individuals with end-stage renal disease.
Q: Why are Medicare Parts A & B considered "Original Medicare"?
A: Medicare Parts A and B were the original blueprint for Medicare coverage. Part A is typically free for individuals who paid into Medicare for a certain period throughout their career. It primarily covers hospital insurance for major medical events and possibly some home health or skilled nursing facilities. Medicare Part B is typically the medical insurance that costs you an out-of-pocket premium for annual physicals, diagnostic, or lab services. You may not need to purchase Medicare Part B if you or your spouse still work and insurance is offered through employment.
Q: What about Parts C and D?
A: Medicare Parts C and D are considered additional coverage. Part C is Medicare Advantage, which is private insurance that covers everything the original Medicare covers and often provides extra benefits for a monthly premium. Part D is specifically designed insurance to cover the cost of prescription drugs. Private insurance companies only offer Part D, which can often be part of a Medicare Advantage plan or purchased separately.
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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EMPLOYMENT



NOW HIRING!

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Seasonal - Full Time
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• This seasonal, full-time position is part of a roving crew based out of the Iron Range Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area near Gilbert, Minnesota. Work schedule: Mondays through Thursdays, 6:00 AM to 4:30 PM. In summer season the crew departs Gilbert early Monday and returns Thursday afternoon. Anticipated season: May 8th through November 1st, each year.

• This position works for the DNR Parks and Trails Division and gets to travel throughout northern Minnesota working on various types of Off Highway Vehicle trails. You will be operating ATVs, along with many types of trail construction equipment.

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OPENINGS

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

Vermilion Country is a project based learning school seeking to expand our staffing. We are adding new positions! Also interviewing for positions for the 2024/25 school year for other licensed teaching positions. Currently open for interview on a rolling basis - call 218-248-2485 or email info@vermilioncountry.org for more information:

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

- ▶ Special Education Teacher (licensed)
- ▶ Literature/Language Arts and/or Social Studies (licensed)
- ▶ Science and/or Math Interdisciplinary Teacher (licensed)
- ▶ Social Worker (skills and students services focus on individual and small group skills work. LSW, LGSW, LICSW, Licensed School Social Worker, or alternative certification considered LADC etc.)

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

- ▶ Special Education Assistant /para(Special Education) (Hourly \$17.50 - 24.50/HR +)
 - ▶ Student Success Counselor (\$40,000 annual salary)
 - ▶ Student Success Program Specialist, (hourly \$24-\$30/hr+ DOE)
- Part Time:
- ▶ 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

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Egg on
- 5 Science room
- 8 Arm bone
- 12 Actress Gilpin
- 13 Hosp. area
- 14 Wedding cake layer
- 15 Bridge position
- 16 Not "agin"
- 17 "Snap out -!"
- 18 Monet or Debussy
- 20 Wards off
- 22 " - Poetica"
- 23 Be sick
- 24 Healthy
- 27 Embeds
- 32 Comic Philips
- 33 Menagerie
- 34 Trio after M
- 35 Fish lover's deli order
- 38 Group of quail
- 39 Transcript no.
- 40 Parched
- 42 Oracle setting
- 45 "Brigadoon" lyricist
- 49 Buffalo's county
- 50 Miss Piggy's pronoun
- 52 French waterway
- 53 - Romeo

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12				13			14				
15				16			17				
18			19		20	21					
			22			23					
24	25	26		27	28	29			30	31	
32				33					34		
35			36	37				38			
		39				40	41				
42	43			44		45			46	47	48
49				50	51			52			
53				54				55			
56				57				58			

- 54 Canine greeting
- 55 Summit
- 56 Ogler's look
- 57 " - hawl!" (cowgirl's cry)
- 58 Monopoly card
- 8 Perfect place
- 9 Game show aid
- 10 Astronaut
- 11 Sciences' partner
- 19 AMA member
- 21 Hearing thing
- 24 Drenched
- 25 Ostrich's kin
- 26 Palmist's prediction
- 28 Neither mate
- 29 Hit song by OneRepublic
- 30 Calendar abbr.
- 31 Covert agent
- 36 Seem
- 37 Taunting laugh
- 38 Secondary route
- 41 Concerning
- 42 Bargain
- 43 Perry's creator
- 44 Noncommittal answer
- 46 Pleasing
- 47 Salinger girl
- 48 Marsh plant
- 51 Tram load

DOWN

- 1 Detail, briefly
- 2 Bell sound
- 3 - Major
- 4 Ceremony
- 5 Not enlarged or reduced
- 6 Tennis feat
- 7 "Ironsides" star

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Even Exchange by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. Prickly sensation | __ I __ _ _ _ | Become ensnared | __ A __ _ _ _ |
| 2. Schoolgirl infatuation | __ _ U __ _ | Fall asleep quickly | __ _ A __ _ |
| 3. Foxhole | __ U __ _ _ _ | Financier | __ A __ _ _ _ |
| 4. Fussy | __ _ C __ _ | Smallest finger | __ _ N __ _ |
| 5. Earth's sister planet | __ _ _ U __ | Expresses oneself | __ _ _ T __ |
| 6. Land owner | __ _ _ _ I __ _ | Four-sided shape | __ _ _ A __ _ |
| 7. Thick string | __ _ _ _ E | Identical siblings | __ _ _ _ S |
| 8. He wanted "more" | O __ _ _ _ _ | A thin slice | S __ _ _ _ |
| 9. Nobleman | __ _ R __ _ | Breakfast meat | __ _ C __ _ |
| 10. Young canine | __ U __ _ _ | Red flower | __ O __ _ _ |

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CryptoQuip

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

Clue: Q equals P

CFNJG RYGZTCTGJ CFRC
YRSG R QRJCN'D'J BTIG YNDG
QBGRJRZC, T BTSG CN ERBB
CFGY QDGREFGD ENYINDCJ.

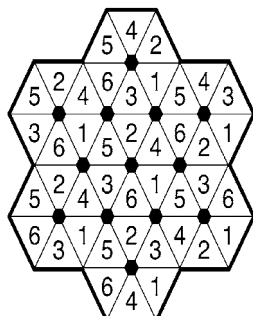
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CryptoQuote

answer
No matter how dark the moment, love and hope are always possible.
- George Chakiris



solution



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218-753-2950

Super Crossword

Answers

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

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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.

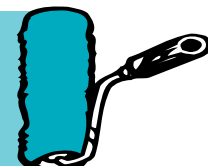
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Term of service: May 15 - September 30, 2024

Requirements:

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- Service must have insurance and list the Chamber as an additional insured. Copy required.
- Submit monthly invoices within two weeks of the close of each month.
- Service provides all tools required to maintain grounds.

Bid must include all costs, including taxes and cost overruns. Costs above the quote amount will not be accepted. The Ely Chamber of Commerce reserves the right to decline any and all bids.

Submit bids to director@ely.org by April 15, 2024, by 3 p.m. Questions, contact Eva at 218-365-6123.

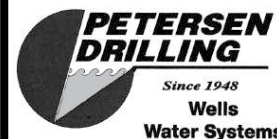
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